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**GROUPS IN PRISON: AN EXAMINATION OF THEIR ORIGINS,  
MEMBERSHIP AND GANG-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of  
Kent at Canterbury for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**By**

**JANE LOUISE WOOD**

**August 2002**

F185092



## CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>.xiv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b><u>PRISON GANGS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</u></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Gang Definitions</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.1 Prison gang definitions	5 x
<b>1.2 The rise and impact of prison gangs in the U.S.A.</b>	<b>7</b>
1.2.1 The rise of the prison gang in the U.S.A.	7
1.2.2 The impact of the prison gang in America	14
<b>1.3 Prison gang formation</b>	<b>18</b>
1.3.1 Importation theory	18
1.3.2 Within-prison gang formation	20
<b>1.4 Prison gang membership</b>	<b>25</b>
1.4.1 Characteristics of gang members in America	27
1.4.2 Identification of prison gang members	31
<b>1.5 Summary</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b><u>GANG THEORY: SEARCHING FOR A MOTIVE FOR MEMBERSHIP</u></b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.1 Subcultural Theory and the Chicago School</b>	<b>36</b> x
<b>2.2 Strain Theory</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>2.3 Control Theory</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>2.4 Social support</b>	<b>54</b>
2.4.1 Definitions of social support and its relevance to forensic psychology	55
2.4.2 Transmission and consequences of social support	56
2.4.3 The social support theory of crime	57
2.4.4 Social support and gang membership	58
2.4.5 Social support and prisoner groups	61

<b>2.5 Prisonization</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>2.6 Summary</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b>	
<b><u>GANG ACTIVITY IN ENGLISH PRISONS: THE PRISON</u></b>	
<b><u>STAFF PERSPECTIVE</u></b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.1 Prison gangs in England and Wales</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.2 Identifying prison gang presence</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>3.3 An initial study</b>	<b>69</b>
3.3.1 Design of the study	70
3.3.2 Summary of main results	71
3.3.3 Implications of this study and the rationale for further work	73
<b>3.4 Summary</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR:</b>	
<b><u>BACKGROUND AND DESIGN OF THE CURRENT STUDY</u></b>	<b>79</b>
<b>4.1 Background</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>4.2 Objectives of the study</b>	<b>82</b>
4.2.1 Gang-related events scale	83
4.2.2 The construction of a second scale	85
4.2.3 The third scale – Prisonization	94
4.2.4 Fourth and fifth scales: prisoners' perceptions of social support	95
<b>4.3 Summary</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE:</b>	
<b><u>METHODOLOGY</u></b>	<b>103</b>
<b>5.1 The Pilot study</b>	<b>103</b>
5.1.1 Ethical considerations	103
5.1.2 Participants	104
5.1.3 Procedure	104
<b>5.2 Changes to the interview schedule</b>	<b>105</b>

<b>5.3 The main study</b>	<b>108</b>
5.3.1 Participants	108
5.3.2 Procedure	109
<b>5.4 Summary</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	
<b><u>ANALYSES OF THE DATA: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS</u></b>	<b>112</b>
<b>6.1 Prisoners' perceptions of the frequency of gang-related events</b>	<b>112</b>
6.1.1 Categories of prison and gang events	116
6.1.2 Most frequent gang events by category of prison	117
6.1.3 Perceptions of gang event frequency and characteristics of prisoners	118
6.1.4 Ethnic origin	118
6.1.5 Age	119
6.1.6 Number of prison sentences served	119
6.1.7 Length of current sentence	120
<b>6.2 Gang events as predictors of perceptions of 'staff order' and     'prisoner control'</b>	<b>120</b>
6.2.1 Predictors of perceived 'staff order'	121
6.2.2 Predictors of perceived 'prisoner control'	122
<b>6.3 The formation and function of prisoner groups</b>	<b>124</b>
6.3.1 Prisoner groups: formation and activities	124
6.3.2 'Own gang' involvement	125
6.3.3 'Other' group formation and behaviour	127
6.3.4 Characteristics of prisoners and perceptions of 'other' involvement	128
6.3.5 Ethnic origin	129
6.3.6 Age	129
6.3.7 Number of prison sentences served	129
6.3.8 Length of current sentence	129
6.3.9 Comparisons of 'own gang' and 'other gang' involvement	129
<b>6.4 Social support and prisonization scales</b>	<b>130</b>
6.4.1 Scales assessing dissatisfaction with social support	131
6.4.2 Prisonization	133

<b>6.5 Predictors of gang involvement</b>	<b>135</b>
6.5.1 Prisoners involved in gang activity	137
6.5.2 Age	137
6.5.3 Gender	137
6.5.4 Number of prison sentences served	137
6.5.5 Male recidivists – all ages	138
6.5.6 Males serving 1 <sup>st</sup> prison sentence – all ages	139
6.5.7 Male and female recidivists	140
6.5.8 Significant others in the prison	142
6.5.9 Male and female – “naïve” prisoners	143
<b>6.6 Summary</b>	<b>145</b>

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **QUALITATIVE EVALUATIONS OF PRISONER GROUP FORMATION AND GANG-RELATED ACTIVITY**

<b>7.1 Group violence in prison</b>	<b>150</b>
7.1.1 When violence occurs	150
7.1.2 How violence occurs	152
7.1.3 Where violence occurs	155
<b>7.2 Prisoners’ perceptions of goods traded by other prisoner groups</b>	<b>157</b>
7.2.1 Medication	159
7.2.2 Phone cards, cigarettes and alcohol	160
7.2.3 Other goods	160
7.2.4 Other prisoners’ trades as predictors of ‘other gang involvement’	161
<b>7.3 Prisoners’ personal involvement in trades in the prison</b>	<b>162</b>
7.3.1 Prisoners trading in drugs	162
7.3.2 Medication	163
7.3.3 Phone cards, tobacco and alcohol	164
7.3.4 Other goods	164
7.3.5 Miscellaneous goods	164
7.3.6 ‘Own trades’ as predictors of ‘own gang’ involvement	165

<b>7.4 Other prisoners associations with each other before incarceration</b>	<b>166</b>
7.4.1 Regional origin	166
7.4.2 Social activities/connections	167
7.4.3 Prison system	168
7.4.4 Criminal activity	168
7.4.5 Miscellaneous	168
7.4.6 Previous associations as predictors of 'other gang' activity	168
<b>7.5 Prisoners' personal association with other prisoners before incarceration</b>	<b>169</b>
7.5.1 Regional origin	170
7.5.2 Social activity	170
7.5.3 Prison system	170
7.5.4 Criminal activity	171
7.5.5 Miscellaneous responses	171
7.5.6 Previous associations as indicators of 'own gang' involvement	171
<b>7.6 The formation and function of prisoner friendships in the prison</b>	<b>172</b>
7.6.1 Perceived use	173
7.6.2 Personal/shared characteristics	174
7.6.3 Status of other prisoners	174
7.6.4 Shared interests	175
7.6.5 Crimes committed before imprisonment	176
7.6.6 Previous associations	176
7.6.7 Area of origin	176
7.6.8 Prison environment	176
7.6.9 Previous prisons/sentences	177
7.6.10 Miscellaneous	177
<b>7.7 Prisoners' personal selection of friends within the prison</b>	<b>178</b>
7.7.1 No specific selection of friends	178
7.7.2 Characteristics of other prisoners	179
7.7.3 Previous associations	180
7.7.4 Previous prisons	180
7.7.5 Home area	181
7.7.6 Common interests	181
7.7.7 Crime committed before incarceration	182



7.7.8 Prison environment	182
7.7.9 Selection of friends as predictors of 'own gang' involvement	183
<b>7.8 Prisons as dangerous environments</b>	<b>184</b>
7.8.1 Acceptable behaviour	184
7.8.2 Unacceptable behaviour	185
7.8.3 Personal characteristics of other prisoners	186
7.8.4 Prison culture	187
7.8.5 Criminal background	188
7.8.6 Miscellaneous	188
7.8.7 New prisoners 'need to know' as predictors of other prisoners' gang involvement	188
<b>7.9 Prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners following entry to the prison</b>	<b>188</b>
7.9.1 Characteristics of other prisoners	189
7.9.2 Acceptable behaviour	191
7.9.3 Unacceptable behaviour	192
7.9.4 Criminal background of other prisoners	192
7.9.5 Prison culture	193
7.9.6 Miscellaneous	193
7.9.7 The most important lessons learned as predictors of 'own gang' involvement	194
<b>7.10 Prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' involvement in illegal activities with people outside prison</b>	<b>194</b>
7.10.1 Drug trafficking	195
7.10.2 Non-violent crime	195
7.10.3 Violent crime	196
7.10.4 Trades	197
7.10.5 Medication	197
7.10.6 Miscellaneous	198
7.10.7 Other prisoners' involvement in criminal activity with individuals outside the prison as predictors of 'other gang' involvement	198

<b>7.11 Prisoners' personal involvement in criminal activities with people outside the prison</b>	<b>199</b>
7.11.1 Drug trafficking	199
7.11.2 Non-violent crime	200
7.11.3 Violent crime	200
7.11.4 Illicit supplies	201
7.11.5 Miscellaneous	201
7.11.6 Prisoners' involvement with outsiders as predictors of 'own gang' involvement	201
<b>7.12 Overall predictors of other prisoners' involvement in gang activity in prison</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>7.13 Overall predictors of 'own gang' involvement in prison</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>7.14 Integrating qualitative and quantitative variables predicting 'own gang' involvement</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>7.15 Summary</b>	<b>207</b>
7.15.1 Group violence in prison	207
7.15.2 Trades in prison	207
7.15.3 Previous associations with other prisoners and involvement in gang-related activity	208
7.15.4 Selection of friends in the prison	209
7.15.5 Prisons as dangerous environments	209
7.15.6 Involvement in criminal activity with individuals outside the prison	210
7.15.7 Integration of qualitative and quantitative data	210

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS** **212**

#### **8.1 Theoretical and research implications** **212**

8.1.1 Levels of gang-related activity: existence of gang-like groups 212

8.1.2 Perceptions of other prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity 216

8.1.3 The formation of prisoner groups 219

8.1.4 Function of prisoner groups 223

8.1.5 Characteristics of prisoners involved in gang-related activity 231

#### **8.2 Methodology** **243**

#### **8.3 Implications for policy** **251**

#### **8.4 Concluding comments** **255**

## **REFERENCES** **258**

## **APPENDICES**

- 1 Staff survey questionnaire
- 2 Briefing sheet for staff survey
- 3 Gang-related events questionnaire: Pilot and main study
- 4 Group formation and function questionnaire: Pilot and main study
- 5 Prisonization questionnaire
- 6 Social support and Significant others external to prison questionnaire: Pilot and main study
- 7 Social support and significant others in prison questionnaire: Pilot and main study
- 8 Briefing sheet for pilot and main study

