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The Power of Place: A Comparative Analysis of Prison and Street Gangs

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The Power of Place: A Comparative Analysis of Prison and Street Gangs

By

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The City University of New York

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Abstract

THE POWER OF PLACE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRISON AND STREET
GANGS

By

Jennifer M. Ortiz

Adviser: Professor David Brotherton

One misconception in gang research is the assumption that the terms prison gang and

street gang are organizationally and ideologically synonymous. Although in the minority, some

researchers suggest that prison gangs are qualitatively and quantitatively different from other

gangs (Fleisher & Decker, 2001). Utilizing 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews, this study

assesses the effect of environment on the emergence, organization, and ideologies of prison and

street gangs. The findings identify key differences between the 'free' society[1] where gangs

emerge and the captive societies where prison gangs emerge. The primary difference was the

level of formal and informal control exerted over individuals within each environment.

This analysis presents a comparative model of prison and street gangs. The model

illustrates similarities and differences across major aspects of each type of organization,

including membership, leadership, ideology, conflict management, and relationships with

authority figures. Gang membership and leadership structures in prison are rigid and not

susceptible to the changes common amongst street gangs. Both prison and street gangs can be

explained using a critical subcultural theory that focuses on their need for survival, a key

component of their ideologies. However, the emergence of prison gangs is greatly affected by the

need for extralegal governance that arose from the weakening of formal governance structures.

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[1] Free society refers to United States' society outside of the prison context. Some researchers refer to this portion
of society as a 'civil' society.

Environments also affect how gangs manage conflict. Violence and crime in the street gang is chaotic while prison gang violence and crime is controlled by gang leaders due to a mutual need for violence reduction within correctional facilities. Lastly, while street gangs experience an antagonistic relationship with law enforcement as a result of formal policies such as stop and frisk and informal policies such as harassment of identified gang members, prison gangs have a complicated relationship with correctional staff that is determined by the type of correctional officer present in a facility. Respondents identified a typology of correctional officers that illustrates this complicated relationship.

The findings from this study are used to develop a new definition of the term "gang" derived from the gang member narratives. Policy suggestions and directions for future research are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Human beings have an innate need to belong to collectives (Fiske, 2004). This need leads humans to form various communities including countries, churches, families, and sports teams. Generally, these institutions serve as a form of positive social control[2] (Hirschi, 1969). Some institutions, however, operate in opposition to one another, leading one institution or collective to label the other as deviant based on that group's definition of morality (Adler and Adler, 2009). When one group is labeled deviant they suffer negative consequences of deviance including exclusion from mainstream society (Young, 1999). Individuals who are excluded will generally find new groups that will afford them new collective identities thereby filling the need for "belongingness" (Fiske, 2004).

Gangs are a form of human collective within society whose members can be viewed as "bonded communitarians" (Conquergood, 1993). The term gang originally referred to groups of cattle or large human collectives (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). As society evolved from an agricultural to an industrial society, the term 'gang' took on a negative connotation becoming viewed as a source of society's ills and a factor in the undermining of social order. Young (1999) has referred to this process as a form of 'Othering' (Young, 1999; 2007). "Two modes of othering are prevalent [in society]: the first is a conservative demonization which projects negative attributes on the other and thereby grants positive attributes to oneself. The second, very common yet rarely recognized, is a liberal othering where the other is seen to lack our qualities and virtues" (Young, 2007, p. 5).

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[2] Hirschi (1969) posits that social institutions such as family, school, peers, and polity create bonds between individuals and society. Once bonded, the fear of losing the relationship with a social institution deters individuals from committing deviant and criminal acts.

In present society, especially in the epoch of zero tolerance, citizens are quick to dismiss street gang members as criminals who cannot be reformed. Criminologists, as middle and upper class members of society, have also actively participated in othering (Young, 2011) the working-class and sub working-class urban individuals who make up street collectives often referred to as gangs. This dehumanization and pathologization are exacerbated when discussing prison gangs because every member is a convicted criminal thereby 'legitimizing' and reaffirming a stereotype. In addition, as criminologists have moved away from sociology and the criminal justice paradigm has come to dominate the field, criminality has become a requirement of gang membership and hence, form a tautology rather than a research question or discoverable phenomenon (Morash, 1983). There is a need to "reframe the gang problem outside the criminal justice matrix" (Hagedorn, 2007, p. 310). The use of a criminal justice lens to analyze gangs results in the exclusion of structural level analyses and hinders the emergence of new theories and ideas. Reframing the study of gangs through an interdisciplinary, qualitative approach will allow criminologists to develop a better understanding of gangs, rooted in the classic ethnographic tradition of gang research.

Purpose of the Study

The current study is an attempt to address the shortcomings of much current gang research by assessing prison gangs and street gangs as two human collectives each affected by their respective environments. The researcher utilized a critical lens that allowed the topic to be divorced from the criminal justice paradigm that permeates the existing gang literature. Rather than relying on official data or data collected from criminal justice officials, this study assessed the narratives and perspectives of individual gang members to explore the two subcultures as

separate human collectives rather than operating under the assumption that street gangs and prison gangs are synonymous.

Research Questions

This study explored qualitative data to address the primary research question: *Does environment affect how individuals experience gang membership in prison compared to their street experiences? If so, how?* To address the primary question, the researcher developed several secondary questions:

1. *How are the "free" societies different from the captive societies where gangs emerge?*
2. *Do gang members identify these differences between their street and prison experiences?*
3. *Do traditional subcultural explanations of street gangs apply to prison gangs?*

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the existing gang literature because it speaks to a gap in the empirical and theoretical literature on the prison/street gang comparison. Findings suggest the need for gang researchers to utilize ethnographic methods and develop interdisciplinary approaches to the study of gangs. These new data demonstrate the different contexts within which gangs exist and the effect of the environment on gang membership, leadership structure, ideology, and organizational operations. In addition, the study sheds light on the relationships between gangs and criminal justice officials.

By analyzing the narratives of individuals who have directly experienced membership in both entities, this study provides gang researchers with a new perspective on prison gangs. While most prison gang studies focus on the West Coast of the United States, this study provides a glimpse of prison gangs on the East Coast. Findings also provide a new definition of the term

'gang' derived from gang member narratives. This study provides a starting point for understanding the similarities and differences between prison and street gangs.

Findings further speak to issues within existing criminal justice policies. Prison officials concede that they segregate inmates based on gang affiliation in order to ensure safety and maintain social order within their prisons (Garot, 2010). Gang affiliation is most often determined by tattoos, symbols, and other 'known' gang identifiers (Gaes et al, 2001). However, results from this study indicate that prison and street gangs are linked but not synonymous. Classifying individuals as "gang" members upon entering a correctional facility and segregating these individuals based on that label has detrimental effects on both the individual inmate and the security of the facility. Findings also suggest the need to reevaluate correctional facility transfer policies.

Lastly, this study illustrates the relationships between gangs and correctional officers. Findings reveal that some correctional officers allow prison gangs to control prison units while other officers are known gang members. These findings and the recent discovery of correctional officer corruption throughout the United States reveal a need to reevaluate correctional officer hiring processes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Gang research has largely been written from a middle-class, predominately male, white perspective. Both researchers and criminal justice professionals have done little to examine alternative perspectives on gangs. A review of the literature reveals the need for an in-depth exploration of gang member narratives to better inform existing gang literature. Such an exploration would allow for comparisons between street gangs and prison gangs through the lens of those who participate in these organizations. Furthermore, existing gang literature fails to account for the effect of space and environment. Anthropological research suggests that space and environment are essential to the understanding of cultural formation (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003).

Definition

One cannot discuss gangs without addressing the problem that faces all gang research: definition. Gang researchers have not reached a consensus on a definition of the term 'gang', with definitions ranging from all-encompassing to overly narrow (Esbensen, et al., 2001; Ball & Curry, 1995). "[The] lack of consensus [among criminologists] is primarily due to contrasting research agendas, derived from contrasting epistemological stances" (Garot, 2010, p. 3). Some researchers view gangs as a criminal justice issue that should be analyzed through positivist quantitative data (Klein and Maxson, 2006) while others view gangs as responses to sociological factors best understood through the use of qualitative ethnographic research (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). These opposing paradigms have produced vastly different definitions of the phenomenon.

Early sociological pieces adhered to the sociological factors paradigm. For example, in 1927, the most popular definition of gangs did not include violence and crime as a prerequisite of labeling a group a gang. Thrasher (1927) argued that any childhood playgroup had the potential of becoming a gang with the transformation from playgroup to gang occurring when youths encountered others who oppose or display disapproval for their group. Thrasher used a naturalist approach to studying gangs that resulted in "a comparative appreciation of gangs among various forms of youthful peer association" (Katz and Jackson-Jacobs, 2004, p. 94). If criminologists followed in Thrasher's example, "the conditions for the formation of gangs could have become a vigorous area of study" (Katz and Jackson-Jacobs, 2004, p. 97). Thrasher's work, although subsequently supported by data (Katz and Jackson-Jacobs, 2004) and valorized by some scholars, was highly criticized by many gang criminologists. Gang criminologists did not view gangs as 'playgroups' but rather as destructive groups. Hence, many modern criminologists largely ignore Thrasher's argument that gangs are not inherently criminal. Thrasher's research, however, did have a major impact on the future study of gangs. Thrasher largely focused on the role of adventure seeking among boys in Chicago. Because of his focus on individual-level factors, Thrasher ignored the role of structural issues thereby creating a pathologizing analysis of the gang problem (Brotherton, 2015). Subsequent gang studies adopted this individualized approach and further pathologized gangs. Gangs were explained and assessed using a psychological approach that placed blame on individual deficiencies or abnormalities while ignoring the structural and historical contexts that resulted in the emergence of gangs.

The war on crime of the 1970s and the subsequent fear that arose from it led to the emergence of the criminal justice paradigm in criminology. By 1971, criminality was included in

the most widely accepted definitions of gangs (Klein, 1995). One such definition arose from the

work of Klein (1971) who defined a gang as:

> any denotable group of youngsters who : (a) are generally perceived as a distinct
> aggregation by others in their neighborhood; (b) recognize themselves as a denotable
> group (almost invariably with a group name) and (c) *have been involved in a sufficient*
> *number of delinquent incidents* to call forth a consistent negative response from
> neighborhood residents and /or law enforcement agencies. (p.13, emphasis added)

Definitions that mandate the presence of criminal behavior are largely the result of the positivist

movement that abandoned the ethnographic studies characteristic of the early Chicago School

(Brotherton, 2012). This shift away from ethnography and towards positivist forms of data

collection that rely on the scientific method resulted in the emergence of theories that did not

originate from gangs but rather were "developed at the theoretical center" and imposed on gangs

(Katz and Jackson-Jacobs, 2004, p.101-102). The inclusion of criminality as a prerequisite of

gang membership is especially problematic because it does not allow for the empirical testing of

whether gang membership involves participation in criminal activity (Morash, 1983). Katz

(2004) asserts that criminologists have "never had a good basis for thinking that gangs cause

crime" (p.93).

A definition of gangs that often is still used in gang research emerged from the work of

Miller (1975):

> A youth-gang is a self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual
> interests, with identifiable leadership, well developed lines of authority, and other
> organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose which
> generally includes the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular
> territory, facility, or type of enterprise (p.9).

Miller's definition is based on survey responses from teachers, police officers, and community

workers. He did not attempt to obtain input from *actual* gang members. Rather, he operated

under the criminal justice paradigm. Furthermore, Miller includes "self-formed" without

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acknowledging the presence of any structural factors. By ignoring the role of structural factors on gang formation Miller treats gang members as individuals who are unaffected by their place in society. "Structural causes must…be at the forefront of any serious discussion on what causes gangs and creates gang members" (Vigil, 2002, p.13). The inclusion of the words "illegal activity" in Miller's definition is problematic because there is no direct evidence that gangs cause crime and there is no consensus among researchers regarding the inclusion of violence as a prerequisite for defining a group as a gang (Gaes et al., 2001; Klein, 1995). Interestingly, only a few researchers have questioned the link between gangs and violence (Katz & Jackson-Jacobs, 2004; See Garot, 2010 for an exception).

A recent example of a gang definition is provided by Diego-Vigil (2007) in his study of gangs in East Los Angeles. For his study, Diego-Vigil (2007) defined a gang as a group

> of male adolescents and youths who have grown up together as children, usually as cohorts in a low-income neighborhood of a city, and bonded together by a street subculture ethos that maintains an anti-social stance which embraces unconventional values and norms (p.20).

Although Diego-Vigil outlines very specific traits of gangs in his definition, his definition is only applicable to his study because it ignores the possibility of female gang members, suburban gangs, gangs who adhere to some conventional norms, and prison gangs.

The definitional issue of gangs carries over into prison gang studies. The majority of prison gang studies utilize pre-existing definitions of the term 'gang' that emerged from studies of street-level gangs (Gaes, et al., 2002). Lyman (1989) defines a prison gang as:

> An organization which operates within the prison system as a self-perpetuating criminally oriented entity, consisting of a select group of inmates who have established an organized chain of command and are governed by an established code of conduct. The prison gang will usually operate in secrecy and has as its goal to conduct gang activities by controlling their prison environment through intimidation and violence directed toward non-members (p.48).

Comparing this definition to Miller's definition it is clear that the two share many qualities including the denial of any structural factors and the requirement that gangs participate in "activities" that are not in line with the institutional norms or values. This is problematic because no study has compared the two organizational types to determine whether they are similar entities.

The presence of conflicting definitions of the word 'gang' makes the study of gangs difficult. Every researcher, in essence, is allowed to create her own definition of the term which results in every group being labeled a gang and every criminal activity committed by individuals in the group defined as gang-related. This misnomer leads to skewed statistics and flaws in the criminal justice system (Meehan, 2000).

The sole benefit of a lack of consensus is the ability for analysis that will allow for the discovery of new gang phenomena (Horowitz, 1990). Orthodox criminologists, however, rely almost exclusively on social disorganization theoretical frameworks (Hagedorn, 2007). One ethnographic study (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004) developed a definition from the data that stands in stark contrast to the definitions presented earlier. Brotherton (2008) defines a street organization as:

> A group formed largely by youth and adults of a marginalized social class which aims to provide its members with a resistant identity, an opportunity to be individually and collectively empowered, a voice to challenge the dominant culture, a refuge from the stresses and strains of barrio or ghetto life, and a spiritual enclave within which its own sacred rituals can be generated and practiced (p.70).

This definition is controversial because it removes the necessity for criminal behavior, includes situated agency, and suggests that there are positive aspects of street organization membership. Due to its radical departure from the 'canon', this definition is largely ignored in American mainstream gang research (For exceptions see Young, 2011; Mendoza-Denton, 2008: Hagedorn,

2007). The different definitions that exist in the literature may be the result of epistemological differences. The present study will focus on the term 'gang'.

Gang researchers have generally relied on antiquated definitions of the term 'gang'. There is a necessity to update these definitions as phenomenon change. Both street gangs and prison gangs are not static entities unaffected by changes in culture and society. Although 'leading' gang researchers have established definitions that are utilized with the field of criminology, many of these definitions were established decades ago in eras very different from the present time. One must assume that gangs have been affected by major shifts in the criminal justice system such as the war on drugs, the criminalization of youth, prison policies, and mass incarceration in addition to major shifts in resistance both locally and globally (Hagedorn, 2005). Furthermore, most criminologists do not attempt to allow gang members to establish their own definition of their association. Rather, criminologists impose onto gang members definitions derived from their privileged middle class positions.

Street Gang Formation

Although criminologists have devoted much time and energy to the study of groups they call street gangs, their studies have been "preoccupied with the gang as metonym, icon, or index" (Katz & Jackson-Jacobs, 2004, p. 94). Researchers have developed varying explanations for the emergence of street gangs. Some researchers have established social disorganization models that attribute gang membership to neighborhood level environmental factors such as poverty, residential mobility, and lack of institutions of social control (e.g. Cartwright & Howard, 1966; Spergel, 1984). These perspectives suggest that gangs form as semi-political organizations attempting to fill a void left by social institutions that have "disintegrated, failed to emerge… or [have] been left without connections to the resource granting mainstream" (Brotherton and

Barrios, 2004, p. 42). A modern ethnography of gangs in Chicago found that gangs policed communities and held community events (Venkatesh, 2008). Gangs, in this context, operate a form of social control for the youth involved and the neighborhoods in which they reside. Social disorganization perspectives of street gangs fail to account, however, for "the existence of stable neighborhoods with extensive histories of gang behavior" (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). This failure ushered in a new perspective which regarded gangs as subcultures that emerged in response to the dominate culture.

Strain theory suggests that individuals who are unable to achieve societally accepted goals due to blocked access to means begin to feel strain and may adapt to this strain through the creation of new innovative means to achieve their goals (Merton, 1938). Building on strain theory, Cohen (1955) posited that working-class males internalized middle-class goals but were unable to achieve middle class status. In response to this status frustration, working-class boys established subcultural groups (i.e. gangs) with other similarly situated boys. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) later argued that the type of subculture that emerged in working-class areas was dependent on the opportunity for involvement in criminal behavior within a given neighborhood. These subcultural groups are transmitted from generation to generation as a means of coping with experienced strain (McKay and Shaw, 1969).

Critical criminologists further expanded subcultural theories of gang formation by including structural level arguments including the concepts of marginalization and structural violence. The critical literature views subcultures as inventions developed by subpopulations as a response to marginalization and unequal power structures within society (Brake, 1980). Marginalization and structural violence refer to the process by which a social structure or institution harms individuals by denying them access to or ability to acquire basic needs

(Galtung, 1969) especially via the process of social exclusion. When individuals are socially excluded they have low levels of social capital and experience "lack of access to basic social services, the lack of universal state security protection, along with the severe corruption, inefficiency and brutality that generally hit the poor hardest" (Winton, 2004). Individuals who experience structural violence in turn resort to reactive violence (Briceno-Leon and Zubollage, 2002). This reactive violence may account for the emergence of gangs. Street gangs largely form in inner city areas, areas that have long been socially excluded (Diego Vigil, 2002). Gangs offer residents in these neighborhoods "a tangible rout to material wealth, excitement, and local prestige" (Glaser, 2000, p. 190) they would not otherwise be able to achieve. Research also suggests that gangs have alternative, informal economies (Fagan, 1992; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004; Hagedorn, 2005). An analysis of street gangs in five different states (i.e. California, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio) found that gangs served various economic functions for their members (Knox, 1995). The informal economies developed by gangs provide an answer to the economic marginalization experienced within impoverished areas.

The 1970s and 1980s ushered in a new perspective of gangs as institutions operating in opposition to the mainstream culture (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). Erlanger (2004) argued that youth gangs of the 1970s and 1980s were the result of failed 1960s social movements that did not address the needs of impoverished inner-city communities. Unlike the social disorganization theorists who argued that gangs served a semi-political function, Klein (1995) suggested that gang membership was too unstable to result in any meaningful political movement. Furthermore, researchers in the 1980s viewed gangs as problematic entities who caused harm to their communities (Hagedorn, 1988). Other researchers, however, argued that gangs operate in a more symbiotic relationship with the neighborhoods in which they existed (Jankowski, 1991).

According to Jankowski (1991), gangs did not operate in opposition to mainstream beliefs but rather worked in conjunction with their neighborhood to ensure gang member survival.

Street Gang Structure

Existing street gang literature suggests that most gangs have a leadership structure (Curry and Decker, 1998). Jankowski (1991) found that gangs in New York developed into complex multi-level hierarchical structures. He identified three distinct organizational structures: vertical, horizontal, and influential. Knox (1991) describes gang structure on a continuum where 'emergent gangs' who are not formally organized develop into formal organizations with goals, leadership, and various income sources. Some researchers posit that gangs are organized hierarchically based on age and experience (Conly et al, 1993). Within the hierarchical structures are leaders, novice members, and recruits (Conly et al, 1993). Leadership structures are better defined within gangs that have existed for longer periods.

Researchers have attempted to develop typologies of street gangs. One assessment of street gangs identified two different types of gangs: hybrid/street gangs and organized crime gangs. Hybrid street gangs are loosely organized and have informal leadership structures. Conversely, organized crime gangs are highly organized and have formal leadership structures (Carlie, 2002). Alternatively, Yablonsky (1962) developed a typology of street gangs based on official data, which classified gangs into one of three categories: social, delinquent, and violent. Social gangs are not involved in delinquency, are generally more bonded to society, and are bound to each other by mutual attraction. Delinquent gangs are structurally cohesive, pursue monetary gain, having specified roles, and are dependent on each other for survival. Violent gangs are focused on acquiring power and seek excitement and gratification through violence (Yablonsky, 1962). Although other gang typologies exist (for example, see Cloward and Ohlin,

1960), it should be noted that gang researchers are more concerned with "categorizing gang types, than are the gang members themselves" (Ruble and Turner, 2000, p. 119).