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	A Theoretical Model of Prison Gang Development (Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991)	21
6.1	Differences between categories of prison in total levels of gang-related events	116

## LIST OF TABLES

3.1	Ten Most Frequently Reported Gang Related Events in Each Class of Prison.	72
4.1	Scales forming the interview schedule for this study	101
5.1	Demographic and Institutional characteristics of the participants in the main Study	109
6.1	Percentage reporting gang-related event as occurring frequently (11-20 times) or very frequently (20+ times) in the previous 6 months	115
6.2	Mean gang event frequency by type of prisoner ('naïve' vs. recidivist)	119
6.3	Significant Beta coefficients predicting 'staff order' in second step of the hierarchical regression	122
6.4	Significant Beta coefficients predicting 'prisoner control' in step 2 of the hierarchical regression	123
6.5	Percentage of prisoners 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with statements suggesting 'own gang involvement'	126
6.6	Percentage of prisoners 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with statements relating to other prisoners' gang involvement.	128
6.7	Reliabilities of overall social support scales (given and received)	130
6.8	Cronbach's Alphas for Dissatisfaction scales	132
6.9	Component Matrix for dissatisfaction with social support in prison	132
6.10	Component Matrix for Prisonization	134
6.11	Model Summary showing step 2 for all prisoners' 'own gang' involvement	136

6.12	Reliable coefficients of the hierarchical regression examining male recidivists	139
6.13	Reliable coefficients of hierarchical regression for male naïve prisoners	140
6.14	Reliable coefficients of hierarchical regression for male and female recidivists	141
6.15	Descriptives of ‘own gang involvement’ categorised by the individuals prisoners support in the prison	143
6.16	Reliable coefficients of hierarchical regression for naïve male and female prisoners	144
7.1	Specific drugs cited by prisoners as traded in the prison	158
7.2	Trades predicting ‘Other gang involvement’	162
7.3	Type of drug and number of prisoners admitting to trading it	163
7.4	The Final Model for Trades that predict ‘own gang involvement’	166
7.5	Previous association coefficients predicting other prisoners’ gang involvement for each model	169
7.6	Coefficients for the final model explaining ‘own gang involvement’ from Prisoners’ Previous associations.	172
7.7	Coefficient predicting how other prisoners choose their friends	178
7.8	Variables predicting ‘own gang involvement’ from prisoners’ selection of friends	183

7.9	Significant coefficient predicting 'own gang involvement' from the way prisoners select friends	184
7.10	Significant coefficient predicting 'own gang involvement' from the most important thing prisoners learned about other prisoners on entering the prison	194
7.11	Coefficients predicting other prisoners' criminal involvement with individuals outside prison	199
7.12	Coefficients for the final model of 'own involvement with outsiders' predicting 'own gang involvement'	202
7.13	Stepwise regression models of other prisoners' involvement in gang activity using variables with significance levels of 0.01 from previous regression analyses.	203
7.14	Variables with significant Beta values explaining 'own gang involvement'	204
7.15	Qualitative and Quantitative predictors of 'own gang involvement'	206

**DEDICATION**

To Sam and Lydia with love



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## ABSTRACT

Gang activity relates to serious problems in American prisons and leads to a reduction in order and control (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991; Stevens 1997). Research reported in this thesis examined the possibility of similar group activity in the English and Welsh prison estate together with some of the factors that might facilitate their development. Preliminary work (Wood & Adler 2001) indicated gang-related activity occurred across all categories of prison. However, identifying prisoners involved is fraught with problems (Kassel 1998). The theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991) indicates prisonized attitudes (Clemmer 1940) and a need for support facilitate prison gang membership, which is generally based on shared commonalities such as racial origin (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985). Similarly, research indicates prison gang members are younger, have more convictions and serve longer sentences than non-gang prisoners (Sheldon 1991). Consequently, the current work assessed prisoners' perceptions of gang-event frequency and the demographic/psychological characteristics of prisoners involved. Interviews were conducted with 360 prisoners from 9 prisons in England and Wales. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were administered. Results indicated male prisoners perceived higher levels of gang-related events than did female prisoners and event frequency related negatively to legitimate order and control. Prisoner groups tended to form along the lines of shared commonalities such as regional origin or a shared criminal history. Prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity was predicted by recidivism, age and gender, although no difference was found between male and female recidivists' involvement. Satisfaction with social support offered to individuals outside the prison related to first time prisoners' gang-related activity, whereas the support they offered to individuals in prison related to recidivists' involvement. Prisonized attitudes predicted involvement in gang-related activity for all prisoners. Discussion focuses on implications for theory and policy and suggests directions for further research.

## PREFACE

American research has highlighted the problems the prison system experiences at the hands of prison gangs (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991). Prison gangs apparently intimidate staff and other prisoners in a quest to acquire power and control resulting in a decline in legitimate order and control (e.g. Stevens 1997).

To date, no explicit evidence exists that such gangs operate in English and Welsh prisons. However, since street gangs appear to be increasing in number (Thompson 1995) it seems feasible that street gang members may re-group following imprisonment. Gang theorists suggest that such re-formation may result in other prisoners forming counter groups as a response to the perceived threat posed by the original group (Knox 1994; Klein 1995). If the high levels of drugs in English and Welsh prisons (e.g. O'Donnell & Edgar 1998) are also taken in to account, it seems reasonable to consider that prisoners may form groups to protect their investment in this lucrative trade.

However, it would be erroneous to assume that all prisoner groups are analogous with prison gangs. One theory of prison gang development concedes many prisoner groups are innocuous entities; prisoners may associate with similar others as this ameliorates the loneliness experienced due to incarceration (Buentello, Fong and Vogel 1991). In addition, some American researchers argue that the identification of prison gang members is a haphazard process that persecutes innocent prisoners it falsely identifies as belonging to gangs in prison. Consequently there is a need for information that may lead to a greater understanding of prison gang development and the prisoners most vulnerable to membership.

The work presented in this thesis attempts to unravel some of the issues relating to gang activity in prison. It begins by examining the literature offering insight into the evolution, growth and membership of prison gangs in America. It contemplates the apparent impact of these groups on the penal system and considers some of the contextual factors that

might encourage prison gang development in the English and Welsh prison estate. The second chapter expands on the first by noting the shortcomings in the prison gang literature in terms of motives of gang membership. It looks to theoretical explanations of street gang membership in a bid to understand why gang membership is an attractive prospect for some. By drawing on psychological and criminological literature, the chapter pulls together the common threads of gang research in an effort to identify factors, which may contribute to prison gang membership.

However, although some research alludes to the possibility that gang-like groups are active in the English and Welsh prison estate, no specific research into this area has been conducted. As a result, a useful starting point in research into this topic is an examination of the rate of activities commonly associated with prison gangs. This is due to American researchers' claims that the frequency of events is the best indication of prison gang development (Fong & Buentello 1991). Consequently, chapter 3 reviews some earlier work, which assessed staff perceptions of the frequency of gang-related activity and how these events related to legitimate order and control in the prison. Results demonstrated that gang-related activity is a common feature of penal establishments in England and Wales.

On the other hand, this initial study could not provide insight into which prisoners are most vulnerable to gang membership and quite how such groups form. Equally, staff reports are unlikely to offer the comprehensive picture of prison life that interviews with prisoners may provide. As a result, chapter 4, drawing on American literature, outlines the development of an interview schedule for use with prisoner participants. The schedule was designed to examine prisoner group formation and activity in some detail. It employed both quantitative and qualitative measures in an effort to collect as much evidence as possible on the issues under examination. In a further effort to maximise the information gleaned, the interview schedule asked prisoners about their own and others' involvement in gang-related activity.

Chapter 5 goes on to give details of the pilot study and changes made to the interview schedule following these initial interviews with prisoners. It continues by outlining the demographic details of participants and the conditions under which the interviews were conducted. Chapter 6 outlines results of the quantitative variables examining prisoners' perceptions of the levels of gang-related activity and the demographic and psychological characteristics of prisoners involved in these specific behaviours. Chapter 7 moves on to examine the qualitative responses prisoners offered in terms of gang-related activity and group formation. It considers which features of prison life and prisoner behaviour relate most closely to prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity. Chapter 7 concludes by integrating the qualitative and the quantitative data in order to determine which factors overall relate most closely to prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity. Finally, chapter 8 considers how the results of the study contribute to gang theory and prison policy. This concluding chapter evaluates the methodology employed and looks to future directions for research in terms of the current findings. It concludes by considering the value of the research overall and the insight this study offers into prisoners' behaviour.

## Chapter One

### Prison gangs: a review of the literature

The central theme of this thesis is the significance of prison gangs to the English and Welsh prison estate. The aim of this chapter is to draw attention to some of the issues relevant to understanding prison gangs. It will present and evaluate literature in order to consider issues and questions related to the psychological study of prison gangs. To date, prison gangs have not been examined in the United Kingdom and their psychological elements remain under-researched worldwide. Therefore this chapter will draw on American sociological literature as well as sources more usually associated with applied psychology.

The first part of this chapter will examine the search for a comprehensive definition of a gang and the implications for research and theory due to the absence of a concrete definition. It continues by reviewing the descriptive work on prison gangs, which offers insight into the extent of the gang problem in American prisons and the effects of the gang on the prison that holds it. It presents a theory of prison gang development and the response of the American penal system to individuals perceived to be prison gang members. Finally, the chapter examines the research claiming to identify the characteristics of prisoner gang members and considers what this work offers in terms of identifying prisoners at risk of gang involvement.

#### 1.1 Gang Definitions

Gang research to date, has been conducted mostly along sociological lines and so it is to sociology that the psychologist must first turn to learn about gang development and activity. As prison gang research is still very limited, an examination of gang research more generally must be conducted in order to contemplate the issue of definition. Throughout the twentieth century gang research waxed and waned but the last twenty years saw an increase in gang interest in the U.S.A. as gang activity seems to be increasing noticeably (Klein 1995)

With this, comes a need to define exactly what constitutes a gang. As Klein (1991) notes, during the 1960s, gangs were considered to be generic, they looked alike and members acted alike, “There was little pressure to attend carefully to issues of definition .....what is a gang, when is a group not a gang, what constitutes gang membership or different levels of gang membership?” (pii). In light of current knowledge, these early assumptions seem somewhat naïve. However, it seems equally naïve to believe that one comprehensive definition appropriate to all types of gang is either possible or even desirable. Nevertheless many researchers continue to emphasise the importance of a comprehensive definition (e.g. Bursik & Grasmick 1995; Huff 1996).

Indeed, some maintain that it becomes impossible to separate fact from mythology without a precise and parsimonious definition of a gang (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Other authors argue that the formulation of effective policy responses to gangs depends upon a reliable and valid formulation of knowledge of the ‘gang problem’ (Decker & Kempf-Leonard 1995). However, researchers need to strike a balance between obtaining operational definitions and public understanding of what is a gang. As Klein (1991) notes, researchers must take care not to create an artificial image of the gang crime problem (Klein 1991). Researchers must keep any gang problem in context and emphasise that the scale of a problem and the existence of a gang problem are not the same thing. Perhaps even more important than public perceptions of a gang, are those of the policymakers and in the absence of a clear and accurate definition many media and public officials’ views of gangs are distorted. (Horowitz 1990).

However, despite the importance attached by so many to a definition, Miller (1975) observes, “At no time has there been anything close to consensus on what a gang might be” (p115). For early researchers such as Thrasher (1927) the word ‘gang’ was as applicable to a playgroup as it was to a criminal organisation. For some, a gang is a delinquent response to a

perceived lack of opportunity amongst the young of socio-economically-disadvantaged populations (Cloward & Ohlin 1960). Other researchers argue for a definition that reflects the negative and criminally inclined behaviour of the group (Cohen 1955; Spergel, Ross, Curry and Chance 1989). Conversely, others maintain that delinquent activity, which may result from gang existence, is not a determining characteristic of a gang (e.g. Hagedorn 1988). Morash (1983) criticises a criminal delineation of a gang, noting that it has arisen from a growing reliance on definitions used by professionals such as those working in law enforcement or social work. However, Klein and Maxson (1989) defend the delinquent criterion, claiming that this aspect alone separates the gang from other groups of young people.

This last point makes sense since one of the defining features of any entity is the people who take an interest in it. Those who are most interested in gangs are the police, criminologists, task force agents and more recently forensic psychologists. It is the criminal behaviour of the gang that interests these bodies and as such, the criminal behaviour of the gang becomes a defining characteristic of the groups examined by the interested parties outlined above. However, as the criminal criterion becomes more popular, there is a danger that stereotypical concepts will result in innocuous groups being labelled as gangs as efforts to overcome gang effects on the community increase. There is also the danger that gangs will be seen *solely* as criminal entities when their actual criminal activity may be far less than their non-criminal activity.

In spite of this, efforts to define a gang by consulting criminal justice agents have led to characteristics other than criminal behaviour being included in definitions. Miller's (1975) survey of criminal justice and youth service agencies resulted in six major elements emerging as most related to the structure and function of a gang. These elements include: being organised; having identifiable leadership; identifying with a territory; continual association;



having a specific purpose and engaging in illegal activities. However, as Goldstein (1991) notes, several years have passed since Miller's survey and gangs appear to be evolving into more violent and threatening entities than their counterparts of twenty years ago.

Furthermore, the value of asking criminal justice agents for a definition has been brought into question. Morash (1983) analysed the differences between practitioners' and theorists' definitions of youth gangs and concluded that agency personnel overestimated gang activity. In contrast, Decker & Kempf-Leonard (1995) found that police and gang task force agents consistently underestimated gang activity, levels of youth involvement in gangs and failed to name as many known gangs as either gang or non-gang delinquents. The value of this research is that it highlights that if researchers want to define a gang more accurately, then perhaps they would benefit from asking not only professional agents but also those individuals closest to the problem (Huff 1996). The argument here is that young people have first hand knowledge and are also more affected by gangs than anyone else and so they are the people most likely to offer useful insight into gang phenomenon. The alternative sources such as justice official are arguably influenced by their own role in controlling any gang problem and may be affected accordingly. For example, the concept of 'denial' identified among police personnel by Huff (1996). As Bookin-Weiner and Horowitz (1983) note, concern about gangs seems not to be very strongly related to the volume of gang activity.

Consequently, not only are there disagreements over gang definitions, even the source of an appropriate definition is a matter of debate. However, one of the most useful and comprehensive definitions to date has to be Klein's (1971). Klein defines a gang as any identifiable group of youngsters who are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighbourhood; who recognise themselves as a group (almost invariably with a name); who have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighbourhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies.

The attraction of this definition is its broad-based approach. However, even such a flexible and widely used approach, is not without its problems. Other gang researchers note how some groups considered to be gangs do not associate themselves so much with a neighbourhood as they do with an activity (Vigil & Yun 1990). Also, Klein (1995) notes how contemporary gangs seem to have older members and so the 'youth' element may not be so applicable now as it was (or appeared to be) thirty years ago.

The irony here is that even a broad based approach such as Klein's seems not to be quite broad enough to envelope all forms of gang and gang activity. As Fagan (1989) observes, there are without doubt, many differences between and even within gangs. Such differences continue to pose problems for gang researchers as the quest for a definition continues. Some even advocate abandoning the term 'gang' altogether (Ball & Curry 1997). Others argue that a precise definition is neither possible nor advantageous as gangs, like any other group, cannot be characterised by a single definition that would endure over time and location (Goldstein 1991). Goldstein (1991) argues that many definitions have been offered over the last 80 years and in a sense all are correct. He notes that what constitutes a gang differs according to political and economic conditions, cultural diversities and with media-generated sensationalism or indifference to law violating youth groups. The current author concurs with the spirit of Goldstein's (1991) argument. As desirable as a precise definition may seem "Let me make the definition and I'll win any argument" (anonymous lawyer; cited in Ball & Curry 1997), to define a gang today will result in the constraint of future gang research, thereby losing empirical reality. Gangs, like any other human group, will evolve across time and differ cross-sectionally. The benefits of generalisability a definition offers will be lost in the costs of excluding so many groups that fail to fit the definitional mould.

### 1.1.1 Prison gang definitions

Nevertheless each researcher must be clear in how he/she operationally defines a gang (although many seem not to do so) in order to prevent misunderstanding of just what he/she examined and prison gang research is no exception to this dictum. It is, however, as susceptible to definitional discrepancy as its street counterpart, referred to above. Some researchers argue that a prison gang can only be labelled as such if it originates within the prison (Fong 1990). Others such as Jacobs (1977) maintain that the 'importation' of established street gangs into a prison equally qualify as a 'prison gang'. It is the contention of the current author that in definitional terms, origin is not as important as impact. The important issue is the *effect* of the 'gang' on the prison and other prisoners. Some researchers use this as part of their definition of a prison gang. For example, there seems to be a general consensus that a prison gang is a group of prisoners, which has a leader and whose negative behaviour adversely impacts on the prison that holds it (Huff 1996). However, considering the differential definitions of street gangs, it seems reasonable to assume that some prisoner groups will not necessarily fit this consensual definition, yet their impact may be just as negative and adverse as the more prototypical prison gang.

In terms of structure, some researchers note the flexible configuration of prison gangs, where organisation may be loosely or tightly structured (Camp & Camp 1985) and so it is feasible that some prison gangs may not have formal structures or acknowledged leaders. In addition, researchers have not delineated the minimum number of members for a prison gang to be determined as such. Consequently, in light of the discrepancies in the literature this thesis will base its definition of a prison gang in part on Brown's (2000) definition of a group and in part on the consensual definition of a prison gang in order to achieve a broad-based definition. Brown (2000) defines a group as existing when ... "two or more people define themselves as members of it and when its existence is recognised by at least one other." (p.2-

3). However, for pragmatic purposes, as some participants may not consider two people to be a group, the number used in this thesis as constituting a group will be three or more people. A prison gang will therefore be defined in this thesis as *a group of three or more prisoners whose negative behaviour has an adverse impact on the prison that holds them.*

## 1.2 The rise and impact of prison gangs in the U.S.A.

To date there is no documented evidence that prison gangs do or do not exist in English and Welsh prisons. Some texts (e.g. King & McDermott 1995) reveal that English prisons appear to be subject to the continuing rivalry of incarcerated community gangs whilst other establishments experience the violent intimidation of prisoners by groups of prisoners involved in the drug trade. Here, the suggestion seems to be that prisoner groups cause problems in English and Welsh prisons. However, this does not necessarily indicate a gang problem on a similar scale to that apparently experienced by American prisons.

Before any investigation into the notion of prison gangs in our prisons can begin, it is useful to examine the American experience of these groups. This may help clarify some of the reasons why prison gangs might develop, since influences such as a prison policy and environmental factors may also be relevant to how prisons in England and Wales are organised. Similarly, results of research into prison gangs may provide some insight into the reasons why prisoners might join gangs and again these may be relevant to the English and Welsh prison estate.

### 1.2.1 The rise of the prison gang in the U.S.A.

American prison gangs are generally thought to have started in Washington State in 1950 (Camp & Camp 1985). These authors note that seven years later, prison gangs began to emerge in California and in 1962, prison gangs developed in Illinois; these are all thought to be unrelated occurrences (Camp & Camp 1985). Some theorists consider prison gangs to have originated within the prison (e.g. Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991). Others contend that gangs

are “imported” into the prison system via prosecution (e.g. Jacobs 1977). The answer to the obvious question of who is ‘right’ really depends on which prisons are examined. As Buentello et al. (1991) looked specifically at Texan establishments and Jacobs (1977) examined Stateville in Illinois, each probably collected both specific and generic gang data. Generalisations from either study are inappropriate without more national data. Suffice to say that prison gangs can (and probably do) originate both within the prison and from the incarceration of street gang members.

Despite records of prison gangs from the 1950’s it was not until the late 1970’s and early 1980’s that an apparent increase in the numbers of prison gangs led to national attention (e.g. Wall Street Journal, August 20<sup>th</sup> 1981, cited in Camp & Camp 1985). In 1983 the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Policy indicated a need for an objective assessment of the extent and nature of prison gangs. Consequently, the first and arguably the most influential, large-scale national survey of adult state prison staff was conducted by Camp and Camp (1985). The aim of this work was to provide as much descriptive information as possible about prison gangs. Their results indicated that 2% (12,634 prisoners) of prisoners were gang members and 33 of the 49 jurisdictions surveyed reported the presence of gangs in their prisons.

However, as Knox (1994) notes a series of surveys of prison personnel conducted by the National Gang Crime Research Center (1991; 1992, 1993, cited in Knox 1994), indicated the number of male prison gang members in state prisons to be 9.41% (1991) and 10.29% (1992). For female prisons, staff reported 3.53% (1991) and 2.75% (1992) of female prisoners were prison gang members. The majority of respondents (66.7% in 1991; 70.9% in 1992) reported that prison gangs had existed in their prison for less than 5 years. Similar results

were found in local and county jails<sup>1</sup> (1993). Five percent of adult males and 2.18% of females were reported as being members of a prison gang and 57.6% of staff claimed that prison gangs emerged between 1989 and 1991. In juvenile institutions, an area neglected by Camp and Camp (1985) staff estimated that 17% of male and 5% of female prisoners were gang members. The results of these surveys seem to indicate that prison gangs are an increasing phenomenon throughout the American prison system.