Although street gangs are often portrayed as highly organized criminal enterprises, data on gang structure is generally derived from criminal justice officials such as law enforcement gang 'experts' (Hagedorn, 1988). Jankowski (1991) posited that researchers are simply too afraid to conduct gang research and rely on readily available criminal justice data which is problematic because official statistics do not reflect actual gang activity. A notable exception is Decker and Van Winkle's (1996) study of St. Louis gangs. Using interviews with street gang members Decker and Van Winkle discovered four factors that determined the level of structure and cohesion within a gang: roles, rules, meeting, and junior gangs. Brotherton and Barrios (2004) were able, through long term exposure to a street organization, to analyze the structure of that organization. The researchers found that "the ALKQN was formally a hierarchical structure with layers of leadership that stretched across both [New York City] and [New York State]" (p.184).

Street Gang Culture

Gangs resemble "societies within a society" (Carlie, 2002). Exclusion from mainstream society results in the development of an alternative culture within gangs (Cohen, 1955). Gang culture helps members mediate the tensions they experience within mainstream society including poverty and social exclusion. Across the vast literature of gangs, there exists varying accounts of gang culture. Thrasher (1927) found that each gang "develops its own sentiments, attitudes, codes, [and] even its own words". Some aspects of gang culture mirror mainstream culture such as the use of prayers and rituals (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004). A major component of street gang culture is identity. Gang culture helps shape how individuals perceive and present themselves

within their environments (Garot, 2010). Members utilize a variety of symbolic representations to exhibit identity including colors, hand signals, and graffiti.

Research on street gangs suggests that each organization consists of its own formalized rules (Knox, 1995). The rules define individual roles, appropriate behaviors, and punishments for these inappropriate behaviors. Within the rules is generally a vow of secrecy regarding the inner workings of the organization that is a response to the structural needs of the organization and the constant threat of law enforcement (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). Brotherton and Barrios found that the Almightly Latin King and Queen Nation consisted of individual positions or roles, meetings, and rules of conduct. Moreover, the organization participated in rituals such as prayers, hearings, and disciplinary actions that are analogous to rituals within non-gang collectives.

Gang members teach new members the rules, norms, values, and rituals of the gang (Carlie, 2002). Some gangs use written text (e.g manifestos) that outline the history, rules, and beliefs of the gang to impart this knowledge onto new members (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004). The rules of gangs reinforce the shared values and norms of the gang. Many gangs have both formal and informal sets of rules that regulate a wide range of behavior including inter- and intra-gang violence, and drug use (Jankowski, 1991). Rules mandate appropriate behaviors and punishments for inappropriate behavior.

Some researchers have argued that what distinguishes gangs from other social groups is a profound level of cohesion that is established through participation in criminal behavior (Klein and Crawford, 1967). As noted earlier, some researchers have illustrated the ability of gangs to bring about economic, social, and political change for both individual members and their communities as a whole (Spergel, 1995; Hagedorn, 2002; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). Some

research suggests that members view gangs as surrogate families (Vigil, 1988). Membership within the gang affords individuals with affection, loyalty, and support (Morales, 1992). Individuals may join the gang to replace an either non-existent or dysfunctional family (Vigil, 1988). Each member has an assigned role he must complete in order for the family to function properly (Ruble & Turner, 2000).

Prison Gangs

Researchers "have only a rudimentary knowledge of prison gangs as social groups operating inside prisons and of the interplay between street gangs and prison gangs" (Fleisher and Decker, 2001, p.2). Nearly all existing gang literature has focused on street gangs while largely ignoring prison gangs and failing to test whether existing street gang literature is applicable to prison gangs (Gaes, et. al, 2001). This is in spite of research that suggests gangs vary across free societies (Rodgers & Jensen, 2008) and even within a single neighborhood (Diego Vigil, 2002). If gangs differ across societies than it is logical to suggest that gangs in prison differ from gangs in free society.

Prison Gang Formation

Existing literature on prison gangs largely ignores how prison gangs form and the effect of incarceration on gang structure and purpose (Irwin, 1980; See Jacobs, 1977 for an exception). There is, however, some literature which suggests that prison gangs emerge due to a need for social identity (Fong and Buentello, 1991) and in direct opposition to mistreatment by correctional staff (Fleisher and Decker, 2001). These findings, however, are based on case studies and official data with little to no input from gang members (For exception see Jacobs, 1974). This is problematic because "there is often a considerable discrepancy between the official stance and what takes place within particular prisons" (Hunt et al, 1993, p. 400). The

official view suggests that prison gangs are problematic entities. Research, however, suggests that gangs have "little negative impact on the regular running of prison operations" (Camp and Camp, 1985, xii). While there is existing evidence that street gangs are imported into prisons (Jacobs, 1974), some correctional agencies suggest that the root of gang problems is located within correctional walls (Fleisher and Decker, 2001).

Sykes' (1958) seminal research on maximum-security prisons suggests that inmates may "bind [themselves] to [their] fellow captives with ties of mutual aid, loyalty, affection, and respect, firmly standing in opposition to the officials" (p.82). Utilizing the work of Sykes (1958), contemporary criminological studies, and official data, Skarbek (2012; 2014) posits that prison gangs emerge as a result of a need for governance brought about by the failure of organizational norms. The era of mass incarceration has weakened organizational norms and directly affected the need for governance. For example, as the California prison population began to increase between 1960 and 1973, the volume of assaults against both inmates and staff also increased (Skarbek, 2014). "[A] growing population increases the scarcity of physical space and other resources. The increased value of resources requires greater governance" (Skarbek, 2012, p.13). As a result of weakened norms and increased scarcity of resources in prisons, inmates seek out non-traditional forms of governance that provide strict membership guidelines, norms, the transmission of information, and punishment mechanisms (Skarbek, 2012; 2014). This theoretical framework of prison gang formation posits that as California's prison population increased there was an influx of younger inmates who never served time in a correctional facility. Older inmates held negative views of these incoming inmates (Hunt et al, 1993). Because of the influx of younger, inexperienced inmates the main organizational norms (i.e. the convict code; see Irwin, 1970) were weakened and the overall social order of prisons diminished

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(Skarbek, 2014). In response, inmates formed groups that replaced the diminished capacity of the state control and assisted in re-establishing order to the prisons. "Thus prison gangs…while apparently disruptive, render penitentiaries governable" (Parenti, 1999, p. 193).

Economists offer alternative perspectives of prison gang formation. Historically, economic factors have led to a surplus in available workers. Ruscher and Kirchheimer (1939) argue that this surplus working force led to the proliferation of prisons. Parenti (1999) offers an economic theory for the emergence of prison gangs in California. California prisons historically consisted of predominately white inmates that controlled the politics of the prisons. Economic factors such as deindustrialization and automation resulted in a reduction of available positions in the work force and the exclusion of Latinos and Blacks from the labor force. This exclusion coupled with a racist criminal justice system led to a large influx of African Americans and Latinos into the California correctional system. Parenti (1999) suggests that racialization of the California prisons resulted in the formation of politicized and racist gangs.

There is also evidence to suggest that prison gangs operate as a form of resistance against the system that holds them captive. Inmates within an institution must decide whether to operate under a collectivistic or an individualistic orientation. Collectivism occurs when inmates operate in solidarity against those in power. Inmates who operate under the individualistic orientation believe that fellow inmates are mere objects that may be used to advance individual interests. Sykes (1958) suggests that when inmates operate under collective or "cohesive" means there is a reduction in the pains of imprisonment for all inmates.

> A cohesive inmate society provides the prisoner with a meaningful social group with which he can identify himself and which will support him in his battles against the condemners—and thus the prisoner can at least in part escape the fearful isolation of the convicted offender (Sykes, 1958, p. 107).

One can deduce from this quote that Sykes views inmate collectives as a form of resistance against the formal structure of the prison. Resistance identities serve as sources of power for inmates (Hagedorn, 2007, p. 301). A study of a "gang-free" prison in the United States revealed that inmates felt less safe when gang members were removed from the institution. "The inmates… saw the gangs as protective mechanisms to counter staff abuse, even though they were not gang participants" (Rivera, Cowles, and Dorman, 2003, p.165). These findings suggest that prison gangs serve a political function in prison whereby they ensure the fair treatment of both gang affiliated and 'neutral' inmates. Jankowski's (1991) study of street gangs revealed that prison gangs play a central role in "organizing life in the prison" (p.275).

Street vs. Prison Gangs

Researchers have theorized that there are differences between prison gangs and street gangs. Gaes et al. (2001) posited that gang membership in prisons is less fluid compared to street gang membership. A qualitative analysis of prison gang leadership found that qualities for gang leadership differed in prison compared to the free world (Fortune, 2003). Decker, Bynum, and Weisel's (1998) work suggests that prison gangs more closely resemble organized crime structures compared to street gangs. However, their findings operate under the assumption that gangs that emerged in prison (e.g. Asociación Ñeta) are identical to gangs that were 'transported' into prison from the streets (e.g. Latin Kings). Other studies suggest that these types of gangs differ from one another. Brotherton and Barrios' (2011) ethnographic study of Dominican deportees reveals interesting differences between prison-only gangs and gangs that exist both at the prison and street level. In the former membership begins and ends within the confines of the prison while in the latter membership may extend beyond the incarceration period. Ethnographic research on the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, an organization that exists both in the

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free world and within the correctional system, revealed differing goals between the street organization and the prison gang of this association (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). For example, while the street-level organization was concerned with community service, the prison organization focused on survival within the institution.

Research also illustrates power struggles that occur between incarcerated members of an organization and street members. As one gang member stated:

> So, a guy would get out of Attica perhaps, or Riker's or wherever he was and he goes back home to the Bronx and he's still a Latin King, wearing his colors proudly, and he starts going to meetings, you know. He hears about this community involvement and helping people and he got through with knife fights in prison with other gangs. He's not gonna take orders from a 20 year old kid who's never been to jail before. (Interview quoted in Brotherton and Barrios, 2004, p. 124).

Some studies suggest that prison gangs are so diverse that there are differences between the same gang in different states and even within different facilities within one state (Parenti, 1999). Skarbek (2014) illustrates the need to assess the emergence of street and prison gangs separately. Because street gangs predated prison gangs by several decades, the reasons for their emergences likely differ.

Place and Culture

Culture is "the ways people have evolved to tackle the problems which face them in everyday life… That is, people find themselves in particular structural positions in the world and, in order to solve the problems which such positions engender, evolve certain subcultural 'solutions' to attempt to tackle them" (Young, 2011, p.88). The relationship between place and culture is essential to understanding the world in which we live (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003). For example, the concept of contested spaces suggests that environment affects culture. Contested spaces are "geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition,

confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003, p. 18). Contested spaces affect culture by creating the need for subcultural responses to address or manage structural issues. Prison is a contested space because inmates enter the captive society in an inferior position to those in power. Correctional staff members actively work to enforce the power differential by degrading inmates upon entering prison (Goffman, 1961). Furthermore, the prison culture literature vividly illustrates the presence of resistance and opposition between inmates and staff.

Social ecological perspectives of crime argue that environment affects subcultures (McKay & Shaw, 1969; Cohen, 1955; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Shaw and McKay (1969) posit that neighborhoods characterized by poverty, transiency, ethnic heterogeneity, and rapid population growth experience higher levels of crime. Within these neighborhoods exist competing and conflicting moral values and as a result the neighborhoods experience a deterioration of its social institutions, a process known as social disorganization. Social disorganization fosters criminal behavior and the emergence of subcultures.

Large shifts in mainstream society, such as economic and criminal justice policies, also affect environment, which in turn affect responses to mainstream society. Subcultures are often viewed as adaptations or responses to mainstream society. An historical example of such subcultures are the Young Lords who opposed the forced eviction of Puerto Ricans on the south side of Chicago (Jeffries, 2003). The Young Lords later moved their operations to the East Coast and protested against discriminatory policies. A modern example of a policy shift is the adoption of zero tolerance policing in New York City. Zero tolerance policing led to the increased use of stop and frisk practices which in turn nurtured a hostility between civilians and law enforcement.

The hostility fomented the "stop snitching" campaign which discouraged civilians from cooperating with the police.

Because environmental context affects subcultures, there is a need to assess the environment where each subculture emerges. While gang research has traditionally focused on individual or group level analysis, focus must shift to the assessment of the 'free' society and captive society where gangs emerge. Existing literature suggests that 'free' society is vastly different from captive societies (i.e. prisons). Understanding the similarities and differences between the two environments will provide a better understanding of gang subcultures.

Captive v. Free Society

Differences between life in prison and life outside of the institution can be understood by comparing prison to modern society. Total institutions, such as prisons, represent primitive societies because they cease to evolve in many ways as a result of being physically segregated from 'free' society (Rhodes, 2001). Within prisons, policies that have long been shunned by free society continue to exist. For example, segregation is an accepted policy in prisons. Inmates are segregated based on race, offense type or severity, and gang affiliation. Racism, a concept that is overtly shunned by mainstream society, continues to permeate the prison culture.

Overt racism emerged within prison during the 1950s and 1960s. "During a time when civil rights were being advanced in society, inmates were in the process of crystallizing and solidifying racial segregation" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 39). As Blacks and Latinos became the majority within correctional facilities, racism emerged as a response to Whites losing control (Skarbek, 2014). Prior to this period, inmates associated with individuals of all races (Bunker, 2000; Irwin, 1980). Immediately following the change in demographic composition of prison populations inmates began to express overt racism via segregation. Inmates loyalties to fellow

captives was now determined along racial lines. Within 'modern' captive society, racism is not only accepted but expected (Rhodes, 2001; Goetting, 1985). In fact, inmates often segregate themselves based solely on racial and ethnic identity (Goetting, 1985; Skarbek, 2014).

While racism does exist within the free society, it is not socially acceptable to display overt racism since the Civil Rights Movement. Laws such as the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and affirmative action programs have been developed to combat racial disparity and segregation. Further, the advent of social media has resulted in the public shaming of individuals who utter racist words or display racist behaviors. This is not to suggest that racism does not exist in the free society or that racism is condemned by all members of society but rather that society as a whole has condemned the overt display of racist ideals.

Prison is also distinct from free society because day-to-day interactions are strictly regulated. Modern society consists of individuals completing different actions in different environments with different people. As individuals, we are free to change our actions (e.g. field of employment), locations (e.g. home), and individuals with whom we interact (e.g. friends). Within total institutions, such as prison, all aspects of life occur within the same location with the same individuals, same authority, and the same mundane daily routine (Goffman, 1961). As Beaumont and Tocqueville (1833) stated in their report on American penal institutions "while society in the United States gives the example of the most extended liberty, the prisons of the same country offer the spectacle of the most complete despotism" (p.47).

Formal control in prisons differs greatly from free society. Within prisons, officials attempt to create the illusion of control. However, prison officials, especially guards, are dependent on inmate compliance to maintain order within the facility. As a result, guards are often left with little recourse but to make deals and trades with the inmates (Sykes, 1958). "[T]he

guard frequently shows evidence of having been 'corrupted' by the captive criminals over whom he stands in theoretical dominance" (Sykes, 1958, p.54). This stands in stark contrast to the free society where law enforcement actively attempt to control delinquents and criminals. While delinquents, especially gangs, in free society must be ever cautious of impending law enforcement harassment (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004), inmates actually assert a level of control over the correctional staff.

Furthermore, within prisons there is a lack of privacy. Both staff and fellow inmates closely monitor interactions between individuals, creating an "omni-optical" society (Cohen and Taylor, 1972). "Although imprisonment provide[s] sustained opportunities to observe others, it restrict[s] the range of situations in which character [can] be evaluated" (Crewe, 2009, p. 307). For this reason, there is a lack of trust within captive societies that limits inmate ability to form meaningful relationships. Conversely, in 'free' society individuals enjoy privacy within their homes, are able to assess individuals in various environments, and are able to form trusting relationships.

When individuals enter prison they experience culture shock. Inmates are unable, initially, to adapt to the new structure of their lives and begin to experience a new sense of self (Goffman, 1961). While in the free society the individual maintains several statuses (e.g. father, partner, employee), upon entering a prison the individual is forced to maintain one master status: inmate. In society our movements, conceptions of self, and thoughts are our own for the most part. In prison, the inmate owns nothing, not even their 'personal' belongings which may be stripped from them at any given moment. Through continuous degradation, correctional officers convey to the inmates that the officers are in charge (Goffman, 1961). According to Goffman (1961) inmates experience a process known as 'mortification of the self' whereby they are

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subjected to humiliating treatment including the confiscation of individual property, being stripped of clothing in view of both staff and other inmates, and being issued an inmate number. These actions are part of a deliberate, institution-sanctioned process designed to remove any trace of autonomy, independent identity, or agency. Over time, the inmate loses a sense of the outside world and becomes acclimated to an environment that varies greatly from it. He begins to adapt to his environment and the newly discovered prison culture (Clemmers, 1940).

Table 1: Captive and Free Society Comparison		
	Captive Society	**Free Society**
Racism	Overt Racism and Segregation	Covert Racism and Forced Integration
Day to Day Interactions	Mundane, Strictly Regulated	Unregulated
Formal Control	Dependence	Antagonism
Privacy	Omni-Optical Society	Protection of Privacy within the home
Social Status	Inmate	Master and Auxiliary Statuses

Prison Culture

The most vivid accounts of life within penitentiaries emerged during the 1970s (e.g. Irwin, 1970; Williams and Fish, 1974; and Toch, 1977) when the country as a whole began questioning the criminal justice system. Modern criminologists largely ignore prison culture (Irwin, 1970; Wacquant, 2002). This is problematic because the prison system in the United States has undergone many changes over the past forty years, including increased populations, diminished resources, increased security measures, implementation of more restrictive behavioral rules (e.g. smoking ban), and changes in demographic composition. These changes have undoubtedly altered prison culture. Hunt et al. (1993) found that prison culture was largely

affected by influxes of first time offenders, the breakdown of the convict code, and prison overcrowding. Skarbek (2014) concluded that increases in prison population result in reduced resources and a need for inmate governance. Increases in prison populations also result in the growth of new gangs (Hunt et. al, 1993).

Sykes' (1958) seminal work on prisons was one of the first to suggest that prison constitutes a society separate and different from 'free-society'. Sykes identified typologies of prisoners that together form a "convict social system" (Irwin, 1970). Within this social system, prisoners develop a system of 'informal' social control known as the convict code (Irwin, 1970). The code dictates behavior of inmates by outlining rules each inmate is expected to follow. An earlier analysis of prison culture found that language or argot plays an important role in prison life because "language transmits much of that which we know as culture" (Clemmers, 1940, p. 102). Prison culture directly affects how correctional facilities operate. Correctional staffs derive their power from their willingness to operate within the inmate culture (Sykes, 1958; Williams and Fish, 1974).

There are factors that appear in both the captive and free society. For example, surveillance on the streets has increased dramatically during the war on drugs and war on terror eras in the United States. Other factors such as education, family units, and religion are also present in both societies. However, these factors may operate differently across the societies. The operation of these factors within a given environment may affect the culture of that society and the emergence of gangs within the society. There are differing frameworks for understanding the presence of similarities and differences between captive and free societies. Two opposing theories for the emergence of prison culture are the deprivation and importation models.

Deprivation Model

The deprivation model argues that prison culture is a response to the custodial environment of prisons particularly, the pains of imprisonment. Upon entering a correctional facility inmates undergo a process known as 'prisonization' (Clemmers, 1940). During prisonization inmates are exposed to the rules of conduct in prison and begin to assimilate to the new environment. Building on the work of Clemmers (1940), Sykes (1958) developed the concept "pains of imprisonment". During incarceration inmates are deprived of basic human experiences including liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, and security. This deprivation has unintended consequences. In order for correctional staff to manage the inmate population, they must balance the pains of imprisonment with rewards. Staff must learn to selectively enforce the rules of the institution in order to maintain peace within the facility. The staff becomes dependent on the inmates to maintain order. As a result of deprivation and the staff's need to maintain order an institutional culture emerges.

Importation Model

An alternative model to the institutional cultural explanation is the importation model, which suggests that incarceration is a continuum of an individual's life in free society. Researchers argue that prisoners are not "wholly overwhelmed or over-written by the new world he or she enters. Rather, the problems of imprisonment are addressed and resolved through attitudes, cultures, networks, and ideologies formed outside the institution" (Crewe, 2009, p. 150). In other words, inmates enter prison with existing coping mechanisms and beliefs. Prison becomes an extension of their experiences in the 'free' society (Cohen and Taylor, 1972). Experiences in 'free' society determine how an individual will adapt to prison and what social groupings an inmate will join (Crewe, 2009).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although extensive research on street gangs exists, the existing dominant paradigms are not applicable to both prison gangs and street gangs because the paradigms do not assess the effect of environment or place on these subcultures. Existing paradigms fail to account for the effects of space, environment, and social control on gangs. When the existing paradigms are inadequate one "must search for alternative conceptual schemas" (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004, p.24) to explain the phenomena. The present research utilized an ecological framework, focused on the interactions between people and the spaces they occupy, to compare individual experiences within prison and street gangs. Specifically, the study asked the question: Does environment affect how individuals experience gang membership in prison compared to their street experiences? If so, how?

What is a Gang?

Given the lack of consensus in the field, this study allowed a definition of the term gang to emerge from the data by asking gang members to define their organization. Although self-definition is not popular in criminology, sociologists and anthropologists argue that it is essential for researchers to accept a group's self-definition (Castells, 1997). Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2009) to the definitional issue allowed the definition to arise through the lens of those individuals who directly experienced the human collective labeled 'gangs'.

Ghetto-Prison Symbiosis

Some researchers argue that recent shifts in policies have caused prisons and inner city neighborhoods (i.e. ghettos) to mesh into a "carceral continuum". Wacquant (2001) suggests that

prisons and ghettos "are linked by a triple relationship of functional equivalency, structural homology, and cultural fusion" (p.97). Both institutions function to control marginalized, unemployed, minority groups particularly Blacks and Latinos. Structural homology refers to the presence of equivalent social relationships and patterns of authority. The structural and functional relationships are intensified by the fusion of the 'convict code' with the 'code of the streets' (Wacquant, 2001).

The code of the street is a "set of informal rules governing interpersonal public behavior, particularly violence [in inner city areas]" (Anderson, 1999, p.33). This code emerged as a response to a distrust in law enforcement. Residents of inner-city areas learn that the police are unwilling to assist them when they experience crime. The police view these residents as criminals not victims. As a result of this perception, the police further victimize members of these communities through harassment and brutality. Residents developed the code to address victimization and violence without involving law enforcement (Anderson, 1999). The use of violence to obtain and maintain respect within inner city neighborhoods is a key component of the code of the streets. All members of these communities abide by the code of the streets to survive even if they do not believe in the tenets of the code. Individuals who do not abide by the code of the streets are at increased risk for victimization (Anderson, 1999). However, some researchers posit that the code of the streets increases violence within disadvantaged inner-city neighborhoods (Baumer et al., 2003) and can increase victimization (Stewart, Schreck, & Simons, 2006).

Wacquant (2001) asserts that the code of the streets was imported into prisons as a result of mass incarceration. The importation of a violence based system of respect altered the prison culture. The code of the streets, which centers on hypermasculinity and respect, has destroyed

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the convict code in prisons that was formerly rooted in solidarity among inmates (Wacquant, 2001). The destruction of the convict code and the adoption of the code of the streets results in more violence within prisons. Prison culture begins to resemble street culture whereby violence becomes the main method of respect and status within prisons. Prison further resembles ghettos in that membership in both carries a certain stigma. The effects of this stigma are felt throughout the remainder of the individual's life. Wacquant's theory asserts that as the prison has become "ghettoized", the ghetto has become "prisonized".

Prisons are hostile environments. The hostility in prison spills over into the streets when the individual returns. Criminal justice policies have shifted the prison population so that prisons resemble ghettos in their overall population (Wacquant, 2001). The majority of inmates are 'recruited' from select ghettos in major metropolitan cities. For example, in the 1980s 75% of inmates in the entire state of New York were from seven neighborhoods in New York City. These neighborhoods were predominately Black and Latino, were serviced by the worst schools in the city, and were the poorest areas in the city. The populations in these neighborhoods did not resemble prison populations, they were prison populations (Clear, 2007).

Wacquant suggests that by incarcerating a large percentage of the poor population the privileged guarantee that the poor are too weak in numbers to revolt. Incarceration is also used to remove cultural capital (Alexander, 2010). This can be seen in the laws created to exclude the formerly incarcerated from social programs (e.g. welfare), education, employment, and housing. The ghettos and prisons are used to extract labor and ensure racial divisions in society (Davis, 2000). Prison labor is compensated at below minimum wage which increases profit margins for corporations, especially privately owned prisons. Davis (2000) asserts that in addition to creating a low wage labor force to be exploited by corporations, prisons are used to hide societal

problems from the public. Wacquant (2001) concludes that prison and the ghetto should not be viewed individually but rather as a continuum that was created and maintained for the sole purpose of controlling and oppressing minority groups.

Based on the importation model and Wacquant's prison-ghetto symbiosis, it is possible that gangs also operate on a continuum between captive and free societies. The relationship between street gangs and prison gangs may not form a dichotomy and may in fact be more fluid. The present study will attempt to assess Wacquant's ghetto-prison symbiosis argument by seeing whether prison and street gangs are separate entities or whether the two operate on a continuum.

Environment and Gangs

If one accepts the argument that prison is its own society then there is a need to study that society and its human collectives as entities separate from free society, because each society consists of its own cultures, norms and values, and groupings. The stark contrasts between free society and captive society forces one to question whether an entity created within an institutional society (i.e. prison gang), where everyday life is vastly different from the outside society and where there exists a different set of cultural norms and values, could be identical or synonymous with an entity created in the free society. This begs the question: *Does environment affect how individuals experience gang membership in prison compared to their street experiences? If so, how?* Investigation into this question may afford researchers with a better understanding of the differences and similarities between prison and street gangs. The present study will utilize this theoretical question as the basis for inquiry.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Methodologically this study consisted of a qualitative inquiry involving in-depth semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to address the central research question: *Does environment affect how individuals experience gang membership in prison compared to their street experiences? If so, how?* The secondary research questions are:

1. *How are "free" societies different from captive societies where gangs emerge?*
2. *Do gang members identify these differences between their street and prison experiences?*
3. *Do traditional subcultural explanations of street gangs apply to prison gangs?*

Sampling

This study utilized a purposeful sampling strategy. Specifically, this study used criterion sampling and snowball sampling methods. In this sampling method subjects are chosen because they possess some characteristic(s) that is of interest to the study (Patton, 2002). The characteristics of interest to this study were individuals who were 18 years of age and experienced gang membership both in the free world and in an adult correctional facility. While purposeful sampling suffers from the shortcoming of generating a non-representative sample, this sampling method is ideal for hard to reach populations (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997) such as formerly incarcerated gang members. This study allowed participants to self-identify as gang members. "The self-nomination technique is a particularly robust measure of gang membership capable of distinguishing gang [members] from nongang youth." (Esbensen et al, 2001, p. 95). Furthermore, self-identification is used both by researchers and prison officials when studying prison gangs (Gaes et al, 2001). This sampling strategy did not produce a representative sample of gang members but rather a purposeful sample where the focus was placed on collecting and

analyzing gang member narratives, opinions, and experiences. Because this study allowed individuals to self-identify as gang members, the researcher was able to gauge individual perceptions of the term gang by asking respondents to define the term.

An essential aspect of the data collection was the use of gatekeepers (Seidman, 2013) who facilitated the ease of access to the sample. Gatekeepers in this study consisted of current or former gang members who introduced the researcher to the sample. These individuals were able to vouch for the researcher's credibility which proved essential to gathering quality data. The researcher had access to twelve (12) individuals who fit the criterion for this study via personal networks and affiliations with organizations that include this population. The initial group of respondents served as intermediates, recruiters, and references for the remaining sample. Upon completion of each initial interview the researcher asked the participant if he knew of other individuals who met the criterion and would be willing to participate. The researcher provided each participant with business cards containing contact information for the researcher. The researcher successfully recruited an additional eighteen (18) participants from referrals. Although the researcher had access to additional potential participants, the final sample size was determined by saturation. Once the data became redundant and repetitive the researcher ceased data collection (Rowan & Houstong, 1997).

The researcher used a screening method to ensure individuals were eligible for this study. Upon meeting with the individual, the researcher asked a series of four questions to determine eligibility. The questions were:

1. Are you at least 18 years of age?
2. Have you ever been a member of a street gang?
3. Have you ever been incarcerated?
4. During your incarceration, were you affiliated with a known prison gang?

Individuals who responded 'no' to any of the above questions were excluded from the study. A total of three individuals did not meet the requirements for the study. Information they provided were not recorded and were excluded from the final analysis.

Using the initial group of individuals to recruit the remaining sample is known as snowball sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). With snowball sampling, the researcher has little control of the demographic makeup of the sample. The final sample for this study consisted of thirty (30) individuals who experienced gang life both in the free world and within a correctional facility. All individuals were over the age of 18 and self-identified as gang members. Members were derived from four different street organizations including the United Blood Nation, Crips, Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, and Asociación Ñeta (see chart 1). The individuals were all male and ranged in age from 19 to 57. Individuals experienced incarceration in various jurisdictions including New York, New Jersey, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico. The individuals were all men of color with twenty identifying as Black and ten as Hispanic.

Data Collection

Addressing the research questions of this study required the collection of qualitative data. Qualitative analysis is preferable because it allowed for the interpretive analysis of gang member narratives. Data collection entailed in-depth semi structured interviews. Interviews are an essential aspect of ethnography (Ely, 1991). The use of a semi-structured interview allows for breadth while allowing the researcher to adapt questions to the responses provided by the interviewees (Fontana & Frey, 1998). The data collection period lasted eight months.

Prior to conducting the interview the researcher read the informed consent form aloud to the respondent ensuring that he was aware of his right to refuse consent (See Appendix B). Each respondent was provided with a copy of the informed consent. As part of the informed consent process the researcher asked whether the respondent consented to the digital recording of the interview. A total of nineteen (19) individuals consented to the recording of their interviews. For these interviews, the researcher utilized a digital tape recorder. In cases where the respondent refused consent, rigorous scratch notes were taken throughout the interview. Immediately following the non-recorded interviews, the researcher reviewed the notes and inserted additional information she was unable to record during the interview. The scratch notes were then transformed into interview memos.

The only potential harm from this study was a breach of confidentiality occurring if the interview were linked back to the participant. Because of this potential harm, the researcher received a waiver of written informed consent. Removing the need for the participant's signature on the informed consent form removed the risk of breach of confidentiality. In lieu of written informed consent, the researcher obtained oral consent from respondents. Once the individual provided oral consent, the researcher turned on the tape recorder and asked the individual to consent again. The recorded oral consent replaced the need for written consent. In instances where the researcher was unable to record the interviews, the researcher relied on the initial oral consent.

During the interviews, the researcher took field notes that included description of data, descriptions of the space in which the interview occurs, researcher reactions to data, and interactions between the researcher and the interviewee. No identifying data was collected in the field notes. Upon completion of the interview the researcher wrote reflective field notes (Sanjek,

1990) that supplement the interview notes. Each interview was assigned an interview number that was used to link the field notes to the interview. All field notes were transcribed and entered into AtlasTi.

The initial interview instrument contained questions covering a wide range of topics focused on themes that have been explored by street gang researchers. Focusing on existing themes in the literature and inquiring about each interviewee's experiences in different types of gangs allowed for a comparative analysis that addresses the main research question; *Does environment affect how individuals experience gang membership in prison compared to their street experiences? If so, how?* Interview questions ranged from a discussion of the interviewee's experiences to general questions about prison and street gang structure, membership, roles, and norms (see Appendix A). The researcher also posed general questions regarding captive and free societies including questions regarding the cultures of each society, which address the secondary question; *how are the "free" societies different from the captive societies where gangs emerge?* Questions regarding rationales behind joining gangs and the purpose of gangs address the secondary question; *do traditional subcultural explanations of street gangs apply to prison gangs?* Specifically, the researcher assessed the interviews for data that may support existing subcultural explanations of gang formation and membership (see literature review above). Several interview questions allowed the interviewee to express his opinions regarding similarities and differences across the gang types and environments. These comparison questions address the secondary research question; *do gang members identify these differences between their street and prison experiences?* After completing several interviews, the researcher adapted the interview instrument to include issues and questions raised in the initial interviews. Interviews concluded by asking the interviewee to reflect on their overall experiences.

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Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is not a process science but rather an "art of interpretation" (Denzin, 2000). This section presents the data analysis portion of the study using Nagy's (2010) broad four phase process: data preparation, data exploration, data reduction, and data interpretation.

Data Preparation

Phase one, data preparation, began with the manual transcription of all interviews and field notes. Manual transcription, while tedious and time consuming, allowed the researcher to familiarize herself with the data (Rossman and Rollis, 2012; Nagy, 2010). Each interview was transcribed immediately after the interview was conducted. Transcribing each interview individually, rather than waiting until all data were collected, allowed the researcher to adapt her questions and approaches for subsequent interviews (Nagy, 2010). For this study, the researcher utilized verbatim transcription which entails transcribing all components of speech including "all pauses, broken sentences, interruptions, and other aspects of the messiness of casual conversation" (Poland, 1995, p. 293).

Data Exploration

Phase two of the data analysis, data exploration, entailed the use of the listening guide strategy. The 'listening guide strategy' (Maxwell & Miller, 2007) is an ideal analytical method because it allows the researcher to move back and forth between locating categorizing and connecting strategies. The listening guide strategy involves re-reading the interview transcripts several times to discern different information each time. The primary reading is used to establish interview plot summaries that provide the researcher with a concise, short summary of the

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transcript. In the listening guide strategy, subsequent readings depend on the research questions. For this study, the researcher conducted three more readings aimed at addressing each of the secondary research questions. In total, the researcher will conduct six readings of the transcripts.

Following the manual transcription of each interview, the researcher reviewed the transcript and utilized the first reading to developed cover page memos (see Appendix C). These cover page memos contained a plot summary of the interview and the reflexive notes written after the interview. The cover page served to simplify the analysis and allow the researcher to quickly review the interviews during subsequent data analysis phases. Memoing is essential to qualitative data analysis because it allows for reflexivity (Erikkson, Hentonnen, and Merilainen, 2012).

Data Reduction

The third phase of data analysis, data reduction, involved the use of coding and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the most common form of qualitative data analysis (Guest, 2012) and begins with the creation of codes. Coding is a method of reducing data so that it is manageable. This method involves the development of words or phrases "that symbolically assigns a summative… attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana 2012, p. 2). The researcher utilized two types of codes: descriptive and In-Vivo. Descriptive codes involve summarizing the primary topic of a line or passage in the transcript (Saldana, 2012). In-Vivo coding involves creating codes "taken directly from what the participant himself says" (Saldana, 2012, p. 3). The coding phase of the data analysis was conducted manually and began after the collection of the ninth interview. Upon completing the coding for each interview, the researcher began to search for themes across the interviews using thematic analysis.

There are fourteen different thematic methods of data analysis described by Bernard and Ryan (2009). The researcher used three of the fourteen methods including similarities and differences, indigenous typologies and categories, and metaphors and analogies (Bernard and Ryan, 2009). These methods involve comparing different data. In this study, the researcher compared similarities and differences across interviews and between gang types (i.e. prison and street gangs). Indigenous typologies and categories refer to phrases or words that are unique to the study. The researcher searched for words that were unique to the gang member narratives. Lastly, the researcher searched for metaphors and analogies in the transcripts. Metaphors and analogies are important qualitative data points because they illustrate how the individual makes sense of his world. Memoing occured throughout this data analysis phase. For each located theme, the researcher created a memo explaining how this theme emerged and which interviews contained these themes (See Appendix D). These memos serve as a detailed record of themes that allow for later reflection (Erikkson, Henttonen, Mereilainen, 2012). Furthermore, memoing illustrates how the researcher derived abstractions from the raw data which improves the data analysis process by discerning the extent to which the researcher's perceptions affect the analysis (Birks, Chapman, and Francis, 2008).

Data Interpretation

The final phase of the data analysis process, interpretation, involved translating the themes into answers for each of the research questions. The analysis presented in chapters 4 and 5 provides a comparative model of prison and street gangs. The model illustrates similarities and differences across major aspects of each organization. These aspects include environmental structure, adaptation to environment, organizational structure, cultural aspects, and relationships with authority. This model provides a framework for understanding similarities and differences

between a street organization and a prison gang. "Looking across groups in this way can help identify trends and tendencies, advancing our knowledge base and sharpening our theoretical perspective" (Diego Vigil, 2002,p. 18).

Atlas Ti

Although the data analysis occurred manually, the researcher utilized the Atlas Ti qualitative data analysis software to manage the data. Atlas Ti allowed the researcher to link files related to each interview and to quickly search for similar codes and themes across interviews.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential ethical concern in any research. Several steps were taken to ensure that the interviews could not be linked to the participants. Participants provided oral consent in lieu of written consent which removes the possibility of linking the consent form to the interview. The beginning of the interview guide asked the participants not to use names of individuals when discussing past experiences (See Appendix B). Interview recordings were stored in a password protected thumbdrive until transcription. Upon transcription, the audio files were erased. Each digital transcription was entered in to Microsoft Word and then password protected with a unique password. The hard copies of the transcriptions were stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. All phases of the data analysis occurred within the researcher's home to remove the possibility of a confidentiality breach. To further ensure confidentiality, all identifying information including location names, individual names, and names of institutions were removed during the interview transcription process. Each respondent was assigned a pseudonym chosen at random from a list of popular names.

"All research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated" (Marshall and Rossman, 1995, p. 143). The quality standards for qualitative research differ from that of quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1995) identify qualitative measures of "truth value" including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The credibility criteria for qualitative research requires that the results are believable from the participant's perspective. Patton (1990) identified three elements used to establish credibility:

> 1) rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that is carefully analyzed, with attention to issues of validity and reliability…;
>
> 2) the credibility of the researcher, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self; and
>
> 3) philosophical belief in the phenomenological paradigm, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, and holistic thinking. (p. 461)

Credibility in this study was achieved through meeting the above standards. The researcher utilized established methods of qualitative data analysis presented by leading qualitative researchers in the field. The credibility of the researcher was achieved through the completion of several qualitative methods courses from across different disciplines including criminology, sociology, and anthropology. Further, the researcher has worked on two additional long-term qualitative research projects under the supervision of professional qualitative researchers. Lastly, the researcher remained conscious of how she presented herself throughout the research process. Presentation of oneself is a major concern of semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1998).

In this study, the researcher attempted to strike a balance between presenting herself as a 'down to earth' individual worthy of trust, and maintaining objectivity. Given the researcher's dual status in society as a criminologist and as an inner city, minority female with 'street' experience this delicate balance was achievable. Further, the researcher's use of gatekeepers created a trust and respect between the researcher and her participants.

Transferability

Transferability refers to whether the findings of a study can be transferred to other contexts or settings (Merriam, 2002). Merriam (2002) states that "providing rich, thick description is a major strategy to ensure external validity or generalizability in the qualitative sense" (p. 29). Based on the description provided, other researchers may determine if they can utilize the findings for their own future projects. This study aimed for transferability by providing a detailed account of the sample and, where possible, provided the reader with rich quotes from the respondents.

Dependability

Dependability is the "degree to which the findings of a study are consistent and the study can be repeated" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Maintaining a data collection and analysis audit ensures dependability of the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). This study achieves dependability by maintaining an inquiry audit and providing a thorough explanation of the research processes utilized. By providing an in-depth account of the study, the research allows for future replication.

Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe confirmability as "a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias,

motivation, or interest". Due to the researcher's former position as a working-class street 'gang' member and her current position as a middle-class, doctoral student, the researcher remained conscious of her subjectivity throughout the data collection and data analysis phases. To ensure subjectivity and ensure confirmability of the findings, the researcher utilized several 'checks' that centered on memoing. Memos were used to provide an audit of the analysis process and to allow for reflexivity, a key component of confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Memos were also shared with the dissertation advisor and other criminal justice professionals in an attempt to ensure that the researcher's current and former positions have not distorted her perceptions of the data. Where possible, the researcher connected her findings to existing literature to ensure that her own biases were not present in the analysis. Lastly, the researcher utilized 'member-checking' by allowing two of the participants, each from a different organization, to read and comment on the first draft of this dissertation. Each individual provided written and oral comments on the final analysis. Member checking serves as a measure of vigor and qualitative validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Limitations

Although this study did not aim for generalizability, there are limitations to the data. A primary limitation is generalizability outside of the New England area of the United States. The interviewees primarily experienced incarceration in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. It is probable that the findings do not extend beyond this area of the country. This is evident in the accounts of incarceration in Puerto Rico (see Chapter 5). Also, many of the findings are limited to state-level correctional facilities. A discussion of differences across locations and jurisdictions can be found in Chapters 5 and 6. A second limitation to the findings centers on organization. Due to the snowball sampling method, most of the respondents (27 out of 30) were derived from

two gangs which may limit the transferability of findings. However, one should note that the two

gangs are inherently different from one another in terms of ethnic makeup, location of origin,

and primary location of incarceration (see table 2).