The apparent increase in the number of gang members could, however, be attributed to more awareness of gangs generally and an increased vigilance on the part of prison staff. Certainly since the publication of Camp and Camp's (1985) survey, greater attention seems to have been paid to the possibility that prison gangs were operational in American prisons. Similarly, the results of these surveys could be a reflection of the increase in street gang membership noted by gang researchers (e.g. Klein 1995), which in turn, is likely to result in more street gang members entering American prisons.

Furthermore, the figures suggesting rising gang membership are not beyond dispute. Knox (1994) notes how a further survey conducted by the American Correctional Association in 1993 indicated that only 6% (60,000 prisoners) of the 1 million American state prison population were gang members. Yet some have argued that both Camp and Camp's (1985) figures and those of the American Correctional Association are a vast under-estimation of the true number of gang members in American prisons (Knox 1994). Knox points out that Lane (1989) noted more than 12,000 gang members in Illinois alone. Despite the debate over figures, most researchers did seem to agree that prison gangs were a flourishing feature of American prisons.

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<sup>1</sup> In the American penal system the U.S. government runs federal prisons; State prisons are run by the state that houses the prison and local and county jails are run by local government authorities. Each may differ in terms of security.

Federal and State prison authorities attributed the increase in prison gangs to inter-state transfers of known gang members to other States (Camp & Camp 1985). Once in the new prison, gang members would simply restart their previous activities by recruiting new members. However, evidence testing this theory remains unavailable due to a lack of prison records detailing the transfer of known gang members (Camp & Camp 1985). The authors did find some indication that gang members may be re-arrested in other jurisdictions and reproduce the gang from the former prison. In other instances the authors found prisoners had formed gangs by imitating what they had heard of gangs in other jurisdictions. Consequently, it was not unusual to find same-name gangs in different jurisdictions that were totally unconnected. Unsurprisingly, the most common gang names were those in receipt of the most media attention, which Porter (1982) argues exacerbated the development of prison gangs.

Inter-state transfers are not the only explanations offered as to why prison gangs spread throughout the U.S.A. Some authors argue that the amendments decreed in the prison reform case *Ruiz v. Estelle* (1980) led to a decrease in prison staff control over prisoners (Marquart & Crouch 1985). Courts expanded the constitutional rights of prisoners<sup>2</sup> and effectively abolished the previous system where prisoners were managed at the discretion of prison staff. Until *Ruiz v. Estelle* (1980), a common practice was for prison staff to use 'trusted' prisoners to maintain control over other prisoners – a process that clearly violated the United Nations standards (1955) on the treatment of prisoners (Palmer 1985). Known as the 'building tender' system in Texas, this method of control was deployed throughout America, albeit under different names. Functioning officially as an information system, this strategy had been effective in terms of prisoner control, but was often applied with brutality and oppression (Marquart & Crouch 1985). Building tender (BT's) prisoners wielded power over

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<sup>2</sup> Prisoners in English and Welsh prisons may direct their complaints to the prison's Board of Visitors and subsequently to the Prison Ombudsman, an independent body that investigates prisoner grievances. Accordingly they do not have leave to appeal directly to a Court of Law, as do prisoners in America.

other prisoners earning privileges for themselves and would often beat and possibly cause the deaths of other prisoners, to maintain order (Knox 1994).

Once the BT system was removed, a “hands off” doctrine was employed and staff were expected to cope alone with issues of control within the prison (Fong & Buentello 1991; Knox 1994; Stevens 1997). Mindful of the increased rights of prisoners and fearful of being sued; staff began to overlook many prisoner transgressions (Stevens 1997). In this atmosphere of inhibited staff and no formal hierarchy amongst the prisoners, power became available and many prisoners sought to capitalise on this new opportunity (Jacobs 1977; Johnson 1996). As Knox (1994) observes, it is also highly unlikely that the disenfranchised BTs ‘went quietly’ after many years of almost autonomous power, although quite what role the BTs played in the later evolution of prison gangs remains unknown. What can be supported is the contention that prisoners quickly organised themselves into self-protection groups whose aim was to maximise their power within the prison (Eckland-Olson 1986; cited in Fong & Buentello 1991). This resulted in increased violence and the further development of prison gangs.

A further explanation for the increase in prison gangs may be attributable to the de-segregation of white, black and Hispanic prisoners in 1979. Before this, racial tension within many prisons was avoided by housing white, black and Hispanic prisoners in separate cell-blocks and allocating them separate jobs. After 1979, prisoners of all races were held together, leading to inter-racial conflict (Irwin 1980) and the escalation in popularity of some politically extreme prison gangs such as the white Aryan Brotherhood (Pelz, Marquart & Pelz 1991).

In England and Wales, prisoners cannot directly approach courts and a BT system is not in operation. Therefore, it could be argued that the English and Welsh prison estate will be less vulnerable to the prison gang than the American penal system. However, there is a growing proportion of foreign nationals in English and Welsh prisons (Flynn 1998), which



could result in some forms of racial/ethnic conflict. Some American researchers argue that although gangs thrive in any atmosphere of conflict, racial conflict in particular, can be viewed as a surrogate measure of the prison gang problem (Knox & Tromanhauser 1991). In the English and Welsh prison estate, the appointment of a race relations' officer to oversee racial harmony within the prison, might help alleviate some racial tensions. Nevertheless, this form of good practice is not universal and racial or ethnic tensions remain feasible.

On the other hand, there are certain fundamental differences between the American and English and Welsh prison systems that may influence the existence and/or emergence of the prison gang. For instance, the lack of control exerted by American correctional officers both before and following the Ruiz ruling could be attributable to the low number of guards expected to supervise high numbers of prisoners. For example, in Quentin (a high security establishment) the ratio of officers to prisoners is 1:190 and even in the block where prison gangs are known to be active the ratio is 1:16. Admittedly this situation may, in some part, be compensated for by the existence of technological assistance such as CCTV but it is debatable how much reliable information a camera can offer compared to the personal supervision provided by prison staff. In English and Welsh prisons, prisoners experience a greater staff presence than their counterparts in the U.S.A. The official ratio of officers to prisoners in England and Wales is one officer per 5.5 prisoners (low security) and one officer per 1.1 prisoners in high security prisons (Function Report, H.M. Prison Service 1998). However, these figures fluctuate widely between wings in different prisons, so some prisoners will experience more supervision than will others even within the same category of prison. Nevertheless, the suggestion here is that *currently* prisoners are supervised to an extent that may hinder the development and functioning of prison gangs.

It is unlikely, however, that the English and Welsh prison estate will remain constant. There exists the question of how much longer the current prisoner/officer ratio will continue,

as prison populations continue to rise, there are cutbacks in staffing levels and an increased reliance on technology. Further, the English and Welsh prison system has already experienced investigations of officer brutality in some prisons (e.g. Wormwood Scrubs) and as we appear to be becoming a more litigious society generally, it is not beyond the boundaries of belief that prisoners will, sooner or later, be able to air their grievances in a courtroom. Should such a policy be put into operation, it is reasonable to surmise that legitimate order and control will be compromised as prison staff begin to fear legal repercussions if they discipline prisoners.

In such an atmosphere, prisoners in this country, like prisoners in America may form groups either to capitalise on available power or for protection. In an environment of deprivation it is perhaps not surprising that prisoners should attempt to grasp back some of the power they have had taken away from them due to incarceration. As the American experience seems to indicate, a fine balance of disciplinary measures and prisoner rights is necessary in order to maintain acceptable levels of order and control within a prison. Given the itinerant nature of a prison population, the amendments to penal policy and the impact of budget demands on the prison, its staff and prisoners, such a balance will be difficult to maintain. Consequently, any prison, if the rationale of prison gang research is accepted as plausible, remains vulnerable to the inception and/or growth of prison gangs. In this, the English and Welsh prison system is no exception.

The increase in the number of community gangs such as the "Yardies," "Triads" and the "Asian Mafia" on British streets over the last 20 years (Thompson 1995) indicates that prisons are also vulnerable to the importation of street gang members. Early research indicated that British street gangs, unlike their American counterparts were generally disorganised units with a transient membership and little in terms of cohesion (Downes 1966) and did not compare to the violent American street gangs described by researchers such as Cloward and Ohlin (1960). However, research suggests this differentiation may be changing,

as gangs in England such as the "Yardies," "Triads" and the "Asian Mafia" proliferate (Thompson 1995). Street gangs may be delineated by race (Thompson 1995) or they may be ethnically diverse, organising themselves along regional rather than racial lines (Mares 2001). Mares also identified that street gangs often do not have the formal leadership so apparent in their American counterparts. However, like the American gangs, they often share a common ambition to monopolise the drug trade (Thompson 1995). The advent of 'new' drugs such as Crack and the reduction in street prices of Heroin and Cocaine has increased the number of gangs and the levels of violence used by them, argues Thompson (1995). Further, it is noted that in England and America, street gang members are usually adolescent or in their early twenties (Thompson 1995; Lasley 1997) and in America, female membership is becoming more common (Campbell 1984).

If street gang membership continues to escalate and evolve it seems feasible that at some point same gang prisoners are likely to be held in the same prison. Paradoxically, this is even more likely if Lord Justice Woolf's (1991) recommendation that prisoners be held close to home is considered. As the Prison Service strives to accommodate this recommendation, it unwittingly increases the risk that same gang prisoners will be incarcerated into one prison and regroup. Furthermore, as Knox (1994) argues, when one group threat arises (e.g. the importation of a community gang) its natural counterpart will also appear (e.g. the development of the prison gang). Thus, if street gangs are imported into prisons it is possible that this will result in the formation of other gangs within the prison.

### 1.2.2 The impact of the prison gang in America

Prison gangs function on the acquisition of power and financial profit (Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Stevens 1997). Some authors argue that prison gangs have evolved into large organisations whose power bases extend into the community (Crouch & Marquart 1989; Fong & Buentello 1991; Sullivan 1991). Prison gangs exploit weaknesses in staff and other

prisoners in order to gain and maintain control within the prison (Stevens 1997). Gangs employ verbal threats and physical attack to suppress staff and other prisoners (Irwin 1980; Huff 1990; Williamson 1990; Conroy & Hess 1992; Johnson 1996; Stevens 1997). As prison gangs flourish due to the acquisition of power, generally they can be delineated by the (almost) total absence of any chosen activity that is not criminal (Camp & Camp 1985).

The most frequent activities of prison gangs include in descending order: intimidation; drug trafficking; assault; abuse of weaker prisoners; extortion; protection; contraband weapons; theft; strong-arm robbery; rackets; robbery; prostitution; rape; sodomy for sale; murder; bribery; arson; slavery; explosives (Camp & Camp 1985). Almost all gang-related crimes are attributable to furthering or protecting business interests (Beaird 1986). Such activities have resulted in some justice agents insisting prison gangs should be classified as the most dangerous crime syndicate in America (Buentello 1986; Fong 1990).