Table 2: Sample Summary				
Respondent (Pseudonyms)	**Affiliation**	**Age**	**Length of Incarceration**	**Jurisdictions of Incarceration**
Clarence	United Blood Nation	31	9 years	New Jersey
Tyrone	United Blood Nation	28	8 years	New Jersey and New York
Luis	United Blood Nation	24	4 months	New Jersey
George	United Blood Nation	---[3]	----------[3]	New Jersey
Chris	United Blood Nation	26	8 years	New Jersey and Federal
Reggie	United Blood Nation	32	13 years	New Jersey and New York
Richard	United Blood Nation	22	--------[3]	New Jersey
Maurice	United Blood Nation	24	3 ½ years	New Jersey
Tom	United Blood Nation	23	4 ½ years	New York and Federal
David	Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation	33	6 years	New York and Pennsylvania
Antonio	*Asociación Ñeta*	31	5 years	New York and Puerto Rico
Ray	*Asociación Ñeta*	28	3 years	Puerto Rico and Pennsylvania
Morgan	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	36	7 years	New York
Anthony	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	27	2 ½ years	New York
Raul	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	57	15 years	New York
Frank	*United Blood Nation*	40	2 years	New York
Tony	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	26	3 years	New York
Mike	*United Blood Nation*	34	6 years	New York
Edward	*United Blood Nation*	34	15 years	New York
Ricky	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	23	1 year	New York
Johnny	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	33	12 years	New York, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico
Hector	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	30	4 years	New York
Darryl	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	21	3 years	New York
Scott	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	25	5 ½ years	New York
Dominic	*United Blood Nation*	19	1 year	New York
Dante	*Crips*	34	9 years	New York
Jason	*United Blood Nation*	29	4 ½ years	New York
Brandon	*United Blood Nation*	39	9 ½ years	New York
Kendrick	*United Blood Nation*	21	1 year	New York
Felix	*Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*	25	2 years	New York

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[3] Respondent did not disclose this information.

CHAPTER 4: GANG DEFINITION

As discussed in the literature review, there is no agreed upon definition of the term "gang". Although each individual researcher is allowed to develop her own definition, most rely on the orthodox criminological definition which roots gangs in social disorganization and violence. The present study approached the definitional issue through a grounded theory approach by asking gang members to define the term in their own words. The data revealed respondents held a negative view of the term 'gang' and believed that society did not truly understand the positive aspects of their organizations. When asked to define their organizations, respondents described their groups are empowering, resistance organizations that provide a sense of inclusion and belonging, and are often subjected to structural level violence at the hands of the criminal justice system.

"Gang Ain't in my Dictionary"

A common theme across the interviews was an aversion to the term "gang". Respondents largely agreed that they did not use the term within their organizations. Several individuals asked the researcher to refrain from using the word throughout the interview which indicated a strong hostility to the term. In lieu of the term 'gang', the researcher used the term organization. Interestingly, however, the individuals who asked the researcher to refrain from using the term subsequently used 'gang' to refer to their organizations throughout the interview.

Respondents stated that the term 'gang' had a negative connotation derived from 'outsiders' unwillingness to acknowledge gang members as human beings but rather as violent individuals. The following quote from Tyrone spoke to the 'othering' nature of the term 'gang.

> [Society] calls us a gang because the word gang intensifies hatred. It gives you the sense of 'these criminals'. Its gives you that sense of negativity.

Respondents viewed the term 'gang' as a label used to justify differential treatment of gang members.

Misconceptions of the Term

Other respondents indicated that the term gang was used by society because there is a reluctance to accept that gangs have a positive effect on some youth and their communities. George discussed outsiders' inability to see the positive aspects of gang membership.

> Outsiders look at it as a gang. We don't look at it like criminals and violent people. Outsiders look at it like criminals and violent people because that's the only part of gangs they see: the violence. They never see the good part of it.

Although respondents disliked negative perceptions of their organizations, they did freely admit to utilizing violence and committing crime. Some respondents viewed 'putting in work[4]' or 'going on missions' as an essential part of their membership in the organization. Others, however, viewed themselves as inherently criminal and expressed that the gang did not have control over their behavior. Respondents did not attempt to portray themselves as innocent victims of poor publicity both rather expressed a desire for society to acknowledge the positive aspects that do exist within their organizations. Existing gang literature supports the notion that gangs have positive aspects. Studies have revealed that gangs do serve constructive functions for their members including empowering its members (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004) by providing a collective identity (Fong and Buentello, 1991), a sense of belonging (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003), and resistance identities (Hagedorn, 2007). Gangs also provide economic support (Knox, 1995) and safety from physical

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[4] Slang term that refers to committing criminal activity such as robbery or assault.

violence. Gangs further serve as informal social control in neighborhoods where citizens have lost faith and trust in the criminal justice system (Venkatesh, 2008).

Another common theme across interviews was the notion that the term 'gang' could be used to refer to a variety of organizations including religions, colleges, and even law enforcement. Jose indicated that the term gang was broad and therefore did not solely refer to the stereotypical image of a violent, criminal group.

> Gang [is] a group of people with a cause. It isn't so much the word 'gang' that's the problem or not the problem. I think the word 'gang' is used totally wrong. Like you can criticize anybody as a gang. Christians, Muslims, Bloods, Crips, Latin Kings... the police. A gang is a group that is united somehow. A group that moves for the group. A group that take cares of one another whether it be something good or something bad.

Jose's quote reveals a very different view of 'gangs' than the one held by mainstream society and gang researchers. Gangs are perceived as a group with a cause that actively seeks to better its members. The comparison of gangs to other groups such as religions and law enforcement is interesting because these legitimate organizations are viewed as subcultures (Britz, 1997; Greeley, 1977) and share many characteristics with gangs.

Religions and law enforcement organizations utilize symbolic representation, require individuals to earn entrance via membership processes, adhere to strict rules of conduct, regulate behavior of members, require a devotion to a set of beliefs, and hold antagonistic views of individuals who express disapproval of their beliefs or organizations. Some gangs, such as the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, in fact, refer to themselves as a religion. The ALKQN Manifesto states, "The Almighty Latin Kings Nation is a religion, which gives us faith in ourselves, a National self-respect, power to educate the poor and relieve the misery around us". Like gangs, religions and law enforcement have utilized violence against individuals outside of their groups and are involved in crime, such as the Catholic Church sexual abuse scandal (Terry,

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2008) and the Abner Louima case in New York City (Chan, 2007). The parallels between the

organizations suggest that the term 'gang' may be used improperly as Jose suggests or that the

term is overly broad.

<center>*Empowerment and Resistance*</center>

When respondents were asked to define and describe their gang or organization, most

provided similar responses. In nearly every interview the respondents used the terms

'organization' or 'family-oriented' to describe their groups. Respondents also spoke of the strong

historical and cultural ties associated with their organizations. It was evident that the

organizations were rooted in political and community level movements aimed at empowering

members. Respondents spoke of aiming to protect their communities from crime and structural

level violence at the hands of law enforcement. This finding is true across both prison and street

gangs.

> We was created to protect the community from anybody who tried to come in [such] as police, people robbing our neighborhoods, stuff like that (Clarence)

> Netas started in prison to deal with the COs… they [COs] abused their power. [The Association] kept inmates safe… stopped inmates from attacking other inmates… It was about keeping the peace. (Antonio)

Reggie spoke directly to the political origins of his organization.

> We push to follow in the footsteps of the Black Panthers. Black Panthers were for the community. No matter what happened in the community, if it was right, the Panthers have a part of it. If it was wrong, they had a part of it. That's how we're supposed to move.

The political origins of gangs have been documented by gang researchers (see Brotherton &

Barrios, 2003 for example) and are also documented in the written manifestos and histories of

street gangs (see Davis, 2006 for example). For example, the Nuestra Familia's[5] constitution, the organization's governing document, states that the "primary purpose and goal of this O [organization] is for the betterment of its members and the building of this O on the outside into a strong and self-supporting *familia*" (Quoted in Skarbek, 2014, p. 54).

Many respondents spoke to the positive influences of their organizations including leaders who emphasized the need for members to acquire an education to better themselves and the organization. A high ranking member of the United Blood Nation spoke of punishing members who were caught skipping school. George attributed his current success to the influence of older members.

> My Big Homie made me graduate. He made me go to school. He made me do all that. That's why I got the job I got right now. If it wasn't for him, I'd be on my block right now hustling.

Antonio spoke of older members assisting younger members with school work before meetings.

> We can't let the young ones [mess] up. So, whoever got an education needs to help the ones trying to get one. Before meetings on Sundays we get together and see if we can help them with their [school]work.

Although individuals spoke to the importance of education and desire to educate younger members, some respondents openly acknowledged their unwillingness to attend school.

Other positive influences identified by respondents included members who actively assisted others in seeking employment. Luis described his role within the organization as follows:

> My role is like a big brother. [Members] will ask me if they should do [something], whether good or bad, and I will let them know with feedback if it's good or bad and my

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[5] A California prison gang.

other job is to create opportunity for them. So if I find something that can benefit them, far as a job or school or anything, I would tell them, call them… that's my job.

Respondents were often drawn to the organizations after witnessing the positive changes the organizations brought about in their communities. David described his reason for joining his organization as follows:

I saw what the Almighty Latin King Nation was doing in my neighborhood… like not allowing drug selling on the block…They wouldn't let the police mess with anybody in the neighborhood if it was unjust, we would all come out and if there was an unjust case like even if it [meant] confronting the cops…keeping our community safe... and I wanted to be a part of that.

Another common theme across the interviews was the notion of safety. Respondents spoke to the protective nature of gangs. Within communities there was a sense that not belonging to a gang would result in physical harm. Luis spoke of the need for gang protection within his neighborhood. He stated "If you're not in a gang, it's like you're in the middle of the ocean. Basically, anything can happen to you". The protective function of gangs is supported by ethnographic gang studies in several major cities (Skarbek, 2014).

Inclusion and Belonging

In addition to protection, gangs provide a sense of inclusion and belonging. All thirty of the respondents utilized terms such as "family", "family-oriented", "love", "united", "community", and "belonging" when defining the term gang. The familial function of gangs is documented across gang studies (Carlie, 2002; Sanchez-Jankowski, 2003; Goldman, Giles, and Hogg, 2014). Respondents discussed situations in which the organization provided them support similar to what is expected in 'traditional' family units. For example, Clarence described returning home after serving nine years in a correctional facility. The majority of his biological family was either incarcerated or addicted to narcotics. When he was released from prison, he

could not afford to purchase clothing. His organization welcomed him home and purchased an "entire new wardrobe". Ex-convicts often spend a great amount of time during the reentry process "trying to secure material and non-material (i.e. emotional, spiritual, psychological, and social) well-being (Scott, 2004, p. 115). For individuals like Clarence the gang provides a 'cushion' that eases the pains experienced during the reentry (Scott, 2004). Gangs can address both the material and non-material needs of gang members including providing a sense of family, belonging, and financial support (Vigil, 1988; Morales, 1992).

Gangs also provide a sense of empowerment. Luis states that he joined his organization because he "wanted to be somebody. [He] wanted to be a leader". Research suggests that becoming a gang member "is to have a name and clout in a setting where many people perceive themselves to be excluded and disenfranchised" (Baker, 2005, p.2). There is also literature that supports the idea that gangs provide an opportunity for social capital and empowerment (Bassani, 2007; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004).

Manifestos

Each of the four organizations represented in this study have written manifestos often referred to as constitutions, teachings, lessons, or literature. Manifestos or constitutions serve as the governing documents for each organization (Skarbek, 2014). These governing documents contain information on the organization such as historical information of the organizational roots, founding members, membership processes, codes or rules of conduct regulating individual and group level behavior, disciplinary measures, organizational structure and positions, and ideologies or beliefs of the organization including purposes, goals, and prayers. David described the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation Manifesto as follows:

When I say lessons, you know, you're king and then you're given rules, lessons that explain to you what the Nation is about, how the Nation was founded when the Manifesto was written, what are the prayers, what to do to be elected for council, what is the definition of an Inca[6], what is the definition of a "Cazeke", what is the definition of a secretary, what are their job descriptions, what is the definition of a people like me, a Foot Solider, and what are our doings, what are we supposed to do? Like that's what I mean by lessons, you're supposed to like live by a code.

Other respondents described ideologies described in their teachings. For example, Reggie spoke of his responsibility to procreate, a written "law" of the United Blood Nation. Antonio spoke of the rules dictating comportment in prison including the discouragement of sexual abuse of another inmate. David spoke of qualities that would bar a person from membership in his organization. All of these rules described by respondents are derived from their organization's manifestos. Manifestos are used to transmit information to new members and can be viewed as a form of socialization that transmits the gang identity. Socialization into gangs has been documented by gang researchers (Vigil, 1988; Miller and Brunson, 2000).

Losing Sight of Their Lessons

Another common theme across nearly all thirty interviews was the notion that the gang had lost sight of its original purpose. Respondents spoke of the lessons they learned when joining the gang and how the actions of current members were at odds with these teachings. This finding is true across all of the organizations included in this study. David spoke of a disconnection between the teachings and practices of the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation.

When I joined everything was good. I didn't see any abuse. But the longer I was a part of it I started to see changes. We're given lessons when we're [initiated] and we're supposed to live by these lessons and…the more time passed, things changed. We were robbing in our neighborhood and not keeping the neighborhood safe anymore. Now, we were the ones bringing problems into the neighborhood.

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[6] Inca, Cazeke, and foot solider are positions within the ALKQN hierarchy

Clarence discussed how the United Blood Nation also changed from an organization that protected its community to one that destroyed its community.

> My neighborhood was family oriented… So, if you went down here causing trouble, they'll beat your butt just like your family… We was just one big group, like, my whole neighborhood was like a family. You know you have people out there selling drugs… like any other neighborhood. But when the gang came in, it formed like a tighter family, like ain't nobody coming in here, this is ours. I don't care if its police, anybody… ain't nobody coming in here. So, the community was aiight. We went to school… It wasn't until we got older where it was like, we start destructing our own community, like we turned the community into… what it is. So, [the gang] went from good to bad.

Gangs are "both product[s] and producer[s] of exploitation" (Scott, 2004, p. 125). When asked why he believed the organization lost sight of its primary goals, Clarence attributed the change to a loss of leadership caused by incarceration. He stated, "So, once [my leader] got taken away from the community we just started running wild". The incarceration of gang leaders, especially those who were positive influences in the community, resulted in fragmented organizations that lacked leadership. The structural dismantling of street gangs is achieved by using the federal-level Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute (FBI, 2013). Within correctional facilities, administrators have attempted to dismantle or weaken gang structures by utilizing indefinite solitary confinement (Center for Constitutional Rights, 2012) and transfers to out of state facilities (Fleisher and Decker, 2001).

Society's Treatment of Gangs

Perhaps most evident across the interviews was the notion that gangs were misunderstood by society. Respondents spoke to the stereotypes in society that are used to categorize all "gangbangers" based on the actions of a few. This finding supports Wacquant's (1997) argument that within American society "the most destitute, threatening and disreputable residents…are typically made to stand for the whole of the ghetto" (p. 348). Society views gang members as

inherently violent because that is the image promoted by the media. Mike spoke to the media's unwillingness to acknowledge the positive actions of the gang and the effect media coverage has on perceptions of gang members.

> Even when we did good [things] like cleaning up gardens all [the media] ever talked about was shootings and drugs. It's like no matter what we did that's what they would talk about. Of course everybody else is gonna look at us like thugs, that's all they see on TV.

Law enforcement then uses these stereotypes to justify the mistreatment of the entire gang. Hector described being harassed by police officers for simply being outside.

> I think most police have a one track mind. If you're in a certain neighborhood, you're classified, period. Like they'll harass you. They know you're not selling drugs. It's just the fact that you be out here with [other members].

Other respondents discussed being stopped by police, searched, and given meritless tickets when the police could not locate a justifiable reason to punish the individual. Police harassment of gang members is so prevalent in modern society that cities have developed 'gang ordinances' or laws that not only allow but encourage police harassment of gang members (Packebusch, 2006).

Harassment and differential treatment of gang members extends to other areas of the criminal justice system including incarceration and post-incarceration. Respondents discussed being targeted for violence at the hands of correctional officers based on their gang affiliation (see chapter 5). Some incarcerated individuals witnessed and fell victim to correctional officer sanctioned violence at the hands of rival gang members. The use of gang members as a form of informal social control within correctional facilities is well documented (Skarbek, 2014). A 2011 report by the American Civil Liberties Union documented dozens of cases where correctional officers in the Los Angeles County Jail threatened or utilized gangs to physically punish both

gang affiliated and neutral[7] inmates (American Civil Liberties Union, 2011). The negative treatment of gang affiliated individuals extends beyond prison walls to the post-incarceration period.

Parole conditions generally include a 'no-affiliation' clause that prohibits parolees from associating with known gang members and felons. Because most parolees are released to the same area from which they were arrested, the 'no-affiliation' clause proved problematic for many respondents. Individuals described a sense of fear and frustration whenever they ventured outside of their homes. One respondent described his precarious situation as follows: "I be outside and the police harass me. I get picked up for [something minor] like loitering. Now I get violated…. No matter what I do, I'm wrong". Another individual described receiving a parole violation because he possessed clothing that matched the color of his organization. "I got violated for owning red clothes. My PO straight came in my house and took my clothes and gave me 30 days". The fear of parole revocation shapes the respondents' daily behaviors. Goffman's (2009) study of young men in Philadelphia illustrates how urban men of color live in constant fear of arrests and shape their daily activities and interactions around the desire to avoid being incarcerated. The "threat of imprisonment transforms social relations by undermining already tenuous attachments to family, work, and community" (Goffman, 2009, p.339).

The creation of stereotypes for gang members and the mistreatment at the hands of law enforcement aligns with the theoretical concept of 'othering' proposed by Young (1999; 2007). Young posited that we live in an exclusive society where there is a constant need to dehumanize or demonize a given group in order to reaffirm our sense of self-worth and place in society

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[7] Neutral refers to individuals who are not members of a gang.

(Young, 1999). Society actively others individuals to create a binary 'us v. them' where 'we' are superior to 'them'. Othering is a process that begins with the creation of an ideal set of qualities (cultural or biological) which a given group is said to possess (Young, 2007). Once the ideal set of qualities is established, society locates and denigrates a group that does not possess these qualities. The group is dehumanized and viewed as inherently different from 'us'. Stereotypes and prejudices regarding the group are established and society begins to attribute many of the existing social problems to the behaviors of the group (Young, 2007). By dehumanizing the group, society justifies excluding them from mainstream society and utilizing violence against this group. A common form of violence against the group is structural violence whereby society subjects a group to economic marginalization and punitive criminal justice practices including police harassment (Young, 2007). The grounded theory analysis of the respondent's narratives suggest that gangs are "othered" by mainstream society.

Grounded Theory Definition of 'Gang'

Based on the themes that emerged from this grounded theory analysis, I have developed a new definition of the term 'gang' that is rooted in the narratives of the respondents. I define the term gang as:

> An organization originally formed as a subculture of resistance with a focus on community activism and individual empowerment but that has since lost sight of its primary purpose due to police harassment that has resulted in the destruction of its leadership hierarchy. The organization maintains a written manifesto that contains the written codes of their culture. A gang provides safety, financial and material support, and a sense of belonging to its members, and is "othered" by mainstream society largely due to the misconception that the organization lacks any positive qualities.

This definition differs from the existing orthodox criminological definition because it does not include violence as a prerequisite, includes the political underpinnings of the organizations'

origins, and acknowledges that gangs are 'othered' by mainstream society. The definition also incorporates the cultural and historical aspects of the organization while acknowledging the role of structural level violence in the formation of the organization.