More recent evidence reinforces the earlier findings of Camp and Camp (1985). Rush, Stone and Wycoff (1996; cited in Stevens 1997) found prison gangs to be associated with large amounts of drugs, assaults on staff and prisoners, extortion and the frequency of non-gang prisoners' requests for transfers and protective custody. Stevens' (1997) interviews with prisoners suggested that gangs control the drug trade in North Carolina prisons and employed intimidation and violence against staff and other prisoners. Stevens (1997) also revealed that sexual violence was a further tactic prison gangs used against other prisoners in order to maintain control and power. Unsurprisingly, Stevens (1997) reports that 73% of non-gang prisoner respondents wanted transfers and 87% would accept protective custody, if they could do so without losing their rights.

It would also seem that inter-gang alliances contribute to the evolution of prison gangs. Such alliances are argued to result from affiliations formed in penal institutions that provide gangs with the opportunity for resolving differences and merging into "supergangs"

(Knox 1994). Bobrowski (1988) notes how street gang alliances are becoming more commonplace as gangs amalgamate to strengthen power and pool resources. Knox (1994) points out that a penal institution is the ideal place for such allegiances to be formed. The argument here, is that mismanagement of the gang problem by correctional institutions, results in such conflict within the prison that gangs feel forced to establish alliances which facilitate the expansion of gangs into “supergangs” that can have an even greater impact on the prison (Knox 1994).

However, reports of gang impact on the penal system differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (Camp & Camp 1985). Some administrations in Camp and Camp’s survey, for example Hawaii, Colorado and Michigan, recorded the presence of prison gangs but maintained they were not problematic. A further 11 States reported that gangs accounted for less than 5% of prison problems; 3 States reported that prison gangs account for 85% of problems whilst 6 States maintained prison gangs were responsible for more than 50% but less than 85% of problems. Camp and Camp (1985) maintained that many prison staff seemed reluctant to report prison gangs as a problem as it would appear as if they (the staff) were unable to maintain order and control in the prison. More recent evidence shows that some staff (who have little to do with gang intelligence work) believe the aim of a prison gang is to undermine staff authority (Ralph, Hunter, Marquart, Cuvelier & Merianos 1996). To achieve this, gangs file frivolous legal writs and lawsuits, instigate food and work strikes and cause major disturbances. However, Ralph et al. (1996) note although prison gangs do indulge in such behaviour it is likely to be a leisure activity and not a real objective.

Explanations as to why some prisons reported the presence, but not the problem of gangs may be found in the behaviour of the gangs themselves and in staff perceptions of what constitutes a ‘gang problem’. Prison gangs are not generally disruptive and tend to avoid contact with staff and other prisoners except in the execution of gang business (Camp &

Camp 1985). Gangs operate by using the prison regime, employing officially sanctioned activities, for example social clubs and in particular, visiting times, as a cover for criminal activities such as drug trafficking. They are usually co-operative with prison staff (considered as a negligible obstacle to gang business) and as a consequence, gang-related problems only arise if staff challenge the gang's activities. If staff impede gang business, the results are generally violent (Camp & Camp 1985). In Texas alone, the impact of prison gangs was so severe during the 1980s that the Director of the Department of Corrections declared a state of emergency (Beaird 1986; Fong 1990).

In this way, the unopposed prison gang will have little effect on the regular running of a prison and may be reported as unproblematic. As many American prisons once sanctioned the building tender system, allowing some prisoners to use intimidation and violence to control other prisoners, it is feasible that staff may not consider gang intimidation and violence to other prisoners to be a *problem* as such. However, if prison staff consider gangs in terms of the impact on other prisoners, then they may be more likely to report a gang problem and possibly feel they should take action. If gangs do operate in the English and Welsh prison estate the implications in terms of staff response are clear, since the Prison Service is obliged to abide by its statement of purpose:

“Her Majesty’s Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity and help them lead law abiding lives in custody and after release.”

Clearly in this country the Prison Service has a duty is to look after prisoners. If prisoners are subject to intimidation and aggression imposed by prison gangs, then arguably they are not being ‘looked after’. Similarly in order to ‘help them lead law abiding lives’ the Prison Service must look to challenge any illegal activities prisoners become involved in. A final argument against ignoring the presence of a prison gang is the possibility that gang

numbers will increase. As noted earlier, prisoners who feel threatened by gang activity, may form their own gangs for protection (Knox 1994), which in turn will lead to an increase in the number of threats to staff and other prisoners (Lane 1989).

From the above, it seems that prison staff surveys may be influenced by a number of factors not derived from an objective assessment of gang impact by prison staff. Staff reports of prison gangs as a problem may be largely dependent on who it is that the gang victimises. If staff are victimised, staff may consider gangs to be a problem. However, in many instances, gangs victimised other prisoners and thus the likelihood of the gang being considered a problem by prison staff may be reduced. This reduction may be further exacerbated by the possible reluctance of some prison staff to admit a gang problem for fear of losing credibility as custodians of a criminal population. However, it may also be reduced by staff inability to identify prisoners as members of a prison gang.

### 1.3 Prison gang formation

As noted earlier, prisons are probably vulnerable to both imported and prison gangs that form within the prison. This may have little implication for the assessment of the existence and impact of the prison gang, but it does have implications for the processes involved in the development of the prison gang. Without a clear understanding of the developmental processes involved in gang membership, it remains virtually impossible to devise effective interventions. As Jacobs (1974) argues, if the behaviour of the prisoner can be entirely explained in terms of the environment in which he/she is placed then the ... "right mix of institutional policies and programs would produce a rehabilitated individual whose favourable disposition toward formal organizational goals would augur well for his later return to the community" (p.397). However, it seems doubtful that an examination of the environmental origins of prison gangs will offer a comprehensive explanation of the influences that contribute to gang membership. Instead, it seems more reasonable to expect an

examination of the origins of these groups to perhaps offer insight into some of the psychological processes that underpin prison gang membership.

### 1.3.1 Importation theory

Importation theory argues that gangs arise in the prison system due to the prosecution of community gang members, who are subsequently 'imported' into the prison system. Jacobs (1977) observed that once in prison, some street gangs would recruit from the prisoner population thus swelling their numbers, whereas others adhere to a strict code of no further enrolment. Jacobs' (1977) compelling observations in a male high-security prison, provided evidence that much of the supposedly unique 'prisoner culture' was not in fact a prison phenomenon. Rather it was a reflection of community culture. This notion was not new, it was proposed earlier by Irwin and Cressey (1964) and, to some extent, by Clemmer (1940) who argued that the prisoner brings a set of values and behaviour patterns into the prison with him/her.

These attitudes and behaviours will then influence the way the prisoner behaves once in prison. If a street gang member enters a prison where other members of the gang are already held, then his/her pre-existing attitudes and behaviours may be continued, as past associations are renewed. Consequently, incarceration, apart from the obvious denial of liberty, may have little impact on the street gang prisoner who simply continues with previous associations and maintains his/her pre-existing attitudes and behaviours. Jacobs' (1974) description of the incarceration of street gang members as almost a homecoming reinforces this notion of minimal penal impact on the individual. Gang member prisoners, Jacobs (1974) observed, ensured that newly incarcerated members' psychological and material needs were met in the form of protection against other prisoners and immediate access to a vast array of contraband goods. If the gang member's family had deserted the prisoner, then the gang arranged visits and correspondence to offset feelings of loneliness. Jacob's (1974)

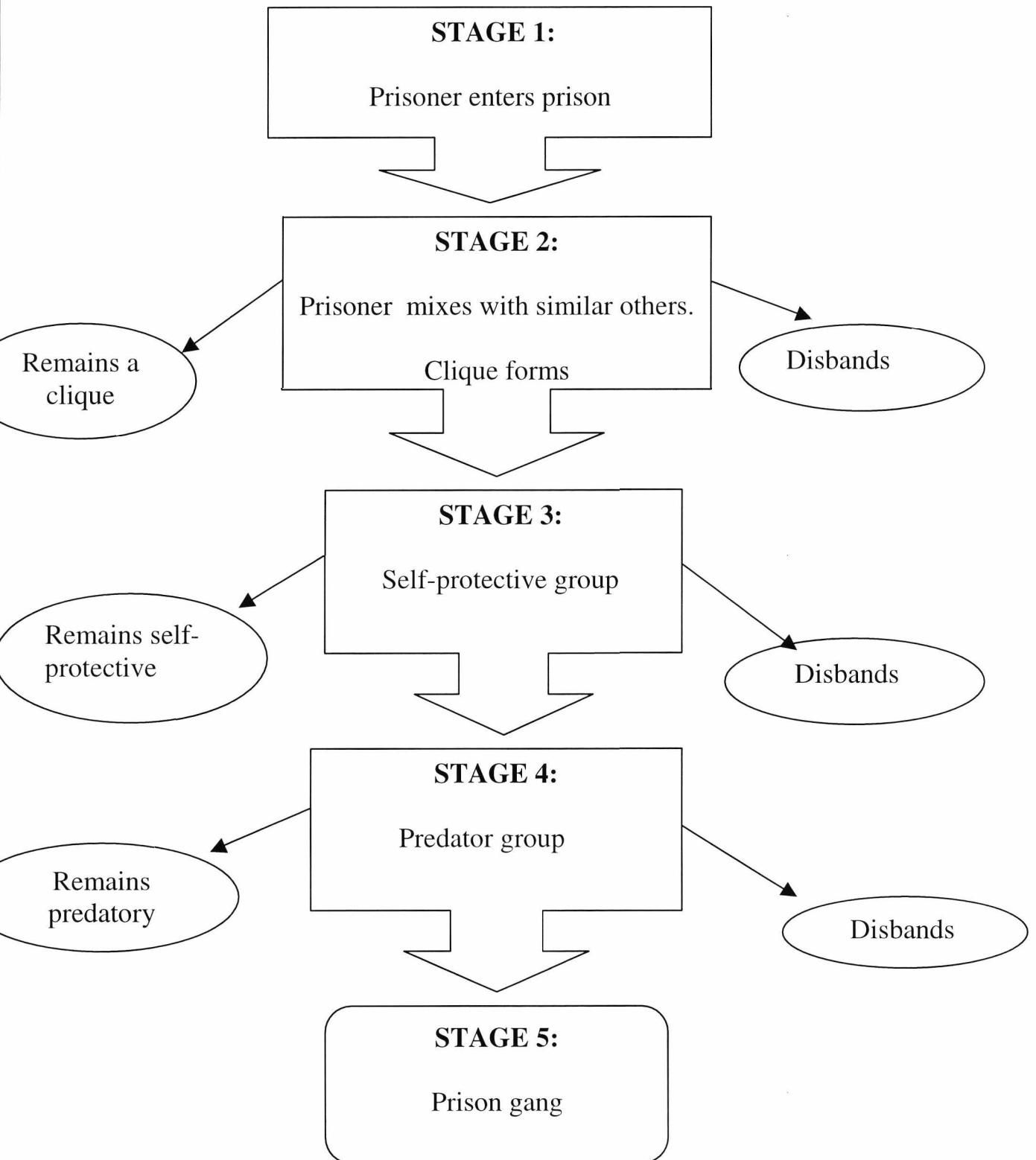


observations demonstrate the function of the gang as an ally to the individual prisoner. Jacobs notes, "To the extent that adjustment needs to be made to the contingencies of incarceration, the adjustment is a group rather than an individual phenomenon" (p. 408). The gang therefore offers its members insulation against some of the more unpleasant experiences of imprisonment.