CHAPTER 5: CHAOS v. CONTROL: THE EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENT ON GANGS

This study primarily focuses on how the environments in which street gangs and prison gangs emerge vary, and the extent to which any variance affects the respective organizations. Data suggest that there are differences across captive and free societies including levels of autonomy, control of individuals within the society, the role of law enforcement, and the level of racism. Overall, the findings reveal that captive societies are more controlled and organized. The level of control exerted on inmates affects the organizations known as gangs. As a result of these differences, in particular the difference in regulation of individuals within the society, the organizations that form within these environments differ. Although there are similarities across prison and street gangs including initiation processes, the need for safety, and providing support to their members, the respondents identified many differences across the two organizations including membership, leadership structure, ideology, and organizational operations. Lastly, the data suggest that prison gang emergence is best explained using a critical subcultural perspective that incorporates the role of institutional and informal governance structures.

Captive v. Free Society

The data support Sykes' (1958) argument that captive and free societies are inherently different. A primary difference across captive and free societies is the loss of autonomy. Jason described this loss of autonomy.

> Your freedom is gone. You gotta listen to this one person that don't know you tell you what to do, when to eat, when to sleep, when to shower.

Because prison is a total institution (Goffman, 1961; Foucault, 1975) the inmate's daily life is strictly controlled, thereby eliminating their ability to control basic daily behaviors such as eating and sleeping. Respondents indicated that entering prison resulted in an immediate sense of fear

that was unfamiliar to them. This fear was brought about by the realization that one was unable to leave the institution. When asked to describe the feeling of entering prison, Edward equated the feeling to that of a slave.

> I felt like somebody just took me and left me somewhere and I couldn't leave if I wanted to. That was the feeling I felt. I felt trapped [sighs]. I felt like a slave, like they just kidnapped me and I couldn't leave even if I wanted to and even if I could leave, I didn't know how to get back home.

This feeling of being trapped runs counter to what is experienced on the street. Respondents described the ability to roam freely and the ability to make choices for themselves in free society.

> In jail you can't be as free as you want to because you're confined to one space. But outside of jail you could do whatever you want to do. Like you go anywhere, you could do whatever you want (Mike).

> Within captive societies there is also a sense of lost identity and dehumanization.

Respondents indicated that once incarcerated, they were no longer viewed as human. Inmates lose all sense of individuality and simply become an object to be warehoused. Johnny states, "[correctional officers] don't treat you like you're human… They even treat you like cattle". This treatment of inmates reflects Goffman's (1961) notion that once an individual is institutionalized, their master status becomes 'inmate'. Dehumanization also occurs within the "free" society. This is reflected in the stereotypes that are used as justification to harass individuals. Luis stated that the police treat individuals in the neighborhood "like scum". Hector described how stereotypes and generalizations are used to justify harassment.

> They catch you walking across the street, 'Hey you come here.' They know you're not selling drugs. It's just the fact that you be out here with your boys… They will slam you against the wall and they'll choke you….They wanna abuse their power.

This dehumanization and subsequent abuse reflects Young's (2007) concept of othering discussed in Chapter 4. While dehumanization does occur in the free society, individuals are able

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to maintain a sense of identity through material possessions such as clothing and jewelry. Obtaining and maintaining status symbols becomes a dominate focus of some individuals in marginalized 'free' society (Anderson, 1999).

Across all respondents there was an agreement that prison was a controlled environment and the streets were chaotic. Tyrone states,

> In the street, they have chaos. Whereas in prison, there's order… There is none of that shit you've been doing on the street… You see, so when you step into prison, all that "I'm the man" shit that you was doing on the street, get your ass killed in [prison].

Respondents acknowledged that the control and order they found in prisons is the result of being exposed to the same mundane routine on a daily basis.

> Because you're closed in damn near every day. So you're around the same faces. It ain't like you could say, 'alright, I'm about to go over here and see what the homies doing over here.' or 'I'm about to go across town and get that thing and come back over here.' In jail it's more organized, it's easier to follow the rules. (Reggie)

This idea of prison consisting of mundane daily routines supports Goffman's (1961) notion that within total institutions all aspects of life occur within the same location with the same individuals, same authority, and the same everyday interactions.

Respondents also indicated that in prison they were constantly under the watchful eye of correctional officers. Raul described his experiences with surveillance.

> Somebody is always seeing everything you do. [Correctional Officers] watch you shower, [urinate], and [defecate]. I mean, do you know what it's like to squat and cough? Have another man stare into your [rectum]? That shit is embarrassing… [I felt] like I wasn't a man… Prison feels like you're an animal in the zoo.

Raul's comments regarding the lack of privacy reflect Cohen and Taylor's (1972) notion of an omni-optical society in which individuals are closely monitored by both staff and fellow inmates. His quote also illustrates Goffman's (1961) "mortification of self" concept. When asked whether

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he felt police were also constantly surveilling individuals, he stated that police did monitor

behaviors, however, their surveillance differed from correctional officers' because police

surveillance is temporary.

> Cops watch people but not 24/7. They put up the pig's nest[8] when something big happens but they're gone quick…. Cops may come around the block a few times a night but they're just passing by, COs are with us all day.

Approach by Authority Figures

Respondents also indicate a difference in how authority figures address incidents of

violence. Within prisons, the correctional officers adopted a 'hands off' approach to violent

incidents. In this approach, correctional officers did not intervene until the violent incident was

over. Maurice attributed this approach to fear.

> The only thing you gotta do is wait until [another inmate] comes out and do whatever you want because the CO's is obviously scared. Like you can sit there and beat somebody up. They're not gonna move until you stop. They're gonna lock the gate and say "y'all done fighting?" That's when the CO's gonna come in and whoop your ass afterwards. But other than that, they scared. Honestly they scared. They look at it like "what can you do?" Yes, you have CO's who do have equipment but you also have inmates who got stuff that will go poke through your equipment and it's all homemade stuff but it's dangerous.

Skarbek (2014) quoted a correctional officer who confirms the 'hands-off' approach: "You tell

me: Are you going to risk your life by stepping in front of a knife when you have one lousy piece

of shit trying to kill another lousy piece of shit?" (p.21).

Respondents identified this hands-off approach in many jurisdictions including New

York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico. Johnny described his experience in a Puerto

Rican prison as vastly different from his "mainland"[9] experience. Upon entering a Puerto Rican

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[8] Respondent is referring to an NYPD Skywatch Tower.
[9] Mainland refers to the contiguous United States.

prison at the age of 17, Johnny quickly became aware that the prison was controlled by the

Asociación Ñeta, not by the correctional officers. He gave the following account of his first day

at the facility:

> The COs walked me into a room where there were two dudes and a chair in the middle
> [of the room]. Then they [the COs] left me there, locked the door and left me there. One
> of the guys in the room told me to sit in the chair with my hands on my lap. So, I sat
> down and they started breaking down the rules for me… Prison there was way different.
> You followed the code or you got dealt with, COs didn't care what happened as long as
> they [Asociación Ñeta] kept the peace. And they did [keep the peace]. There wasn't a lot
> of fights. Trouble makers were called insectos[10] and moved to a different block with the
> other insectos. If you followed the rules, no one fucked with you. Not inmates, not COs,
> no one.

Because the correctional officers had an informal agreement with Asociación Ñeta, Johnny states

"there was no such thing as a Latin King in Puerto Rico". This stands in stark contrast to the

mainland facilities where rival gangs do exist and there is competition to control the facilities.

While Johnny did identify the 'hands off' approach in other jurisdictions, he felt that mainland

facilities were dually governed by gangs and the correctional officers. The "hands off" approach

to violence exhibited by correctional officers has been documented by various news outlets (See

MSNBC, 2011 for example).

While correctional officers do not immediately intervene in violent situations, the police

address violence through a proactive 'hands on' approach. Police tactics include the use of arrest

quotas, physical assault, and constant harassment of residents (Goffman, 2014). Hector, whose

cousin is a police officer, states that the police need to reduce violence because their jobs are

dependent on crime reduction. He further states that officers viewed crime as a nuisance that

resulted in a larger workload.

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[10] Insecto translates literally to 'insect' but it used to refer to a traitor or snitch.

> The cops don't want people robbing, shooting, killing. They gotta worry about their jobs. They don't want their boss [yelling] at them... My cousin always said 'you and your friends ain't nothing but more paperwork for me to fill out'.

The 'hands on' approach utilized by police officers is evident in varying policing strategies including broken windows and zero tolerance policing (Fabricant, 2010-2011).

Although most respondents identified differences between police and correctional officer responses to violence, some respondents also identified differences across correctional jurisdictions. Chris described differences in the approaches of state and federal correctional officers. He stated that federal officers actively attempt to curb gang activity while state correctional officers "just try to stay out of the way. They just let it happen". Chris stated that federal officers attempted to curb gang activity by not allowing inmates to congregate in groups.

> You can't sit in no groups. They know every gang in there [federal penitentiary] so you're not sitting in no groups, you're not having no meetings, none of that. They [correctional officers] don't have it. They'll break you up real quick.

Differences in the approaches of authority figures affect many aspects of captive and free societies including organizations that emerge within the societies. Another respondent who experienced the federal correctional system stated that many of the organizations that exist at the state level, do not exist at the federal level. Tom indicated that upon arriving at the federal facility, he learned the color of his organization paled in comparison to the color of his skin.

> In the feds [federal system], there's no such thing as Bloods and Crips, Latin Kings and all that. Like there is but the minorities, Bloods, Latin Kings, Crips, we stick together because they [other inmates] don't look at you as, "Oh he's King, we'll mess with him," or "He's Crip, we'll mess". Everybody's together. There's no color up there in prison at all… We ain't got no other choice but to stick together… I ain't really seen nothing going on between the Bloods, the Crips, Latin Kings, Ñetas, none of that. It was either Mexicans and people against Mexicans, Whites against Mexicans, or Whites against us [minorities].

Camp and Camp (1985) support Tom's notion that street gangs can enter correctional facilities and abandon "their street gang identity for the collective purposes of mutual protection" (p. 93). The differences in correctional officer approaches at the federal level and Tom's description of gang allegiance align with Skarbek's (2014) finding that prison gangs are not as prevalent at the federal correctional level. Skarbek argues that because the federal correctional population is small in comparison to the state correctional population, the formal governance structures and informal inmate structure (i.e. convict code) still provide the necessary governance to ensure the successful operation of the facilities. Thus, prison gangs are not necessary at the federal level. While gangs do exist at the federal level, they do not have the same control over the federal facilities as state facilities.

Poverty and Pleasures

A commonality identified by respondents was the availability of 'pleasures' or vices. Both prisons and the free societies described by the respondents were areas of high poverty, however, within both environments respondents were able to access pleasures including narcotics, electronics, and even heterosexual sex. Clarence stated that inmates can easily acquire pleasures they were accustom to experiencing in the street.

> Portable DVD players, phones, drugs, weed, pills, everything. You got everything in prison. There is nothing out here that you can't get in there. You got female COs prostituting. Yea, so, its everything in jail.

The presence of the prison black market is well documented in the prison literature (Stojkovic and Kalinich, 1985; Lankenau, 2001). Correctional officers openly admit that the illicit goods market exists in prison. When asked about the presence of narcotics in prisons, a prison warden stated, "Nobody can convince me that there's a county jail, a prison, a juvenile detention center, or any other place where you have drug addicts locked up, that there's not drugs in the facility.

There is no such place" (quoted in Skarbek, 2014, p. 22). Some respondents indicated that it was, in fact, easier to acquire some pleasures in prison. Morgan explained his experience entering a prison facility as a heroin addict.

> Don't believe the hype that [prisons] are drug free. I went in an addict, I came out an addict. Don't nobody really get clean in prison 'cause it's easier to get drugs in prison than on the street. On the street, you got to know somebody so they don't think you're a cop. In prison, they see you [exhibiting withdrawal symptoms] and they come to you like "Yo, what you need?" And they'll give you [drugs] on credit because they know you ain't going nowhere.

Morgan's statements are supported by reports that show widespread drug use in correctional facilities (Chambers, 2010).

While pleasures are available in both environments, the financial climate of the environments are different. Inmates are not allowed to possess physical currency. When an individual enters a correctional facility they are dependent on their family members in 'free' society to provide them with commissary[11] funds. If an individual does not receive commissary from family members they become dependent on the prison black market bartering system. By contrast, an individual in the 'free' society can seek employment or commit a crime to obtain financial resources. Although some inmates are allowed to work within the facility, the number of available positions are limited and the daily pay rate can be as low as $0.13 per hour (Wagner, 2003).

<center>*Racism*</center>

Racism was a concept that existed in both the captive and free societies, however, respondents stated that racism was more prevalent in prison. In prison, racism was acceptable.

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[11] Commissary is a prison 'bank' account where family members deposit money that the inmates can use to purchase items such as toiletries, postage, and snacks.

Tom described his experience with racism in prison and jail. He stated "you got more racism in prison. It's not like some people are racist, everybody racist [in prison]. I don't know why it's just different, like you got a lot of racism up there, a lot". David described the segregated yards in New York correctional facilities:

> [Everyone stays with] their own kind, gang wise mostly, but there's a lot of racism you could tell. Whites over there, playing whatever they're doing, handball or whatever. Basketball, blacks you got more Black people on basketball than Spanish. Spanish playing baseball, soccer, like, but you can tell the difference between prison and the outside.

Amongst respondents who served time in a New York State prison, there was agreement that racism was not as prevalent on Riker's Island as compared to upstate correctional facilities. Tom spoke of the differences in the existing gangs at the state and local levels. During his time on New York's Riker's Island, he stated that he did not witness racist gangs. Once he entered a state correctional facility, he encountered members of racist and supremacist groups.

The overt racism displayed in prisons was not limited to inmates. Tom described a white correctional officer in upstate New York who walked "around with a black doll with a noose around his neck". David described a white correctional officer in Pennsylvania who referred to David and his brother as the "spic brothers". Correctional officer racism is well documented in the literature (Britton, 1997; Camp, Saylor, & Wright, 2001).

Racism and segregation are mandated behaviors within the captive society. Individuals who are not racist when entering a correctional facility must learn to abide by the rules of a segregated society (Skarbek, 2014). The environmental role on the development of racism was explained by a Pelican Bay[12] inmate as follows: "I've never been a racist person, and I will never

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[12] A California maximum security facility.

be a racist person. But there are realities in each environment that dictate its own response… In a violent institution, I have to find a way to shelter myself from the violence… Not because it's my mentality but it's necessary to survive" (quoted in Skarbek, 2014, p. 79).

Although racial segregation policies within correctional facilities have been deemed unconstitutional by the United States' Supreme Court (*Johnson v California, et al., 2005*), many prisons remained segregated because the inmates maintain an informal policy of not allowing inmates to be housed with members of other races (Skarbek, 2014). The presence of overt racism and segregation in correctional facilities supports the argument that prison is a more primitive version of society that tolerates antiquated notions like racism (Rhodes, 2011). The racist nature of prison is evident in subcultures that emerge. Most prison gangs restrict membership to individuals of a particular racial or ethnic group (Skarbek, 2014).

While racism exists within the free society, it is not socially acceptable to be racist as is evident by the recent nationwide protests surrounding racist policing (Lee, 2014). Negative responses to racism have become common place and expected. For example, in March 2015, the fraternity Sigma Alpha Epsilon was filmed singing a racist chant. University of Oklahoma's President, David Boren, responded by immediately revoking the fraternity's charter and ordering the closing of the fraternity's on-campus housing (Reynolds, 2015). While negative responses to racism do not indicate the absence of covert racism, it does suggest that overt racism is viewed as unacceptable and deviant by mainstream society. Within the free society one is free to challenge racism and racist law enforcement, the same is not true for the captive society. Because there is little regard for the lives of inmates, there are no mechanisms to truly address correctional officer racism. Society has long since 'othered' inmates and therefore is not concerned with their treatment.

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Overall, the findings suggest that captive and free societies differ to some extent. The primary difference is the level of control exerted over the individuals in each environment. Differences also exist in the level of racism, the economic situations, and the approaches taken by authority figures. These differences across captive and free societies affect prison and street gangs. Findings reveal differences across gang membership, leadership structure, ideology, and organizational operations.

Table 3: Differences across Captive and Free Society		
	Captive Society	**Free Society**
Autonomy	Complete loss of autonomy; Strictly regulated daily interactions	Individual autonomy; Unregulated daily interactions
Individual Identity	Loss of individual identity and property; Dehumanization	Maintain individual identity and property; Dehumanization
Formal Control	Omni-optical society	Sporadic surveillance
Approach by Authority Figures	"Hands-off" approach to violence at the state level; "Hands-on" approach at the federal level	"Hands-on" approach to violence
Poverty and Pleasures	Pleasures are available; Physical currency is unavailable	Pleasures are available; Physical currency is available
Racism	Viewed as acceptable; Mandatory segregation	Officially viewed as unacceptable; Laws against segregation

Gang Membership

Membership into a gang begins with initiation. Initiation into both organizational types consists of similar methods. Initiation methods include physical violence, committing crimes or

'work', and being 'blessed'[13] in by a higher ranking member. Clarence stated that the method of

initiation was chosen by the gang not the individual who wanted to join the organization.

> Somebody joining a gang, you go to a gang. You tell them you want to be in. And they pick a method on how you're going to get in. [It's the] same way in jail, you need to get beat up, jumped in, you are blessed in, or you can go put in work.

Tyrone described two different initiation processes, 'tap out' and 'five rounds', that both

required the use of physical violence.

> A tapout [involves] you standing in [a] group of five [members] and you fighting until you felt you couldn't take it anymore and tap out. Five rounds would be you standing with that group of five and the round is stopped every time you hit the ground. I got five rounds. You have to get up in order to start the next round. But every time you hit the ground your round will be over… it was a rule [that] you can't put your feet on blood. That was like the ultimate disrespect. So even if you hit the ground, no one will put their feet on you. (Tyrone)

Various respondents described the necessity of 'knowing someone' in the organization who held

a position of power in order to be considered for initiation.

> As far as becoming a part of a gang, they got to meet somebody that has some type of leverage in the gang. Not just a regular soldier. They got to meet who he's under and they got to chill which means just like sit around on a block where [the gang] hangs out at for about 20 days. Get to know 'em and then you get initiated. (Luis)

> Umm, I went about joining… because I knew so many people within the organization: my best friend, cousins, my uncle… my uncle was the one that "Kinged"[14] me. (David)

Although respondents acknowledged similarities with regard to initiation processes, not all street

membership was recognized in prison. This is particularly true of the "blessing in" process.

David was blessed into his organization by his uncle, however, upon entering prison David's

membership was not recognized. David was asked to earn his membership into the prison

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[13] "Blessed in" refers to an initiation process that does not require the individual to prove their worth because they are known to a high ranking member.
[14] Kinged is the ALKQN's term for their initiation process.

organization by committing a criminal act. When David refused he fell victim to his "own" organization.

> [In prison] I wasn't a real King because according to what they told me, the guy who crowned me was not a Corona[15]. I don't know, he could have been, could not, so I don't really know if he was or he wasn't. I never saw the guy again. According to them, he wasn't a Corona so in order for me to be part of the Latin Kings I was given a kite. A kite is a note you get in prison. You get this little note and it tells you what to do. You read it, tear it up, flush it, burn it, whatever you want so there's no evidence. I read it and choose not to. I choose not to do it. So there were consequences and repercussions. I was beaten by the Kings, I was raped by the Kings and then I was stripped by the Kings.

Unwillingness to recognize street gang membership is especially prevalent amongst those individuals who serve incarcerative sentences in jurisdictions other than the one where they resided. Tom, a resident of New Jersey, explained the difficulty he experienced upon entering a New York State correctional facility

> I'm from Jersey and they're from New York, we got two different respect levels. They didn't know who I was. They didn't believe I had [rank]. They told me I had to prove myself but… I don't follow nobody, I don't follow nobody rules… So I ended up fighting [people] who are supposedly my brothers.

Lack of membership recognition and having one's membership status revoked by the prison gang is further supported by Ray's story of entering a prison in Puerto Rico. He stated, "I got to PR and [the Netas] stripped me, told me that the [beads] were bullshit that I better not come in here with that Nuyorican[16] bullshit".

Membership in prison and street gangs also differs on level of fluidity. Within prisons, individuals are unable to willingly leave the organization. Tyrone described how the prison gang

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[15] High ranking member with the ability to initiation someone into the organization.
[16] Term used to refer to individuals that are born in New York City and are of Puerto Rican ancestry.

would mete out violent punishments for members who violated rules. Once the individual

recovered from the 'discipline' he was expected to return to the organization.

> No matter what the discipline is. [Whether its] you and your bunkie in the yard with three
> other people or you in the cage and four people stabbing you. It's the ultimate discipline
> for you. You did something that you aren't supposed to do. Now you're paying for it. So
> how do you feel now that they stabbed you up? You don't want to be right there with
> them. But when you get out of ICU, you bring your ass back to the unit… You're gonna
> come back. You ain't gonna feel comfortable but you gonna come back.