### 1.3.2 Within-prison gang formation

Despite the long history of prison gangs, no theory existed to guide prison gang research until Buentello Fong and Vogel (1991) proposed a five-stage model of prison gang development (see figure 1). Using the inductive method, Buentello et al. (1991) based the theory on data spanning a ten-year period inside the Texas Department of Corrections. The data included: some personal observations, staff reports, prisoner reports (non-gang and ex-gang members), prisoner records, prison gang files and interviews with ex prison gang members. The authors argue that eight gangs (1,174 prisoners) representing most of the prison gang problem in Texas, were 'home grown,' that is, they developed inside the prison. Their theory offers an explanation as to how such gangs arise.

**Figure 1.1: A THEORETICAL MODEL OF PRISON GANG DEVELOPMENT (BUENTELLO, FONG & VOGEL 1991)**



In the first stage of Buentello et al.'s (1991) model, the newly incarcerated prisoner, bereft of his/her usual forms of support, recognises his/her entry into a very uncertain environment where danger is an ever-present feature of prison life (Duffee 1989). In order to cope with feelings of isolation and fear, the prisoner must go through a process of prisonization (Clemmer 1940), adapting attitudes and behaviour in order to abide by the prisoner code of conduct (Sykes & Messenger 1970). The new prisoner must also become familiar with the illicit trades of the prison (Gleason 1978) and any racial conflict. To overcome feelings of isolation and fear, the prisoner moves on to stage 2 and mixes with other prisoners with whom he/she shares common interests e.g. cellmate, classmate, racial or regional origin. In this stage, Buentello et al. (1991) explain, the group is based on the need to belong and the need for survival. Criminal activity is rarely promoted.

In time, some such groups disband due to transfer, or release of members. Others evolve into stage 3 becoming self-protection groups. This occurs when the clique has a sizeable membership or when members perceive hostility from other groups. At this 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, the group is recognised as such by other prisoners and staff. The group's primary function is protection of its members and so it does not engage in illicit activities. Apart from the increased recognition as a group, the clique bears little resemblance to the formality of a prison gang. There is no clear structure and no distinct leadership. In due course, some individuals begin to exert influence over the group and emerge as leaders taking the group into stage 4; the predator group.

In stage 4 members begin to discuss the necessity for formal rules of conduct. Viewpoints not held by the majority are dismissed and members who are considered as weak or non-cohesive are expelled. The predator group is now ready to participate in criminal activities such as extortion, gambling and violence against other prisoners. This group can generate fear among staff and other prisoners and use their power to profit from criminal

activities. Eventually, the authors contend, some predator groups emerge as stronger than others and elevate into stage 5, a prison gang.

As a prison gang, members abide by strict codes of conduct and see themselves as part of an organised crime syndicate. The very existence of a code of rules attests to their organisational capacity and commitment to criminal activity. For example rule 12 of the Texas Mexican Mafia states:

“The MEXIKANEMI is a criminal organisation and therefore will participate in all aspects of criminal interest for monetary benefits” (Fong 1990, p. 40)

Members were once expected to wear tattoos to serve as a warning to other prisoners not to disrespect the gang member. However, this is a diminishing habit, since staff could also identify prison gang members and send them to segregation units. The gang may adopt a paramilitary style organisational structure with a definitive authority and responsibility for each member. Commitment to the gang is lifelong and thus the prison gang is guaranteed a crime base on the streets once members are released (Sullivan 1991). Buentello et al. (1991) argue that prison gangs have an alarming level of power on the streets as a result of their criminal activities. This argument is supported by Sikes (1997) who observed a Los Angeles gang summit in 1993, attended by the media and 1,000 street gang members. At the summit, the Mexican Mafia sent a message from prison ordering a truce among youth gangs and an end to drive-by shootings. The result, Sikes (1997) observed was a radical decrease in the numbers of gang slayings as gangs were forced to fight face to face. Prison gangs, it seems, have the potential to exert power and control over street gangs even from within prison (Buentello et al. 1991; Sikes 1997)).

Buentello et al. (1991) acknowledge that prison gangs may owe their origins to the streets in other jurisdictions, but in Texas, the authors claim, they originate primarily from within the prison. Nevertheless, the authors offer no arguments as to why Texas should be

unique in this respect. Buentello et al. (1991) do, however, point out that assumptions that prison gangs originate from the streets resulted in delaying the development of a theoretical framework explaining prison gang evolution. This is a valid point. If prison gangs are community gangs imported into prisons then they may be perceived by prison authorities as a community problem mirrored into the penal system. Consequently any explanations of and solutions to, their existence may be expected to come from community gang research. If, however, prison gangs develop within the prison then they may be considered to be a penal problem and so explanations and solutions would need to be sought within the prison system.

Given the impact of prison gangs on the penal system in America, it does seem that it would be complacent (and dangerous) to make any assumptions that prison gangs arise from importation alone. As noted earlier, Knox (1994) argues that prison gangs may develop due to the perceived threat posed by imported gangs. A possible example of this is how the power of the Texas Aryan Brothers (a white supremacy gang) seemed to increase after the development of the Black Muslims in Texas prisons. Street gang research clearly supports notions of gangs begetting gangs. Evidence suggests that many street gangs form due to the perceived threat presented by another gang (Klein 1995). Therefore, even if the prison gang problem originates from street gang importation, prisons will be vulnerable to further gang formation, necessitating a theory of gang development particular to prisons.

In addition, other authors note how perceived threats leading to gang formation can come from a number of sources including regime, correctional (prison) officers and correctional (prison) regulations (e.g. Marquart & Crouch 1985). In this way, even in the absence of imported gangs, indigenous gangs may develop due to the threat that penal sanctions pose to prisoners and as Buentello et al (1991) note, this seems to be the case in Texas. However, what seems to be particularly important is that although street and indigenous prison gangs may effectively be opposite sides of the same coin, presenting

different pictures in terms of origin, in terms of function or impact they are very similar. Both provide members with support, protection and material possessions and both adversely affect other prisoners and order in the prison. If steps are to be taken to alleviate the problem of prison gangs then what is needed is a comprehensive theory to guide research and subsequent interventions.

The theory offered by Buentello et al. (1991) has much to offer intuitively. However, for a theory to adequately explain any phenomenon, it must be comprehensive, explaining the “why nots” as well as the “whys”, it must make sense of a complex situation and it must allow us to develop strategies for responding to the phenomenon. Unfortunately, their theory of prison gang development fails in many of these aspects.

Buentello et al. (1991) explain the process of indigenous prison gang development, but they fail to explain why only an estimated 10% of prisoners become gang members. Also, the model fails to explain why some prisoners remain in the early stages of development and do not progress to become full-blown prison gangs. Furthermore, the theory fails to indicate the length of time it takes for a prison gang to develop, or if prisoners enter the gang at later stages of development. The theory seems to imply that all gang members join simultaneously. Surely some members will join the gang at later stages in its development and, if so, for what reasons? However, from a psychological perspective, perhaps the most important criticism of this theory is that it fails to offer any indication as to which prisoners will be most vulnerable to prison gang membership.

#### 1.4 Prison gang membership

The theoretical concepts of prisoner fear and loneliness proposed by Buentello et al. (1991) and to some extent by Jacobs (1974) are supported by evidence that prisoners experience a number of “pains” (or stresses) due to incarceration (Sykes 1958). Sykes argued that male prisoners exist in a milieu of deprivation where five basic needs - liberty; goods and

services; heterosexual relations; autonomy; and personal security - are denied. Giallombardo (1966) offered a similar picture of female prisoner deprivation. According to Sykes, (1958) these deprivations deal the prisoner a “profound hurt” (p.79). The ‘wounded’ prisoner then turns to his/her peers in order to find a form of support that may enable him/her to cope with the negative psychological effects resulting from the stress of imprisonment.

Prison gang research elaborates on the point of peer support by showing how prisoners seek the company of peers with whom they have something in common. Such commonalities include, race, religion, region of origin, political beliefs or an acceptance of gang values (Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Fong & Buentello 1991; Rush et al 1996). In some instances, gang membership may even be founded on a process dubbed ‘Juvenilization’ by Stevens, (1997). ‘Juvenilization’ explains how prison gang membership in adult prisons may be based on the knowledge that a prisoner was once held in the same juvenile detention centre. It is not even necessary for the prisoners to have known each other at that earlier time; knowledge of shared institutional experience is sufficient to draw prisoners together into a gang (Stevens 1997).

Once a prisoner joins a prison gang the support he/she receives from other members may offset some of the deprivations referred to by Sykes (1958). The prison gang may supply its members with goods and services; it may also offer some form of sexual relations, prestige, power and a heightened personal security in the form of protection (Camp & Camp 1985). This point is particularly relevant for the purposes of this thesis, as research in England indicates that prisoners fear intimidation and assault above all other aspects of prison life (Adler 1994). McDermott and King (1995) note, for prisoners, one of the worst “pains” of imprisonment is being with other prisoners. These authors revealed that, of the five English prisons in their study, one reported the continuing rivalry of incarcerated community gangs and others reported intimidation and violence from groups of prisoners involved in the drug

trade. Consequently, it is conceivable that gangs may be responsible for a number of problems (e.g. prisoner assaults and bullying) within English prisons. Such observations offer reasons why prisoners may be tempted into gang affiliation at least in terms of the protection the group may offer.

As much as it seems that any prisoner, given the same set of deprivations and fears, would be vulnerable to prison gang membership, American research indicates that only a small minority of prisoners actually belongs to gangs (e.g. Knox 1994). Such observations inevitably lead to questions of which prisoners are vulnerable to prison gang membership and why this might be the case. To address such issues, it is necessary to look at the personal characteristics of prison gang members and non-gang prisoners.