Gang leaders discipline their members for a variety of rule violations including harming rival

gang members without authorization (Trammell, 2009). Respondents also explained how gang

members circumvented anyone's attempts to renounce their membership. Clarence discussed a

mechanism used to ensure members who attempted to renounce their membership would be re-

classified as a gang member.

> You sign the paper [renouncing your membership] and the minute you reach population,
> guess what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna spread the word to everybody that you said you're
> not gangbanging anymore. And if I really want you, I'll send you a letter… saying you're
> the new double OG[17] of the [gang]. You just got to general population [and] this is my
> way of getting you back here. I'll send you a letter and they'll ship you back to Gang
> Unit. Guess who be waiting? Me and about a hundred other people… This is where the
> violence happens… it's like that everywhere.

While respondents acknowledged that they were also unable to ever fully renounce their street

gang membership, they were able to reduce their gang activity either for parole or family reasons

without fear of repercussions. These findings support Gaes et al's (2001) finding that prison

gang membership is less fluid than street gang membership.

<div align="center">Leadership Structure</div>

Leadership and rank also differ between the street and prison gangs. Respondents

acknowledge that it is easier to acquire a leadership role on the streets compared to within

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[17] OG stands for original gangster or leader of the organization

prisons. Within prisons acquiring a position of power involves spending an extended period of time within the organization.

> You see in prison, you have to really deserve it. It takes 10 years for you to be qualified to become a legit leader. You see, you've got people running around the street who's been banging for four years that's almost got to [the rank of] OG. He comes into prison and he ain't got shit.

A leadership position in a street organization can be purchased. Chris described how the gang will give an individual with material wealth a position of power simply to exploit their wealth. This method of acquiring rank is not respected by other members, particularly incarcerated individuals.

> [The leader] is going to give you a certain rank to make you feel better about yourself in this gang and all the while, he's going to benefit off of your money situation. You're going to show him how to get money and he's going to give you enough rank to command people as well. So now you have enough rank to do shit you would never dream of. You have money to blow but you have no respect. And a lot of people still won't respect you but they won't go against you because they know who gave you the rank.

While respondents acknowledge the presence of a hierarchical leadership, they acknowledge that the hierarchy in the street organization changes when a leader is incarcerated. The newly appointed leader can dismantle the existing power structure. Respondents state that this dismantling is common place and results in internal strife within the organization. Edward described this process as follows:

> Let's say the leader of the gang gets sent to prison forever, he's going to think about who he can trust with his gang. Now he's still leader but he no longer is active. He's active in the prison system but not on the street. He needs someone in the street. So he's going to give the 'okay' to this guy. Well this guy just so happens to be cool with you and all your boys… He's gonna make his whole line, a whole new line of captain, lieutenant, sergeant, the general. Everybody's going to be different now… That's when you got inside beef. That's when you got the violence. You see, you got sneaky violence because now that the rank has changed, even though you were [a high rank] you're no longer [that rank] but you got so many people who respect you. So, now you get those people and fight the new leader.

Tyrone also discussed internal strife as a result of structural dismantling. He admitted to having a "a group inside of a group" who were prepared for intra-gang violence.

> Like if there's something that happens within the [gang]. I'll guarantee these ten people right here aren't going to be the ones that come through looking for me. Instead we gonna be the one to look for somebody else or another group is gonna be looking for this ten.

The notion that leadership within a street gang can change instantly and the presence of internal conflicts counters the notion that streets gangs are highly organized criminal enterprises.

Within prison, there is a hierarchical structure analogous to the street organization, however, the prison gang structure is rigid and not susceptible to power struggles. George states that the leader in prison is respected by all members and his authority is not challenged. Further, when a prison gang leader gives an order, the order is followed without question.

> In prison the head of the snake is the head of the snake. Outside, the head of the snake is the leader but he still got people he got to [converse] with. In prison, whoever the OG[18] there, whatever he says goes. OG in jail can be like, 'Yo, everybody we gotta do this and that tonight.' Everybody gotta do it. In the streets, you could run away from things. In prison, you can't.

Because rank is easily awarded in the street gang, street level rank does not translate into the prison organization. Respondents state that individuals who hold a position in the street organization cannot be compared to individuals who hold the same rank in the prison organization because rank in prison is earned.

> I mean, a Foot Solider in prison was not a Foot Solider in the streets… a Foot Solider in the street is a 'mamao'[19] compared to one in prison. We had to do a lot in prison and again it involved numerous things that were not part of our culture in the street. (David)

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[18] Original Gangster
[19] Mamao is a Puerto Rican slang word that means 'punk' or 'sucker'. The word is derived from the word mamado which means sucked.

Tyrone confirms this difference in rank and states that individuals in the street organization only attain a higher rank due to the incarceration of the 'true' leader. He states that if the 'true' leader were to be released, the current leader would be demoted.

> The difference is the OG in prison is really an OG… Not to take any credit away from the OG on the street. It just to say that he's only the OG because the real OG is in prison and ain't never coming home. If [the OG] was home, the OG on the street will probably be a lieutenant. He wouldn't be an OG.

While street rank is not respected in prisons, rank earned in prison must be respected by all street gang members. Prison rank is viewed as truly earned and therefore warrants respect. Mike explains that a member's unwillingness to respect prison rank can result in discipline if that individual were to be incarcerated.

> You take [prison rank] out with you and you don't care what nobody on the street say because even if on the streets you go through hell, when those people go back to prison, they gonna pay for it. Because when you get in prison, [that rank is] worth something. You can get it on the street and still go hard for it but you get stamped at prison, it's worth something. It's like gold.

Lastly, ranks in prison differ based on the expected roles and functions of each rank. Respondents indicate that their responsibilities differ when entering prison. Brandon asserted that his role in the street organization was carrying out "missions" that generally involved committing armed robberies. When he entered prison his role became that of peace keeper. He actively sought out opportunities to quell potential violence. The respondent's statements regarding the rigid nature of prison gang leadership structures and differences between membership requirements are supported by the existing gang literature (See Camp and Camp, 1985). "Compared to street gangs, prison gang members are typically more organized, entrepreneurial, cover, selective, and strict" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 9). The differences across membership, rank, and role are the result of the prison environment. Because members are not

free to leave the environment, they are forced to interact with the gang, obey its leaders, and tolerate the punishments meted out by the gang.

Ideology

The ideology of prison and street gangs differ. In the street organization, there was an emphasis on community and empowerment. Several respondents acknowledged their organizations' focus on protecting one's community.

> We was created to protect the community from anybody who tried to come in with as far as police, people robbing our neighborhoods, stuff like that. (Clarence)

> They started community gardens. They wouldn't let the police mess with anybody in the neighborhood if it was unjust. It was about being able to do for your community without being rich. Just [us] keeping our community safe. (David)

This rhetoric, however, did not translate into practice as respondents acknowledge that their organizations were destructive to the communities they claimed to want to protect. The purpose of the street gang, in practice, was the same as prison gangs: safety and survival.

Safety and Survival

The need for safety was an important notion expressed by respondents. Both street gangs and prison gangs provided members with protection (see discussion in Chapter 4). However, safety in prison is imperative because individuals live within close quarters and are unable to leave the environment. This is illustrated by the strict rules imposed on prison gang members (see discussion below).

In conjunction with the notion of safety is survival. Prison and street gangs both provided their members with financial and material support. Johnny described how the street gang provided him with a sense of familial support.

> When I joined the gang I had nobody. My mom was in jail. My pop was in jail. My

brother ain't really care. My sisters ain't really care. So I felt like I was on my own. So the people I grew up with, none of us was in gangs until somebody older approached us. He said "[the gang] will do this for you, we'll do that for you, do this for you." So I felt like joining the gang meant "ain't nobody gonna let nobody mess with me. I ain't gonna let nobody mess with them. We're gonna eat together. We're gonna do anything together".

The need for survival was more imperative in prison where members experienced extreme deprivation. Luis described how the meals served in prison were often not enough to sustain oneself. The gang provided access to commissary goods and additional meals.

You got somebody to lean on and somebody that knows where your meal will come from. If those meals that the jail provided for you is not enough, then somebody will help you.

The benefits of prison gang membership are discussed at length in Skarbek's (2014) study of California prison gangs. A member from the Black Guerilla Family states that gang members "would never really want for anything… We had private stores—cigarettes, candy, pies, canned food, canned meat" (quoted in Skarbek, 2014, p. 55). Prison gang assistance extended beyond meals and included access to 'luxuries' including televisions. Reggie described how when a member is released from prison, his possessions belong to the gang and are distributed amongst other members.

Whatever you need [the gang] is gonna get it for you until you get back on your own feet. When you first [enter prison] they serve you. I got a TV for my room and the entertainment that I might need and then when a [fellow member] leaves, whatever he had goes to the [remaining members].

In some gangs, the requirement to aid members entering into correctional facilities is written into their manifestos. For example, the United Blood Nation manifesto states "in our organization, we will provide new Blood inmates with clean clothes, food, soap, shampoo, powder, deodorant, money, protection, and phone time". The financial and material support role of gangs is evident in both the free and captive environments. Both prison and street gangs address deprivation

experienced by their members (Glaser, 2000; Skarbek, 2014). Prison gangs also assist

individuals who are being released from correctional facilities.

Education

Another contrasting difference between prison and street gang ideologies is the emphasis

placed on education. Respondents acknowledge that education is of key importance within the

street gang.

> School was important more than any gang. You had to get to school before you could
> join the gang. They'll tell you 'go to school'… they will lead you to the right path. (Tom)

Education was essential because it ensured the survival of the organization. Reggie explains that

school attendance ensured that incarceration would not cripple the organization.

> If you're going to school. I push it. Keep going to school… As long as he's doing that,
> he's good because if we do our dirt and he's supposed to be where he's supposed to be at
> and we get jammed up. Jammed up meaning locked up. We still got somebody out here
> holding us down.

School is so highly valued by the organizations, that failure to attend school would often result in

reprimands and punishment. Reggie discussed meting out physical punishment to individuals in

his gang who did not attend school.

> We're supposed to encourage people to do positive work. That's what it's supposed to be
> like I got a little homies and they supposed to be in school. When I see them out in the
> hood. Why you not in school? When I get off work, now you got to get his ass whooped.

Tom indicated that he would reprimand members but he acknowledged that he could not force an

individual to attend school.

> They did get in trouble [for not going to school], but at the same time like we could only
> tell them what's right, it's up to them to do it, so we're not going to just keep on forcing
> them to do what they don't want to do.

When asked whether education was important in prisons, respondents agreed that education was not important to the prison gang.

Organizational Operations

One of the major differences between prison and street gangs concerns organizational operations. Because prison gangs are confined to close spaces and there is a rigid leadership structure, prison gangs have strict control over the movements of their members. Clarence, described the morning routine of his prison gang as follows:

> Aiight, so you wake up, they bust your door around 7:45 for breakfast. You wake up, you get dressed, grab your knife. Then whatever corner your gang meet in, there's about 6 corners on the tier so at 7:45 you gotta be dressed with your knife. If this is your corner, you gotta be in the corner by 7:45 soon as your door open you gotta be in the corner. [If you're not in the corner] then they discipline you… So once ya'll meet in that corner, ya'll observe the tier, then ya'll go get ya'll food. Then you go back to your table. You got two people standing, probably seven people sitting, however many of ya'll are on the tier, then ya'll rotate. Then you go back to your cells, lock the doors. Then you come out about 8:30 for recreation, go back in the corner, everybody come out then ya'll go to recreation together.

This need for strict regimented behavior is the result of a need for safety. While respondents also spoke of the need for protection in the streets, the dangers in prison were ever-present and required a regulation of members' behaviors.

Rules of Conduct

In line with the need for safety, was the need to maintain strict rules of conduct in prison. Rules of conduct are outlined in the gang's written manifesto or constitution (see discussion in Chapter 4). In prison, manifestos are distributed to all members of the gang and individuals must live by the rules or face disciplinary actions. In addition to a written copy of the rules, 'shot callers' meet with new or incoming members to discuss the rules (Skarbek, 2014). Obeying the

gang's rules of conduct in prison was essential to the safety of the organization and its members. "The only objective which the group and leader share is to make the time pass as agreeably and as comfortably as possible" (Clemmers quoted in Skarbek, 2014, p. 31). Tyrone explains that the need for safety was the primary reason why street behavior was not tolerated in prison.

> You see, so when you step into prison, all that 'I'm the man shit' that you was doing on the street, get your ass killed in there… You'll follow the rules in prison or you'll get dealt with just like that. There is no waste of time. [If the leader] says do it, you do it.

Due to the heightened need for safety in prisons, members were required to travel in numbers. This requirement made what would be simple tasks in the streets, difficult to accomplish in prison. Tony described the difficulty associated with obtaining a doctor's appointment in prison.

> If I gotta go to the doctor, you and two other people gotta drop doctor slips with me, just to go to the doctor. If I'm on the list by myself, I ain't going unless there's two or three of my [brothers] going with me.

The need for strict adherence to the rules is the result of living within an environment where one can be attacked at any moment, an environment where one is unable to flee impending danger. Inmates are limited in their ability to move within the correctional facility, both by formal and informal institutional level policies (Skarbek, 2014).

Conflict Management

The adherence to rules also affected how the organizations managed conflict within their respective environments. Respondents described violence in prison as organized and controlled because of a mutual need for violence reduction. On the streets individuals felt they were free to attack anyone as long as they were not a member of their organization. In prison, members were not free to attack anyone without the authorization of a high ranking member of their organization. "Gangs must authorize the use of violence because spontaneous unplanned

violence causes problems for other inmates" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 86). Morgan explained the difference in violence across street and prison organizations.

> On the streets, I was wild. I could do anything to anybody, as long as they wasn't a King. When I got locked up, it was way different. I had to ask for permission. Even if a dude said some slick shit to me, I had to ask for permission to retaliate because anything I did could [affect] everyone in my tier. A lot of the time I ain't get [permission] so I had to eat the disrespect. On the streets, I would have hit dude without a problem.

Morgan's comment counters Wacquant's notion that the code of the streets has been adapted in prisons. It appears that gangs act as a barrier to the use of violence to obtain respect that is mandated by the code of the streets.

The difference in conflict management is due to inmate's mutual need to reduce violence in order to avoid losing the "luxuries" they are afforded in prison. Maurice described an incident where members of rival prison gangs developed a truce in order to avoid a lockdown[20] of the prison.

> [The gangs] got tired of getting everything taken from them. Every time they turn around, everything getting taken. TVs getting taken. Microwaves getting taken. Everything … get taken so they was like "everybody calm down [and] we get it back then". So I look at it like now they got structure now. Everybody not trying to be on the same stuff [as the streets].

"Goods and services can ameliorate the pains of imprisonment, but their availability depends on the effectiveness of extralegal governance institutions" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 7). Trammell (2009) found that gang leaders would discipline any of their members who accrued drug debts or

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[20] Lockdown refers to a period when all inmates are confined to their cells and are not allowed privileges such as visitation and recreation.

utilized unsanctioned physical violence against rival gangs. This type of behavior could result in a lockdown of the facility that would be detrimental to all inmates. The control over violence exerted by prison gangs does not indicate that violence does not exist within correctional facilities but rather that violence is strictly regulated by gang leaders. Violence is coordinated to minimize or eliminate negative repercussions. This coordinated violence may actually "improve the overall prison social order" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 98) by ensuring that random, unnecessary acts of violence do not occur. Prison gangs will attempt to resolve issues without violence by utilizing 'peacemakers' or 'shot callers'. The regulation of violence between groups of inmates suggest that inmate solidarity does still exist within prison. The presence of inmate solidarity contradicts Wacquant's (2001) argument that the convict code has been destroyed by the code of the streets. It appears that gangs now operate to maintain a level of inmate solidarity.

Respondents also described the need to collectively fight against correctional officer corruption. This involved joint cooperation between rival gangs. Reggie described an incident where he was placed in a cell with a rival gang member who informed him that the Bloods and Crips had reached a mutual agreement to avoid conflict.

[The correctional officers] don't care if you Blood, Crip, they don't care about none of that. They put ya'll in the same room and dare ya'll to fight each other so they can come in and jump on y'all. I was in a room with a Crip and I'm looking at him like, this that bullshit. He said "What's cracking?"[21] I said "What's popping?"[22] He like "You Blood?" I'm like "You know it"… He said look, "[the correctional officers] want us to fight so they can come up in here to jump on you. So everybody that's on this unit, we kind of like banded together. We put our differences to the side. So when they get out of pocket and we all out, we gonna get out of the pocket." So I went around the yard and asked about it and everybody told me what he was telling [me was true].

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[21] A greeting given between members of the Crips
[22] A greeting given between members of the Bloods

The notion that prison gangs are willing to work together to address mistreatment by correctional officers supports literature that suggests inmates operate under a collectivist orientation to provide a protective mechanism against staff abuse (Sykes, 1958; Rivera, Cowles, and Dorman, 2003). Inmates' willingness to work with rival gangs counters Wacquant's (2001) argument that the ghetto-prison symbiosis has destroyed inmate solidarity. Wacquant (2001) claims that the importation of the street code into prisons has destroyed the convict code that once bound inmates together. However, the respondents' statements indicate that inmates have turned to prison gangs to replace the solidarity once afforded by the convict code. Gangs not only provide financial support and safety but also often operate collectively against the oppressive nature of incarceration. The collectivist orientation of prison gangs was illustrated in 2014 when the leaders of four rival prison gangs launched a statewide hunger strike to protest the use of long-term solitary confinement (NPR, 2014). This finding is supported by Skarbek (2014) who posits that mass incarceration weakened the convict code and led to the emergence of prison gangs. Prison gangs replaced the governance once afforded by the convict code.

Communication

Prison and street gangs do communicate with one another. Many respondents spoke of the ability for prison gang members to communicate information to both the street gang in the 'free' society and prison gang members in other institutions. Mike described how prison gang members delivered messages to their street gang counterparts regarding members who were promoted while incarcerated. Some gang manifestos require that inmates send messages to their street gang counterpart informing the street gang of a member's status or progress in the organization upon release from a facility (Skarbek, 2014). These messages are distributed via a variety of channels including visitation with female members, written letters containing coded

wording, and via telephone calls. David described the difficulty of transmitting messages via phone calls.

> It ain't easy trying to say [messages] through the phone. Someone is always listening. Even the COs ain't doing their job, you're talking in front of other people. All you need is for one snitch to be listening to your call… Back when I was locked up you couldn't call cell phones from inside [prison] so if you wanted to tell someone on the street something, you had to call someone who had a phone [landline] and have them call the person.

Monitoring of prison phone calls in a common institutional measure aimed at limiting or hindering illegal activity (Skarbek, 2014). David also indicated that delivering messages from jail was easier than from a state correctional facility because most jail inmates are serving short sentences. Because these individuals will return to the streets relatively quickly, they are often tasked with delivering messages from jail. Although some correctional facilities have implemented measures to obstruct communication, inmates have developed innovation methods of relaying information. Even prison gang leaders who are held in solitary confinement have developed methods of communicating with other gang members (NPR, 2014). Some gang members have utilized the assistance of 'legitimate' individuals such as defense attorneys (Zazueta-Castro, 2014).

Organizations also communicated within the correctional system. Tyrone explained how his organization sent notices to other facilities whenever a gang members was transferred between correctional facilities. He stated,

> Once you get there [new facility] everyone knows who you are. They already sent a 'kite' to the head [of the organization] to be on the lookout for you, to help you. But if you're sent there [transferred] because of some dumb shit like renouncing, they'll be on the lookout for you in a different way, someone's gonna hurt you.

Transfers within or across facilities are viewed negatively by inmates because a transfer generally indicates that an inmate experienced problems at his previous facility or tier. Gangs

utilize the inter-facility communication described by Tyrone to ensure that members in good standing are protected and that members who are 'green-lighted'[23] are physically harmed upon arrival. Intra-correctional facility communication has been documented in California prison gangs as well (Skarbek, 2014).

Although an open channel of communication did exist between the street and prison organizations, the respondents indicated that the messages from prison were respected by the street organization but messages from the street were given little credence by the prison organization. For example, following David's victimization at the hands of the prison organization, the street organization asked to hold a meeting with the victimizers upon their release. David was never awarded his chance to address the issue because one of his victimizers was promoted following David's release. Edward reinforced this idea in his recounting of a member who violated a cardinal rule while on the streets and was not subsequently punished by the prison organization.

> When I was locked up, we found out that [one of our members had sexual intercourse with] someone else's girl while he was locked up. When dude came in the prison, I thought we was gonna violate [punish] him but the OG said that we wasn't gonna bring the street nonsense inside. He said, "Let them figure that shit out when they outside".

Conversely, respondents indicated that messages from prison were held with the highest regard and were to be abided by. Skarbek (2014) documented the power of prison gangs over street gangs. Prison gangs in California ordered street gang members to commit a variety of criminal acts. Oftentimes completing these acts resulted in promotion within the organization. The prison organization provides street gang members with financial and status incentives. Released members of the prison gang are expected to maintain their allegiance to the gang (Skarbek,

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[23] 'Green-lighted' refers to inmates who have committed an act that puts them in bad-standing with the gang. Members of the gang must physically injure a "green-lighted" individual upon his arrival.

2014). The view of the prison organization as holding more prestige or power than the street gang reinforces the earlier discussion regarding ranks within the organizations.

Relationships with Authority

The final major difference between prison and street gangs is their relationships with criminal justice representatives. The street gangs experience a purely antagonistic relationship with law enforcement while prison gangs experience a complicated relationship with correctional officers. The relationship between street gangs and the police involved harassment at the hands of the police that resulted in animosity between the two groups. Police utilized unethical methods to address the street gang problem. The relationship between prison gangs and correctional officers was dependent on the type of correctional officer present. Respondents identified a typology of correctional officers that illustrates the complicated nature of the relationship.

Police and Street Gangs

Respondents described how police officers held negative opinions of gang members regardless of how the gang member behaved. Luis described how the stereotypes led police to take aggressive and hostile positions toward the gang members.

> So they treat us like we scum basically. Like that's all y'all know is trouble. So we gonna come aggressive at you every single time. And if we could do anything to get y'all off this block or this neighborhood, we will.

The hostility exhibited by the police extended to anyone who resided in the neighborhood, not just gang members. The police made generalizations based on where an individual resided and the clothing they wore. One respondent described how the color of one's clothing affected how police responded to an individual.

Police see you, you got on red, you got on any color, red, purple, blue, they automatically think you part of a gang just because of the area you're in. My area is populated mostly by Bloods so [if the police] see you wearing red on, they just automatically think you're a Blood… They automatically think you selling drugs [or] got a gun on you. And my area's like, right by the precinct. So we got to deal with it all day.

Police officers also would use an individual's gang association to their benefit. George described an incident where police were angered by their inability to find a justification to arrest him and decided to leave George in rival gang territory.

I was in my hood one time. Cops just snatched me up and dropped me off in a place where I'm not supposed to be at… We was in a group, [the police arrived] and everybody ran. So I ran too. I got caught but I had no drugs. So since they knew I ran and I had no drugs, that was their pay back, dropping me off somewhere where they know something's gonna happen to me.

Similar behaviors by police have been documented in Los Angeles (Lait & Glover, 2002) and Chicago (Edwards, 2011). The murders of several gang members have been linked to this unethical police practice (See Lait & Glover, 2003; Bentham, 2014 for examples).

Respondents also describe how their gang membership results in unjustified punishments including tickets and arrests. Reggie described an incident where he was given an unjustified ticket simply because the officer was unable to prove that the respondent's bicycle was stolen.

I was riding my bike and I found another bike that was broken but it had good parts on it that I might need for my bike…. He looked up my state book [criminal record file].... since he couldn't actually hit me with stealing the bike, he gave me a ticket. I'm like, 'Brah, for real?

Law enforcement also actively attempt to dismantle the organizations by targeting the leaders.

[The police] pick and choose who they want to mess with because it's not too many members who have a lot of [rank]. [There are] a lot of big homies down in prison who are doing a lot of time. [The police] can't go there and say [the incarcerated members] did it. So they going to the next one [in the hierarchy]. It's like, if you can't get the big fish, go

for the little one to get the big fish. So they tryna pick at every little thing so they can arrest someone for something. (Maurice)

This law enforcement tactic included wrongfully arresting gang members by planting evidence on them and threatening the individuals with lengthy prison sentences if they did not provide the police with information about a high ranking gang member. Richard described one such incident.

> [The police] treat [gang members] bad. It got to the point like they'll find something and put it on you. Like it may not be yours, but if they find something near you they're going to put it on you… They put a gun on me the first time I got locked up. They picked me because, I was in a gang [and] I was known in that city. Anything that came up in that area they came after me… It got to the point my mother had to go to internal affairs on them, because they would roll up and [search] me or my little sister, and she ain't even in a gang. [The police] just ain't like me… So, I got locked up and [the police] came to visit me and told me "Tell us who [name redacted] is or we gonna make you go away for a long time."

The relationship between gang members and police was further strained because the police departments were unwilling to assist gang members with issues within the neighborhood. David described how his organization attempted to address issues in their neighborhood by speaking with the police, however, the police ignored their calls for action.

> I mean, there was bad blood between cops and the Nation. I remember us going to the precinct and bringing up certain issues that we had in the neighborhood like prostitution, crack houses, stuff like that but nothing would ever get done. So, I mean, I would say that's one of the reasons why we really had bad blood with the cops and we just took it upon ourselves to fix what they were supposed to be fixing.

Due to law enforcement's unwillingness to confront problems in the neighborhoods, the community sought out gang members whenever an issue arose in the community.

> I don't say that gang members are the police but whenever something happens in my hood, a lot of people don't go looking for the cops no more. They go out looking for the leader. So if something happened in my block, they'll go looking for my OG and first try to [speak] with my OG.

This antagonistic relationship between street gangs and law enforcement was echoed by all thirty respondents. Each provided stories of abuse, violence, and harassment at the hands of the police. The same is not true of the relationship between prison gangs and correctional officers.

Correctional Officers and Prison Gang Members

Correctional officers and prison gang members have a relationship best described as complicated. Whether the relationship is antagonistic or beneficial is dependent on the type of correctional officer present within the facility. Several respondents described various types of correctional officers. A typology of correctional officers has been developed based on their responses. The typology includes three types of correctional officers: the greasy officer, the gang affiliated officer, and the asshole.

Table 4: Correctional Officer Typology	
	Characteristics
'Greasy' Officers	Promote and encourage extralegal governance by inmates; utilize gang affiliated inmates as informal control mechanisms against other inmates; allows inmates to use violence to control the prison unit.
'Gang-Affiliated' Officers	Identified gang members who actively work to assist their organization; involved in the illicit black market.
'Asshole' Officers	Analogous to police officers; utilize violence against inmates; reinforce the degradation of self by destroying inmate belongings; utilize an inmate's gang affiliation against them.

The greasy correctional officer is one who is corrupt. These officers actively engage in the prison black market and allow gang members to control the prison units. Johnny described how greasy officers supplement their income through the black market.

> [There are] greasy-ass officers who if you do something for them, they'll do something for you. You've got your officers who bring their work here… CO's bring in phones, let drugs in…. They getting paid off of it. They getting paid top dollar. The money is in the prison. There is no one on the street making money like someone in the prison is making money.

Greasy officers also use gang members to maintain order within a prison unit. Clarence described how correctional officers would chose known gang leaders and make them responsible for ensuring the prison unit was properly maintained. The gang leaders were authorized to use violence to maintain order.

> So, on a tier you got 80 people in one tier… about 75 will be gang banging. Then you got [correctional officers] that can't control everybody so they'll pick out the two gang leaders, make them tier reps. They tell the tier rep, I want these people locked up, I want the chow area cleaned, I want this that and the third done. So, the gang members will do that just for maybe a sandwich or a soda or just to let them stay out on the unit a little longer… If its people acting up on this tier, the CO will go somewhere and get the gang member leader, bring 'em back, "Yo, you gotta handle him. Beat him up" and the gang member will beat him up.

The relationship between greasy officers and prison gang members is mutually beneficial and stands in stark contrast to the relationship between police officers and street gang members. Greasy officers are willing to work within the gang structure rather than attempting to dismantle the structure. This relationship counters the official criminal justice narrative which suggests that prison gangs are problematic entities. The 'greasy' officer typology is supported by literature that suggests correctional officers utilize gang members to control the facilities and are actively involved in corruption (Hunt et al, 1993; Camp and Camp, 1985; McCarthy, 1996; Worley & Cheesman, 2006).

The presence of the 'greasy' officer typology also runs counter to the notion of the 'convict code'. Clemmers (1940) describes the convict code as a set of rules that dictate inmate behavior and interactions with another inmates and authority figures. "The fundamental principle

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of the code may be stated thus: Inmates are to refrain from helping prison or government officials in matters of discipline" (Clemmers, 1940, p. 152). Respondents acknowledge that inmates assist the correctional officers in maintaining order and doling out punishments. This findings supports Skarbek's (2014) argument that the convict code has eroded over time. Prison gangs have replaced the convict code's rules of behavior and implemented their own code of conduct.

The second type of correctional officer identified by respondents were the gang affiliated correctional officers. These officers are individuals who were street gang members who became educated and secured careers. Brandon described how some street gang members adhered to the positive influences within the gang and achieved success.

> Some of the correctional officers [are] gang bangin' themselves. Like, everybody didn't get locked up, some people stayed on that path, some people had mature figures in the gang that made sure you went to school, made sure you went in the house at a correct time.

Although the gang affiliated correctional officers had achieved some level of success outside of the gang, they were obligated to support the prison gang. This obligation included trafficking contraband and ensuring that the gang did not receive punishment for misbehavior. Reggie described an incident where six members of the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (ALKQN) assaulted an inmate. The correctional officer on duty was a member of the ALKQN. The officer identified Reggie and five members of the United Blood Nation as the assailants.

> The [correctional officer] that picked me out of the Latin King fight, that I had nothing to do with, he was Latin King. So I figured he picked me and five [blood members] out to keep his brothers on the pod. That's the way I felt. Because [the prison] got cameras so you know who jumped on this man but you still got me doing some 225 days in [solitary confinement] for something I didn't even do.

The gang affiliated correctional officer also stands in stark contrast to street level law enforcement because the gang affiliated correctional officer has a positive relationship with the inmates who belong to his organization. The gang affiliated typology is supported by a recent Department of Investigations report that revealed correctional officers on Riker's Island were gang affiliated (Schwirtz & Winerip, 2015).

The final type of correctional officer identified by respondents, the asshole, has a relationship that is analogous to the relationship between law enforcement and street gang members. These correctional officers hold negative perceptions of inmates and utilize violence against inmates. Tyrone described how asshole correctional officers would destroy an individual's property simply because he does not fear repercussions from his actions.

> You got your asshole officer who come through and while you're in the yard, he'll come through and rip open every piece of food that you have. [He'll] dump it on your bed, the floor… He thinks he can do what he wants to you.

These officers also utilize an individual's gang affiliation against them. Clarence described how officers would pit rival gang members against each other merely for sport.

> So, if I'm Blood and you Crip, the officer will put you in my room knowing I got a big knife in there. And they'll stand at the door and bet on who's [going to] win.

Correctional officers also utilized rival gang members to dole out punishment for assaults against correctional officers. Tyrone described an incident where a correctional officer retaliated against him for ordering another gang member to throw urine at the officer.

> My door gets bust and I'm wondering why because I already came out today… We go to the door. They let in about 24 cells of Crips there. That's 48 people. I'm Blood. They Crip. It's war. But that CO popped my door on purpose. That was payback time.

The asshole correctional officers align with the police officers described by respondents. This typology is supported by the vast body of literature on correctional officer use of violence (Bowker, 1980; Cohen, Cole, & Bailey, 1976; Hemmens & Atherton, 2000; Hemmens & Stohr, 2001).

Although typologies of correctional officers do exist in the literature (see Farkas, 2000 for example), the typology of correctional officers discussed above is the first derived from inmate narratives. This typology illustrates the complicated relationship between correctional officers and prison gang members. The varying relationships found in prison do not exist on the street.

Explaining the Emergence of Gangs

While the literature is rife with varying theories on the emergence of street gangs (see chapter 2), there is no comparative body of literature for prison gangs. The data from the present study suggests that prison and street gangs can both be explained through a critical subcultural explanation. Specifically, gang emergence can be explained by social exclusion and structural violence.

Both organizations emerge in environments that are socially excluded from mainstream society. As a result of these environments, individuals must operate within the structural constraints placed upon them by the larger society (Wacquant, 1997). These structural constraints include structural violence in the form of economic marginalization and police harassment (Young, 2007). One of the responses to the structural constraints is the development of parallel institutions to mainstream institutions. Prison and street gangs both replace the mainstream institutions that are supposed to provide safety and financial support: law enforcement, employment, and family.

The critical subcultural explanation of street gangs exists in the literature (see chapter 2). The findings from this study suggest that the explanation may also apply in prison. Prison is the greatest form of social exclusion. Inmates are physically removed from mainstream society and are actively 'othered'. As a result of this exclusion, inmates experience a lack of financial and familial support while incarcerated. The prison gang provided individuals with access to material goods including basic necessities. This mirrors the literature on street gangs that finds gangs provide "routes to material wealth" (Glaser, 2000) through their alternative, informal economies that are used for survival (Fagan, 1992; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004; Hagedorn, 2005).

While the critical subcultural explanation may account for both street and prison gang emergence, existing gang research reveals that street gangs predate prison gangs by several decades (Skarbek, 2014). For this reason, there is a need to delve deeper into the emergence of prison gangs and examine alternative or complementary explanations of prison gangs as researchers have largely ignored the emergence of these organizations. The present study's findings support Skarbek's (2014) argument that prison gangs emerged out of a need for governance.

As 'tough on crime' and 'war on drugs' legislation spread throughout the United States, prison populations increased. Between 1970 and 2010, the prison population in the United States increased by 500% (The Sentencing Project, 2014). The era of mass incarceration experienced in the United States dramatically altered the prison culture. The influx of new inmates in correctional facilities was comprised of younger individuals who were entering prison for the first time. Younger inmates ignored the convict code that dictated behavior within facilities (Hunt et al, 1993). As a result of the younger generation's unwillingness to abide by the convict code, violence within correctional institutions increased. The formal governance structures no

longer properly controlled and regulated inmate behavior (Skarbek, 2014). Inmates sought out alternative governance structures. Prison gangs provided the necessary governance.

Skarbek (2014) posits that the diminished capacity of official governance strategies in prisons explains the delayed emergence of prison gangs. Prison gangs emerged around the beginning of mass incarceration and developed to protect inmates from other inmates. As prison gangs emerged and began to informally govern inmate interactions, violence decreased. By implementing new codes of conduct and regulating the illicit prison black market, prison gangs successfully developed an informal governance system.

This study's findings support Skarbek (2014) arguments. Respondents described prison gangs as 'controlled' and explained at length how prison gangs regulated behavior. Prison gangs have a vested interest in reducing prison violence, primarily their interest in maintaining privileges. This interest is so dominant within the prisons that gangs actively work to limit animosity between inmates including between rival gang members. Clarence described how he operated as a 'peacemaker' between rival gangs.

> [In] one prison we had beef with another gang. [Some members] wanted to just go fight [the other gang]. Instead, I went to this other gang and I talked … I told them, "What was the beef about? Listen man we in prison. We are already in a bad situation and if you think of that, let's not not make it worser." So I took on the opportunity in the gang as the peacemaker.

California gangs refer to the 'peacemaker' position as a 'shot caller'. Peacemakers, as described by Clarence, and shot callers fill similar roles to 'building tenders'. Building tender was an informal position given to an inmate by correctional officers. This position entailed assisting correctional officers in managing disputes between inmates. In *Ruiz v Estelle* (1980), Texas deemed the use of building tenders illegal (Crouch & Marquart, 1989). Skarbek (2014) posits that the elimination of building tenders resulted in increased violence. Gangs developed shot

callers and peacemakers to address that loss of governance. Shot callers now regulate behavior and manage conflict. One inmate quoted by Skarbek stated "that's why we have shot callers so when a couple of idiots get into it in the yard, instead of letting them kill themselves, the shot-caller goes out and works it out" (p. 83).

In addition to the need for governance, mass incarceration resulted in depleted resources within prisons (Skarbek, 2014). Depleted resources led to the exploitation of weaker inmates. Prison gangs address the limited resources by providing members with financial support while incarcerated (see discussion above). In addition to financial support, prison gangs regulate aspects of the prison environment that aid its members. For example, prison gangs regulate housing or cell assignments (Marquez and Thompson, 2006) and prison officials classify inmates based on their gang affiliation. Dante described the need to belong to a gang while incarcerated:

> If you don't belong to a gang you'll get all your stuff [taken] from you and there's nothing you can do about it. You're not about to go against 50, 60 guys. So, you get down [join a gang] and now no one messes with you.

The need to belong to a gang was confirmed by a correctional officer who stated "when you come to prison, you have to join a gang. You have no choice. If you don't join a gang, you'd better pack up. Go into the sergeant's office and tell him you're ready to leave the yard" (quoted in Skarbek, 2014, p. 56).

Respondents also discussed gangs operating in a collectivist nature to combat structural violence, specifically correctional officer sanctioned violence. In this sense, prison gangs operate as semi-political organizations within the correctional facility. Prison gangs also address a lack of "universal state security protection" (Winton, 2004, p. 172) by operating as a form of social control similar to the social control discussed in Venkatesh's (2008) study of street gangs. As illustrated earlier in this chapter, prison gang leaders were allowed to control the operation of

entire tiers and actively worked to limit the level of violence in a given facility. Just as the street gang ideology was focused on community empowerment and safety, the prison gang ideology centers on maintaining peace within the facility and ensuring the safety of its members. Prison gangs, much like the street gangs described by Jankowski (1991), do not operate in direct opposition to the society in which they reside, but rather work within the existing structure to ensure the survival of their members. Collectively these findings reveal that gangs serve a governance function within prisons. Inmates responded to the structural level issues within prisons by developing their own extralegal governing bodies.

Table 5: Prison and Street Gang Comparison		
	Prison Gang	**Street Gang**
Membership	Rigid; must be earned	Fluid; Can be purchased
Leadership	Hierarchical and Rigid	Hierarchical but Fluid
Initiation	Violent, Criminal, or "Blessed"	Violent, Criminal, or "Blessed"
Ideology	Survivalist both rhetorically and in practice	Pro-Community rhetorically, Destructive in Practice
Education	Education is unimportant	Pro-School
Control over Members	Strict Control Exerted	Little Control Exerted
Conflict Management	Controlled by Leadership; Limited	Chaotic, uncontrolled
Relationship with Criminal Justice Representative	Complicated	Antagonistic
Emergence	Response to failure of formal structural governance	Response to structural level violence

Environmental Effects

The research found similarities and differences between the captive and free societies where prison and street gangs emerge. However, there is a stark difference between the levels of control exerted on the daily lives of the inhabitants of each environment. The difference in control affected the organizations that emerged in these environments, particularly gangs. A

primary difference between prison and street gangs is membership requirements which are more rigid in prison than on the street. The membership requirements directly affect leadership structure which, although hierarchical in both environments, is more fluid in the street organization compared to the prison organization. Prison and street gangs differ in their rhetorical ideologies but not in the practiced ideologies. Differences that can be directly attributed to environment include the level of control exerted over members, conflict management strategies, and relationships with criminal justice representatives.

CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether differences existed between the free society where street gangs emerged and the captive society where prison gangs emerged. The study further aimed to assess whether any existing differences between the two environments affected gangs. A third goal of the study was to discover whether traditional subcultural explanations of street gangs are applicable to prison gangs. Lastly, the study sought to address the definitional issue within the gang literature (see Chapter 2) by deriving a definition of the term from the gang member's narratives.

The effect of environment on prison and street gang members was investigated through a critical, qualitative analysis of gang member narratives. Interviews were conducted with 30 formerly incarcerated gang members. Where possible, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions were then analyzed using the listening guide strategy, coding, and thematic analysis. The data were organized by themes and memoing.

A vast body of literature exists on street gangs. The existing literature contains extensive qualitative data and examines a wide array of topics including the emergence, membership, structure, and culture of street gangs. There is no comparable body of literature for prison gangs. Further, there is little research that calls into question the assumption that street gangs and prison gangs are synonymous entities. This qualitative study sought to address this shortcoming in the literature by developing a comparative framework for the two different gang types.

Relevant Findings

Overall findings were derived by locating themes and comparing the themes to existing literature. The findings are organized to address the questions outlined in chapter 1.

Captive vs. Free Societies

The data revealed similarities and differences between captive and free societies. The two environments primarily differed with regard to the level of autonomy. Respondents expressed a loss of autonomy upon entering prison that was not apparent in their street narratives. Although a loss of autonomy was not present within the free society, dehumanization did occur across both environments. Racism existed in varying capacities across both captive and free societies. Within the captive society racism was overt and accepted as normal. Both inmates and correctional officers were actively involved in racism and segregation. By contrast, within the free society there are negative responses to overt racism.

Captive and free societies additionally differed in the level of control exerted over the individuals within each environment. Prison was a heavily controlled environment while the streets afforded members with freedom. The mundane routine in prison and constant surveillance by correctional officers differed from freedom experienced on the street. Lastly, the data reveal a difference in the approach taken by criminal justice system officials. Street level law enforcement took a "hands- on" aggressive approach that resulted in harassment while correctional officers operated under a "hands-off" approach that allowed inmates to self-govern their environment. The "hands-on" approach taken by law enforcement creates an animosity between police officers and civilians. The approach by correctional officers varied across jurisdictions. At the federal level correctional officers were more actively involved in reducing violence and gang behavior. In 'non-mainland' facilities in Puerto Rico the correctional officers allowed one gang to fully control the facilities.

Collectively, the findings suggest that Wacquant's (2001) notion of the prison-ghetto symbiosis does not apply to the individuals and facilities reflected in this study. Wacquant

(2001) suggests that the prison and ghetto have meshed into a "carceral continuum" whereby the two institutions resemble each other. The respondents in this study have identified many differences between the two institutions which suggest that Wacquant's argument may be over-simplified. Further, Wacquant posits that the street code has been imported into prisons and as a result has destroyed the convict code that once regulated behavior. However, findings suggest that the convict code has been replaced with gang governance, not a 'street' code. This is evident in the differences between street and prison gang operations. If the street code was directly imported into the prisons, one would expect to see organizations or gangs that closely resemble their street counterparts. The data reveal that the organizations differ greatly with regards to membership, structure, and governance. Therefore, the findings suggest that Wacquant's may not be representative of the lived experiences of these residents.

Effect of Environment on Gangs

The differences in environments affected many aspects of gangs. Although the initiation processes and requirements were constant across both environments, membership within the prison organization was less fluid than the street organization. Street gang membership was often not recognized by the prison organization, especially if the individual was incarcerated in jurisdictions other than their place of residence. Prison gang members were unable to reduce their gang activity like their street gang counterparts due to living in a constrained and controlled environment. Leadership structures were also more fluid within the street gang than in the prison gang. Within the street organization, leadership could be purchased and one individual could dismantle the entire existing leadership structure. The prison gang structure was rigid and not susceptible to power struggles because of the controlled environment. Individuals are housed with their fellow gang members and therefore open themselves up to immediate victimization if

they challenge the power structure. Unlike with street gangs, prison gang members cannot merely relocate to avoid interactions with the gang. The gangs have developed methods of communication that ensure any member who attempts to leave the organization, will suffer in every facility to which they are transferred.

The ideologies of prison and street gangs shared many commonalities and differences. Both organizations are focused on safety and survival. Both prison and street gangs provide their members with protection from outsiders including law enforcement, and provide their members with financial and material support. Within prisons, however, the need for safety is intensified by the reality that inmates are housed in small units and are easily susceptible to attacks. Education is a key part of the rhetorical ideology of street gangs that does not exist in prison.

The ease by which prison gang members may fall victim to attack results in major differences between the organizational operations of prison and street gangs. Prison gang members must maintain strict daily routines which dictate their every movement. Within prisons, gang members must obey rules of conduct or face violent disciplinary action from their organization. By contrast, street gang members are free to roam their neighborhoods with little fear of reprisal. "Prisons are different [than the streets]. Inmates can't migrate. They can do little to segregate themselves physically" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 102). Prison and street gangs also differ with regard to conflict management. Prison gang members must acquire permission to attack or retaliate against another inmate, even inmates from rival gangs. This requirement is due to inmates' mutual need to reduce the level of violence. Any form of violence committed by one inmate may have dire consequences including the loss of privileges for both his organization and all inmates within the facility. Within street gangs, members are free to attack anyone who is not a member of their own organization.

The last major difference between prison and street gangs is their relationships with authority. Respondents described their relationship with police as antagonistic. Police officers dehumanized gang members, inflicted violence against the individuals, and actively attempted to dismantle their organizations. The relationship between correctional officers and prison gang members is best described as complicated. Respondents identified a typology of correctional officers that explained the relationship. The typology consisted of three types of officers: greasy, gang affiliated, and asshole. Greasy officers were corrupt and often used gang members to control other prisoners. Gang affiliated officers were gang members who were able to earn positions as correctional officers. These officers were loyal to their organizations and protected their organizations. Asshole officers were analogous to street level law enforcement. These officers held negative views of inmates and used their authority to abuse inmates.

Subcultural Explanations of Gangs

When assessing the applicability of existing subcultural explanations of gangs, the data suggest that on the surface it appears street and prison gangs can be explained using a critical subcultural theory of gangs. The emergence of prison gangs, however, requires a more in-depth analysis of structural level issues. Street gangs form in socially excluded areas where they experience structural violence including deprivation and harassment. As a result of the experienced structural violence, gangs develop to replace the mainstream institutions that are supposed to provide safety and financial support. Gangs operate as semi-political organizations that provide support and protection to their members, and utilize social control to maintain order within their societies. Gangs attempt to work within the existing structures to ensure the survival of their members.

Prison gangs are best explained by a critical theory that examines the role of sentencing policies and the need for governance within correctional institutions. In the wake of 'tough on crime' policies, prison populations in the United States began to swell. As prison populations increased, the level of resources within facilities dissipated and led to increased levels of violence. The formal governance strategies of the institution failed to address these growing issues. Inmates responded to the failure of formal governance and the need for protection and resources by forming gangs. Prison gangs provide strict rules of conduct that control the level of violence, thereby easing the issues created by 'tough on crime' sentencing policies in the United States.

Gang Definition

The data reveal a new definition of the term gang derived from the gang member narratives. The new definition differs from existing definitions because it incorporates the role of resistance and empowerment, incorporates historical and cultural aspects of the gang, acknowledges the disconnection between rhetorical purpose and practiced purpose of the gang, and incorporates society's mistreatment of gang members. The definition derived from the data is:

> An organization originally formed as a subculture of resistance with a focus on community activism and individual empowerment but that has since lost sight of its primary purpose due to police harassment that has resulted in the destruction of its leadership hierarchy. The organization maintains a written manifesto that maintains the written codes of their culture. A gang provide safety, financial and material support, and a sense of belongingness to its members, and is "othered" by mainstream society largely due to the misconception that the organization lacks any positive qualities.

Theoretical Implications

This study has theoretical implications for future gang research. It is evident from the data that gang researchers must abandon the notion that prison and street gangs are synonymous entities explained by the same subcultural theories. While prison and street gangs do serve similar functions (e.g. financial support) for their members, the origins of the organizational types must be assessed separately. While there is a rich history of studying street gangs and attempting to explain their emergence, an analogous body of literature does not exist for prison gangs. Researchers have instead attempted to force street gang theory on prison gangs while ignoring the role of environmental factors including structural level policy. The existing theories of street gangs are devoid of sentencing and prison policy discussions that may assist in explaining prison gangs. The captive society is affected by sentencing policies that have caused a ballooning of the prison population and post-release policies that ensure a steady stream of returning inmates. These structural level policies not only affect the environment but also the human collectives that emerge within the environment.

The existing literature reveals that researchers no longer complete ethnographic studies of prisons. It is telling that the most cited studies of prisons predate tough on crime policies, mass incarceration, and the war on drugs; policies that all affected the prison population and structure (See Sykes, 1938; Irwin, 1970). Gang researchers should return to the ethnographic study of prisons and prison culture as this will provide a complete portrait of changes over time.

In conjunction with the return to ethnographic studies of prisons, researchers must reintroduce context into the study of gangs. Both prison and street gangs are affected by historical, social, institutional, and geographic changes. Researchers cannot ignore how structural

level policies affect prison and street gangs. The mere fact that the United States' prison population has increased 500% over the past forty years should cause researchers to question everything we know about prison gangs. Furthermore, the increases in parole revocation, which account for 35% of all admissions (Travis & Lawrence, 2002), likely affect the prison environment as these changes have created an unending pool of individuals who are cycled in and out of correctional facilities. The effect of these structural level policy changes on prisons should be assessed as changes in environment affect subcultures. The effect of policy on gangs is evident in the respondents' discussions of differences across jurisdictional levels and Skarbek's (2014) assessment of governance within prisons. Jurisdictional and geographic context, in this study, reveal that prisons and the role of street gangs in prison differ substantially across geographic locations.

Criminologist gang researchers should develop interdisciplinary approaches to the study of prison and street gangs. The introduction of other bodies of literature including sociology, anthropology, and even economics, will allow for the development of thorough analyses of gangs. For example, the findings of this study are best explained using Skarbek's economic theory of governance. By marrying the critical criminological literature with the economic explanation of prison gangs, the researcher was able to provide a more complete theoretical explanation of prison gangs on the East Coast.

Policy Implications

The findings have implications for existing correctional policies. The first policy implication centers on reevaluating classification systems within facilities. Respondents indicated that although they were convicted of non-violent crimes, they were housed in

maximum security facilities due to their gang affiliation. This classification policy is problematic because "studies provide no clear empirical link between gang membership and prison violence" (Skarbek, 2014, p. 98). The assumption that a gang member will commit violent acts while incarcerated and therefore warrants classification into a maximum security facility is not rooted in substantiated facts but rather in stereotypical ideals. Studies have found, however, that the individuals who are most likely to commit violence acts in prison are non-violent offenders who are housed with violent offenders (California Department of Corrections, 1975). This finding suggests that housing a non-violent gang member in a maximum security may actually force the individual to commit a violent act. David's story reinforces this argument. Upon being classified into a maximum security facility, David, a non-violent drug offender, was asked to commit a murder and was subsequently sexually victimized for refusing to commit that act (see chapter 5). Unlike David, many gang member choose to obey their organizations and commit violent acts. These individuals are forced to become violent as a result of being housed amongst violent individuals. This differential treatment of gang members in prison is detrimental both to the individual gang members and the safety of correctional facilities.

Transfer request policies within facilities are also problematic. Respondents expressed correctional officers' unwillingness to transfer individuals out of housing units even when their physical safety was in jeopardy. Because correctional officers have established relationships with gang leaders, the officers ignore the cries for help from inmates who have been misclassified or those who are being victimized by the gang. Respondents illustrated how the gang members are unable to safely transfer out of units even after being sexually and physically victimized. These findings suggest that the current transfer policies are inadequate. The informal governance structures trump the formal governance structures. Correctional departments should create and

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implement unbiased third parties to assess the requests for safety transfers. Correctional departments should also develop an anonymous system by which inmates can report correctional officer and peer abuse that would allow inmates who are being abused to report the behavior without fear of reprisal. These boards and systems can be developed by requesting federal grants similar to the funds provided by the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2004.

Lastly, the findings suggest the need to reevaluate correctional officer hiring processes and employment policies. Within the past two years, correctional officers have been investigated, arrested, or indicted for smuggling narcotics (Schwirtz and Wineripe, 2014), funneling cell phones into the prison black market (FBI, 2015), raping inmates (Marimow and Wagner, 2013), and murder (Walsh, 2014). The actions of correctional officers described in this study and the recent revelations regarding correctional behavior nationwide suggest that the current hiring practices are flawed. The flaws in hiring practices results in the hiring of individuals with criminal records, gang ties, and violent personalities. Correctional departments should implement more stringent hiring practices including thorough background checks and psychological exams. After hiring, correctional officers should undergo continuing education training. Furthermore, correctional officers should be evaluated throughout their careers to determine if they remain suitable for their positions. Another method of curbing correctional officer corruption would be the creation of an independent body to provide oversight and audits of correctional facilities, similar to the recently formed Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study reveals the need for additional research about prison and street gangs. Due to the sampling methodology, the findings speak to state level prison gangs in the New England

area of the United States. Future research should examine whether these findings are transferable to other areas of the country particularly in the South and the Midwest, areas where gang research is limited. Researchers should also examine the jurisdictional differences in prison gangs discussed in Chapter 5. The limited data on Puerto Rican prisons presented in this study suggest that Puerto Rican prison administrators have adapted a different management approach that rests on inmate informal governance. The two respondents who served sentences in Puerto Rican facilities attested to the lower levels of violence in these facilities. Puerto Rican prisons would provide an interesting case study of prison governance since the Asociación Ñeta originated in Puerto Rican prisons and, according to respondents, other street gangs are not allowed to operate within these facilities. Jurisdictional comparisons of prisons and gangs should also extend to the federal level. Based on respondent's narratives it appears that street gangs also do not have influence at the federal level because the correctional officers have adopted a 'hands-on', proactive approach to gang activity. Both Puerto Rico's and the Federal correctional system's administrative approaches should be explored in the context of sentencing policies, governance, and prison culture. Lastly, future research should delve deeper into the jail versus prison comparison. Respondents indicated that there are stark differences between local county jails and state level prisons, both in regard to racism and gang activity.

Given the sampling strategy utilized in this study, the study did not produce data on a variety of demographics. Future research should assess non-Black and non-Latino gangs to determine whether those organizations are inherently different from the four organizations represented in this study. Gender differences should also be explored. Skarbek (2014) asserts that female gangs do not exist in the California correctional facility. Future research to assess whether that finding is true in other facilities and regions of the country.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
GRADUATE CENTER
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Project Title: The Power of Place: A Comparative Analysis of Prison and Street Gangs

Principal Investigator:	**Faculty Advisor**:
Jennifer M. Ortiz	Dr. David Brotherton
Graduate Student	Associate Professor
John Jay College of Criminal Justice	John Jay College of Criminal Justice
524 W 59th St Suite 2426N	524 W 59th St Room 520-32T
New York, NY 10019	New York, NY 10019
718-570-3622	212-237-8694

Dear Participant,

My name is Jennifer Ortiz and I am a Doctoral Student in the Criminal Justice program at John Jay College/CUNY Graduate Center. You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is conducted under the direction of my faculty advisor, Dr. David Brotherton. The purpose of this study is to understand the similarities and differences between prison and street gangs. This study may provide researchers with a new perspective of prison gangs.

The study will involve interviewing adults who have experienced membership in prison and street gangs. Approximately 50 individuals are expected to participate in this study. Each subject will be interviewed. Interviews will last between 30 and 90 minutes. Before beginning the interview, I will ask you a set of questions to determine if you are eligible to participate in this study.

There are no foreseeable risks to you participating in this study. While there are no individuals benefits to this study, the findings may be beneficial to the classification and placement of prisoners. Locating and identifying differences between the two entities may help establish or reform placement policies in correctional facilities that will increase safety for all parties involved.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may decide not to participate at any time.

With your permission, I would like to audio-tape this conversation and take notes. Using a tape recorder enables me to later check my notes for accuracy. If you would like, you may see a transcript of the tape before we use the interview in our final analysis. You may request that the tape recorder be stopped at any time.

Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout this research project. All tape recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my home office. Upon transcription, the

original tape recorded files will be erased. The transcriptions will then be stored in a locked file cabinet that is only accessible to me.

If you have any questions about this research, you can email me at jeortiz@jjay.cuny.edu, or you can call me at 718-570-3622. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or you have comments or concerns that you would like to discuss with someone other than the researchers, please call the CUNY Research Compliance Administrator at 646-664-8918. Alternately, you can write to:

CUNY Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Attn: Research Compliance Administrator
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Thank you for your participation in this study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

Respondent #:_____

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Prior to the start of the interview I need to ask you several questions to determine if you fit the criteria for this study; adult males who have experienced membership in both prison and street gangs.

1. **Are you at least 18 years of age?**
2. **Have you ever been a member of a street gang?**
3. **Have you ever been incarcerated?**
4. **During your incarceration, were you affiliated with a known prison gang?**

I want to make it clear that I will be asking you questions about your past experiences with prison and street gangs. I am not asking you to reveal anyone's identity. I am asking you to avoid using individual names to protect yourself and to protect other people. Please answer any questions you feel comfortable asking without mentioning any one's name. Also remember that you are free to refuse to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

Demographics

Age: _____

Number of Years Incarcerated: _____

Name of Organization/Gang:_____

1. Tell me about the neighborhood you grew up in.
    a. Probe: Can you describe the neighborhood for me.
        i. What does it look like? Describe the houses to me.
        ii. What was your block/street like?
    b. Probe: What was it like to live in that area?
    c. Were most people in your neighborhood employed?
2. Tell me about going to school in that neighborhood.
    a. Probe: Describe the kids in school.
    b. Probe: Were there metal detectors in your school.
    c. Probe: Was school important to you? Why?
3. Were people in your neighborhood religious?
    a. Was your family?
    b. Were you?
    c. How did you feel about religion growing up?
4. Was there racism in your neighborhood?
    a. What races/ethnicities lived in your neighborhood?
5. How would you define the word 'gang?'
    a. Probe: What does the word mean to you?
6. What, in your opinion, is the purpose of gangs?
7. Why do you think people join gangs?

a. Probe: Are there other reasons you can think of?

Street Experiences

1. Tell me about the neighborhood you lived in when you joined a street gang.
   a. Probe: Can you describe the neighborhood for me.
      i. What does it look like? Describe the houses to me.
      ii. What was your block/street like?
   b. Probe: What was it like to live in that area?
   c. Probe: Can you tell me about the police in the neighborhood?
      i. How was there relationship with the community?
      ii. Did you have problems with the police?
2. Were you employed when you joined a gang?
   a. If so, what did you do for a living?
   b. Were you in school?
3. Can you please explain how you joined your organization?
   a. Why did you join your organization?
4. What is the purpose of your gang?
5. Can you tell me about the history of your gang?
6. Can you describe your everyday interactions with the organization while on the streets? This can include anything that involved being around the gang or participating in gang behavior.
7. What was your role within the gang while on the streets?
8. How do you know who your fellow gang members are?
9. Can you describe how the gang was structured? Was there a chain of command? Did you answer to someone? Did members answer to you?
10. Are there rules that you must follow in your gang? If so, can you explain some of them to me?
11. Can you describe how the police treated members of your organization?
    a. Probe: Was it better or worse than the way they treated other people in the neighborhood?
12. How would you describe the relationship between the organization and the community?
    a. Probe: How did you view the community and how did they view your organization?
13. Do you think your organization is different from other organizations? If so, how?
    a. Probe: Can you give me examples?

Prison Experiences

14. What were you arrested for?
    a. What were the charges against you?
15. Were you employed at the time of your arrest?
    a. If so, where? What did you do?

16. Tell me about prison.
    a. Describe how you felt entering prison for the first time.
    b. Probe: What prison(s) were you incarcerated in?
        i. Probe: Can you describe the prison to me?
        ii. What does it look like? Sound like? Smell like?
        iii. Can you describe the layout of the prison for? How were things structured/organized?
    c. What role does religion play in prison?
    d. Is education important in prison?
17. Can you describe the relationship between correctional officers and inmates?
    a. How did they treat you when you first entered prison?
18. How is prison different from the neighborhood you lived in when you first joined a street gang?
19. Tell me about how it felt to enter prison.
20. Can you describe the culture in prison?
    a. Can you talk about the role of race in prison?
    b. How do correctional officers treat inmates?
    c. How do inmates treat each other?
21. What purpose do gangs serve in prison?
22. When you entered prison, did you stay with the same organization?
    a. If so, were your accepted by your organization?
    b. If not, did you join another organization?
        i. If yes, what organization did you join and why did you join that organization?
23. Can you describe how a person becomes part of the gang while in prison?
24. Can you describe your interactions with your organization while in prison? What was your everyday routine like?
    a. Can you describe interactions with other prison organizations?
25. What was your role within the gang while in prison?
26. Within prison, how do you know who your fellow gang members are?
27. Can you describe how the gang was structured? Was there a chain of command? Did you answer to someone? Did members answer to you?
28. Are there different rules in prison than on the streets that you must follow?
29. Are there rules concerning behaviors that are not allowed within the gang in prison?
30. How do correctional officers treat prison gang members?
31. How do correctional officers identify gang members?
32. Do correctional officers attempt to stop gang activity?
    a. If so, how?
33. Is religion important to your organization?
    a. Is it important to other inmates?

   b. Is it important to you?

34. Do gangs in prison operate differently compared to street gang members? If so, how are they different?

35. After now reflecting back on everything that occurred, how do you feel about your past membership in your organization? Do you regret it?

Appendix C: Memo Template #1

Listening Guide Analysis Memo Template

Date:
Time:
Interview #:

Plot:

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Thoughts/Reflections:

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Appendix D: Memo Template #2

Thematic Analysis Memo Template

Date:

Time:

Theme:

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Emergence of Theme:

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Interviews Numbers Containing Theme:

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Theoretical Implications of Theme (if any):

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Thoughts/Reflections:

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