#### 1.4.1 Characteristics of gang members in America

Research comparing gang and non-gang prisoners is limited but what there is does seem to highlight a number of factors that differentiate the two groups. Gang members are more likely to have reported drug and alcohol problems than non-gang members (Sheldon 1991). Sheldon noted that gang members are less likely to have ever been employed and are more likely to have been arrested 15 or more times than their non-gang counterparts. As juvenile offenders, they are likely to have been arrested and committed to court more frequently than non-gang prisoners. Similarly, they are also more likely to have been sent to juvenile institutions. They are probably serving longer sentences than non-gang prisoners and are more likely to have used a weapon in their last offence. Within the prison, Sheldon (1991) discovered that gang members had more disciplinary offences, particularly drug and fighting offences than non-gang prisoners and were less likely to be involved in prison rehabilitation programmes. Sheldon did find that slightly more gang than non-gang prisoners were willing to participate in educational programmes. Sheldon interprets this as a willingness to change, but it could also indicate a use of the system to further illicit activity.



Ralph, Hunter, Marquart, Cuvelier and Merianos (1996) examined adult males in Texan prisons, again to identify defining differences between gang and non-gang prisoners. They reported that gang members were younger (average 26.05 years) than non-gang prisoners (average 27.96 years) on entry to the prison and older on discharge from the prison (average 29.69 years) than non-gang members (average 29.1 years). This difference the authors interpret as evidence that gang members have longer sentences than their non-gang counterparts. Education levels appeared to be the same for both groups, although White and Hispanic gang members were slightly less educated than their non-gang counterparts. Conversely, African American gang members had a slightly higher education level than non-gang African American prisoners. Also, gang members were found to have significantly more convictions (1.71) than non-gang members (1.55). Ralph et al. (1996) also found that only 17% of gang members were first time offenders, compared to 46.1% of the non-gang group. This is interesting as it could suggest either that gang members are more likely to be convicted more frequently or that prisoners who are convicted more than once are more susceptible to prison gang membership. It could even indicate that prisoners who are most experienced in terms of sentences served are most likely to be considered as gang members by prison authorities.

Previous criminal histories also revealed a number of differences between gang and non-gang members. Gang members were more likely to have histories of previous juvenile reformatories, previous imprisonment and previous probation. They were also 5 times more likely to have been held in solitary confinement (although it is not clear if this occurred before or following gang membership) and were more likely to serve longer portions of their sentences (34.38% compared to 27.26%) than were non-gang prisoners. This trend also held for violent gang and non-gang prisoners, although gang members were more likely to be serving a sentence for a violent offence than were non-gang members. Overall, Ralph et al.

(1996) found four descriptive characteristics to be associated with gang members: previous adult incarceration; length of sentence imposed; earlier incarceration in a juvenile reformatory and the presence of a violent offence.

The results of both studies are not surprising. As most prison gang researchers note, prison gangs are defined by their total commitment to criminal activity (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991; Buentello Fong & Vogel 1991). However, the indications that prison gang members are more violent, have a longer criminal history and are serving a longer prison sentences than their non-gang counterparts may also demonstrate that they have more experience of the judicial and penal system. As such, gang members are not so likely to be the fearful stressed individuals described by Sykes (1958) and Buentello et al. (1991); they are possibly confident, 'seasoned' veterans of the judicial system with something to offer the gang that adopts them. It must not be forgotten that prison gangs aim to acquire power and control within the prison and this is unlikely to be achieved through members who are fearful of official reprisal or violent confrontation. Indeed, in many instances, prisoners seeking gang membership must meet certain criteria showing them to be unafraid of retribution. Potential members may be instructed to shed the blood of another prisoner or a member of staff (Camp & Camp 1985). This serves two purposes for the gang; it takes care of gang business by removing some form of opposition and it ensures that criminal justice agents (who would not harm another individual) cannot infiltrate the gang (Fong & Buentello 1991). Hence the relationship between gang and prisoner may be reciprocal with only prisoners likely to fulfil the gang's aims being admitted for membership.

As much as the data collected by Sheldon (1991) and Ralph et al. (1996) seems to concur with much of the rhetoric of prison gang research, a note of caution is necessary. The methodology in both studies is at best dubious and, at worst, flawed. Ralph et al. (1996) relied solely on prison staff identification of prisoners as prison gang members and Sheldon relied

on prison records (compiled by prison staff) to explore gang membership. Sheldon determined a prisoner's street gang membership from trial data (where the defendant admitted gang allegiance, or was on trial for a gang-related offence) but this does not necessarily mean the prisoner subsequently became a prison gang member. Incarceration of a street gang member does not *inevitably* indicate he/she will go on to be a prison gang member.

It is possible that in some prisons, street gang members may not feel the need to affiliate themselves with a group as they did on the streets. If there are contextual factors within a prison that exacerbate, ameliorate or make no difference to gang membership, it is important that they be identified and prison policies shaped accordingly. This is a problem with a great deal of gang research conducted in prisons. Many researchers (e.g. Sheldon 1991 and Ralph et al. 1996) often do not make it clear whether they are looking at prison gang members or street gang members who happen to be in prison. Without specificity, it is not clear whether the research offers analyses of prison gangs, street gangs or a justified mixture of both.

Added to this, is the problem of using a methodology that relies solely on prison staff identification of prisoners as gang members (either directly or indirectly through prison records). As noted earlier, prison staff perceptions of prison gangs vary greatly; some staff maintain gangs are not a problem whilst others note gangs as an extensive problem (Camp & Camp 1985). Perhaps prison staff consider prisoners to be gang members if they are problematic prisoners. Both Sheldon's (1991) and Ralph et al.'s (1996) research indicates that prison gang members have a higher criminal profile than their non-gang counterparts. What is not clear is if this is an actual indication of members' characteristics, or if it is the case that certain prisoners are considered to be gang members simply because they cause prison staff more problems than other prisoners do. Identification of gang members as such must be

accurate otherwise penal sanctions will be applied to the wrong individuals and examining the wrong people will inevitably flaw prison gang research.

#### 1.4.2 Identification of prison gang members

Some authors argue that the prison gang problem is exacerbated by the wrongful labelling and subsequent mistreatment of prison gang members (Kassel 1998). Kassel (1998) is not a social science researcher, but a staff attorney with the Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services and counsel to prisoners accused of gang membership. As such, much of the evidence Kassel offers comes from affidavits submitted to American courts. Kassel (1998) notes how prisoners identified by prison staff as gang leaders are held in solitary confinement within gang blocks (average stay is one year). Here, prisoners remain in their cells for twenty-three hours out of every 24 for four days in a five-day cycle (DuBois 1995). On the fifth day they do not leave their cells at all. Opportunities for treatment and education are sparse and visiting and telephone calls are inevitably scheduled for the out of cell hour.

The problem with identification of gang members, argues Kassel (1998), is that prison staff are unable to differentiate between a gang-related incident and a routine prison occurrence. The only distinction between the two is that a gang-related incident involves a prisoner perceived by staff to be a member of a gang (DuBois 1995). As Maxson & Klein (1995) note, different definitions of the term “gang-related” can account for variances of up to 100%. Admittedly, the American penal system has attempted to introduce some objectivity into the process of identification by employing 17 separate criteria by which prisoners are judged to be gang-affiliated. However, these criteria are derived from the Department of Corrections Security Threat Group Management Procedural Statement (Kassel 1998) and not from the strength of empirical research. Evaluation of this system, in terms of its accuracy, has not been conducted (Kassel 1998). Prisoners bearing tattoos, which often signify ‘wannabe’ status (Klein 1995), or socialise with ‘confirmed’ members all earn points. Misconduct is

*not* necessary for a prisoner to be labelled a gang member. Kassel (1998) argues that the inaccuracy of this system and the threat it poses to prisoners leads to “reinforcement of gang member commitment to the group enhances gang cohesiveness and criminal capacity, undermining prison security and public safety” (p 40). Kassel argues that imposing harsh conditions on arbitrarily identified gang members only results in a heightened sense of belonging among the prisoner population. In short, prison policy can lead to gang cohesion and possibly contribute to gang formation.

This view is shared by gang researchers who note that counterproductive results with gangs will result from: 1) policies that proceed from an inaccurate view of what gangs are; 2) intervention strategies that enhance gang cohesiveness and 3) misidentification of gang members (Knox 1994). The National Institute for Corrections accepts that 75-85% of the total membership of a prison gang may be marginal members (Kassel 1998). This is particularly worrying, since street gang researchers note how gang cohesiveness derives more from external than from internal sources (Klein 1995). Such a notion may be supported by the observation that in the riots following the death of Rodney King in Los Angeles street gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips, (usually bitter enemies) fought along side each other against a super ordinate enemy, who was in this instance, the police (Sikes 1997). If prison policies continue to target prisoners as gang members using unsubstantiated criteria, then it is quite feasible that the marginal members of a prison gang may feel compelled to become full-blown members, thus ensuring the growth and continuance of prison gangs.

Here it would seem that in many ways, the American penal system is mistaking prisoners associated with any kind of group as prison gang members and probably exacerbating its gang problem. If we are to avoid a similar mistake in the English and Welsh prison system, then clearly we need to understand the purpose of prisoner groups in our prisons and the motivations for prisoner involvement in them. In light of the above, it is clear

that more research is needed. The arbitrary identification of prisoners as gang members is a debate set to continue in and out of court and the reason for this is a lack of accurate knowledge into prisoner groups and prison gangs.

Although the research outlined above attempts to address the question of which prisoners are most vulnerable to gang membership in terms of sentence length, number of crimes etc., it offers no real explanation of *why* such prisoners are vulnerable to gang membership. Buentello et al (1991) describe the progression of the prisoner into innocuous prisoner groups, which may then develop into prison gangs, but again fail to explain why only 10% of prisoners belong to fully developed prison gangs. Prisoners may feel a need to associate with similar others in the dangerous confines of a prison, but research needs to establish whether these groups are innocuous support groups or prison gangs. We need to know what processes come into play that prevents, or exacerbates, the progression of the innocuous group into a prison gang and why group members decide to leave or remain with the clique. We also need to understand more of the reasons why prisoners might belong to either group, in order to identify prisoner groups, prisoner gangs and ultimately who is and who is not a gang member. Research to date, cannot answer these questions. A lack of knowledge into the differences between innocuous prisoner groups and prison gangs has left researchers and the American penal system in a state of confusion, as has a lack of knowledge into the motives of prisoner members of any prisoner group. Consequently, the next chapter in this thesis examines some of the possible motives that may lead individuals to join gangs.

### 1.5 Summary

This chapter initially examined the differences in what is meant by the term 'gang'. It outlined the problem researchers and legal administrators face whenever they refer to a group as a gang. The arguments over definitions seem set to continue and will inevitably impact on research claiming to examine any form of gang, subjecting it to the scrutiny of those who

would argue that the research is invalidated due to inaccurate definitions that are either too broad or too narrow.

Prison gang research, so far, offers a description of the rise and impact of prison gangs on the American penal system. It also shows how staff perceptions of prison gangs as a problem vary considerably. To add to this complex issue, various accounts debate how prison gangs form within the prison system. Some researchers argue that gangs are imported, others that they are indigenous, still others argue for a little of both positions. All offer some insight into how and why prison gangs might exist. None offers conclusive information.

The theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al. 1991) presents a model of prison gang development but fails to indicate what processes impact on the development of a support group into a prison gang. Neither does it explain why members might stay with the group or leave it in its early stages. Finally researchers attempting to identify which prisoners are most likely to become gang members offer the demographics of gang members in prisons. However, the dependence of these researchers on prison staff opinions (who differ considerably in their perceptions of a prison gang), or on staff record keeping, undermines the credibility of their results, as does their failure to indicate whether they are examining street gang members behind bars or prison gang members or both. This research also fails to explain why only a relatively small number of prisoners are motivated to join gangs.

Such problems reduce the chances of accurate identification of prison gang members and diminish the chance of developing interventions useful for working with prison gang members. Clearly there is a need to understand more of gangs and their membership. We need to consider the basis on which they form. For example, do they form predominantly along racial or regional or some other commonality? We need to consider the role of the prison system in the development of gang prison gangs and we need to understand more relating to the activities of these groups. Furthermore, we need to understand more about who is most

vulnerable to prison gang memberships and what it is that contributes to that vulnerability. In view of this particular consideration, the following chapter examines some of the motives for gang membership outlined in theories of street gang development.



## Chapter Two

### Gang Theory: searching for a motive of membership

The focus of this chapter is gang membership and the underlying factors that may motivate it. However, whereas chapter 1 focused primarily on prison gang membership, the current chapter examines literature relating to the development of criminal behaviour, group membership and social support. It draws on diverse sources and disciplines in an effort to clarify why some prisoners might consider prison gang membership to be attractive option. Once again, American sociological literature offers most in terms of research and theory. Gang theorists, particularly the sociologists of the “Chicago School”(e.g. Thrasher, 1927; Shaw & McKay 1931; 1942; Sutherland 1937), were hugely influential from the 1930s until the 1960s. However, the influence of strain theory (e.g. Merton 1938; Cohen 1955; Cloward & Ohlin 1960) and finally control theory (Hirschi 1969; Gottfredson & Hirschi 1990) began to exert a greater influence within criminology as the limitations of subcultural theory were realised.

This chapter explores the explanations offered by these theories and explains why none to date offer an adequate account of gang membership or delinquent behaviour generally. It then continues by proposing that all the theories suggest implicitly, social support to be a contributory factor to both gang development and the amelioration of criminal behaviour generally. Having explored the case for a theory of social support and crime the chapter finishes by noting how social support may play a key role in the development of prisoner groups and prison gangs and demonstrates why social support is an organising concept within this thesis.

#### 2.1 Subcultural Theory and the Chicago School

Interest in gangs during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was limited to description. Thrasher (1927) paved the way for the explosion of Chicago based research with his account

of 1,313 Chicago gangs. Although Thrasher (1927) included many non-delinquent groups in his analysis of gangs, he offered an insight into the reasons why adolescent boys join gangs. Thrasher (1927) noted that gangs came in a variety of forms depending on their stage of development. They [gangs], according to Thrasher provided an outlet for normal healthy American boys seeking fulfilment of normal adolescent drives. Thrasher (1927)'s study was conducted at a time when American society was experiencing vast transformation; immigration urbanisation and industrialism all contributed to what Thrasher (1927) saw as a destabilising of American society.

The principal casualties of this destabilisation were residents of urban areas, particularly those who lived just outside the city's inner core of commerce. This area Thrasher (1927) dubbed the "zone of transition" and was plagued by "social disorganisation." The gang, Thrasher (1927) held, was a product, or symptom of that disorganisation. Thrasher (1927) argued that central to social disorganisation was the breakdown of social institutions such as the family, school and church. Of these, Thrasher (1927) considered the family to be the most important institution and noted that many families "failed to hold the boy's interest, neglects him or actually forces him onto the street" (p.340). Gradually these conventional establishments unable to satisfy the needs of the people, weakened and lost their ability to control the behaviour of the area's populace. A primary reason why social institutions failed to satisfy the needs of the populace was because so many people living in disorganised areas were immigrants. Immigrant parents could not help their children adapt to a new culture due to a lack of familiarity with customs they themselves were experiencing. Intensifying this situation was the lack of compensatory measures from the established social order such as school. Here, Thrasher (1927) set the failure of conventional institutions in opposition to the thrill and excitement offered by unconventional institutions such as the gang. The unconventional group offered children "the thrill and zest of participation in common

interests, more especially corporate action, in hunting, capture, conflict, flight and escape” (p. 32-33). For Thrasher (1927), this group became a gang when it became organised, adopted a formal structure became attached to local territory and involved itself in conflict. Conflict was a pivotal notion for Thrasher (1927), who argued that it resulted in the formation of gangs via a group consciousness. Thrasher (1927) held that this conflict existed between the gang and the conventional social order that opposed the group’s existence and between the gang and other gangs.

Significantly, Thrasher (1927) did note how a gang could become conventionalised into a conformist grouping if it is encouraged to do so by an external source such as a “politician, a saloon keeper, or welfare agency” (p 52). Conversely, in the absence of external guidance, the group became a criminal gang and if that gang was subject to harsh and well organised efforts to break it apart it became a “secret society” with the capacity to carry out varied “delinquent enterprises.” Thrasher (1927) also noted how the gang provided a learning environment that offered its members an opportunity to develop and capitalise on their criminal enterprises

Thrasher’s perspective of the gang cannot help but be influenced by the events in America at that time. The Wall Street crash had just occurred and so much of what Thrasher observed must be taken in the context of the depression that was beginning in the U.S.A. Nevertheless in many of the observations Thrasher made, it is possible to see the seeds of contemporary psychological theory such as social comparison theory (Festinger 1954) and social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel 1982). Thrasher’s (1927) observations seem to show how the gang offered the socially disadvantaged child a more positive self-concept than traditional social institutions such as the family seemed able to provide.

Although Thrasher’s (1927) observations proffered many theoretical strands, it was the notion of social disorganisation that threaded its way into the succession of gang research

that followed. The subcultural approach, which Thrasher heavily influenced, claimed involvement in criminal behaviour emanates from an adherence to social norms appropriate to the environment where social disorganisation predominated. Shaw and McKay (1931; 1942) developed Thrasher's (1927) concepts when they concluded that certain neighbourhoods exhibit a criminal tradition or culture that is socially transmitted from generation to generation. Like Thrasher (1927), Shaw and McKay (1931; 1942) argued that conventional pathways in disorganised communities were unable to meet the needs of the populace. Certain neighbourhoods exhibited a criminal tradition that was as transmissible as any other culture. However, this particular subculture was founded on an infrastructure of social disorganisation. In such a setting the gang becomes a satisfying alternative to unsatisfactory legitimate conventions. Hence, a criminogenic process became the central tenet of Shaw and McKay's theory of cultural transmission.

Also, in the vein of Thrasher (1927), Shaw and McKay (1931) noted how societal forces produced gangs. Family, school, church and government all failed to adequately provide for young people, who responded by forming indigenous groups. Such group formation and the criminality that emanates from it pass through a process of socialisation from generation to generation, transmitting the motivation to deviate. For Shaw and McKay (1931), the family in poor inner city areas had low levels of functional authority over the children, who, once exposed to a delinquent tradition succumb to delinquent behaviour. Conversely, in middle class areas conventionality predominated and thus, middle class youth were not only not exposed to delinquent traditions, they were adequately controlled by parents in a stable environment. Consequently for Shaw and McKay (1931) it was the environment and not the ethnic identity of the individual that determined involvement in crime.

Although criticisms of the "Chicago school" for its exclusive focus on working class criminality (e.g. Cullen 1984) are justified, the exception to this accusation must be

Sutherland (1937; 1949). Sutherland initially supported the notion that socially structured forces underpinned deviancy. He also (Sutherland 1937) recognised that criminal behaviour was prevalent across all classes. Sutherland's theory of differential association offers an explanation of how young people develop the attitudes and learn the skills necessary to become delinquent. Sutherland (1937) argued that the process of deviancy is facilitated through the association of adolescents with individuals who are 'carriers' of criminal norms. The essence of differential association is that people will commit crimes if they are exposed more to attitudes that favour law violation than attitudes that are not favourable to law violation. Once the appropriate attitudes are in place, young people learn the skills of criminality in much the same way as they would learn any skills by example and tutelage. Sutherland argued that a principal part of this criminal learning process is derived from small social groups such as the gang.

The appeal of Sutherland's theory is that it not only looks to the environment for explanations of criminal behaviour, it also looks to psychological constructs such as attitudes that would help explain individual differences ignored by other researchers such as Shaw and McKay (1931; 1942). Sutherland's theory, with its emphasis on social psychological variables, disquieted claims that appeared to argue the genetic origins of crime (e.g. Lange 1931) popular within psychology at that time. Although in examination of Sutherland's many works this often goes almost unnoticed,

A wealth of empirical evidence lends support to the propositions of the subcultural theorists such as social disorganisation (Thrasher 1927; Shaw & McKay 1930; 1942), cultural transmission of criminogenic norms (Shaw & McKay 1930; 1942) and differential association (Sutherland 1937) noted above. Cohen (1956) also noted the hostility, intolerance of restraint and short term hedonism of youth gangs observed by Thrasher (1927). Most gang crime does seem to emanate from poor urban areas marked by some form of social disorganisation (e.g.

Cullen 1984; Goldstein 1991; Knox 1994; Klein 1995; Huff 1996). This echoes Thrasher's (1927) and Shaw and McKay's (1930; 1942) concept of an association between social disorganisation and crime. Young people living in a neighbourhood with high rates of delinquency are more likely to commit delinquent acts than their counterparts in areas of low delinquency (Rutter & Giller 1983). This seems to corroborate both Shaw and McKay's (1930; 1942) notions of cultural transmission and Sutherland's (1937) argument for exposure to anti-law attitudes and learning of criminal behaviour leading to criminal involvement. Early criminal behaviour is often a group product (e.g. Farrington, Gundry & West 1975) and delinquent friends are good predictors of delinquent behaviour (Voss 1963). This may indicate the experience of adolescents who share similar attitudes; learning from one another noted by Sutherland is justified, as does the observation that the strongest covariate of an individual's future offending behaviour is delinquent associates.

However, as much as some empirical evidence seems to support the concepts proposed by the Chicago theorists, critics are quick to point out the conceptual shortcomings of this school of thought. Some suggest that the model of social disorganisation is basically tautological; explaining delinquency in terms of social disorganisation when delinquency is a criterion of social disorganisation (Emler & Reicher 1995). Nettler (1978) notes the overly simplified view of the learning process proposed by Sutherland (1937). Also, Emler and Reicher (1995) argue that the Chicago school sees people as motivationally empty, mere vessels to be filled with society's impositions. These authors point out that choices are not allowed in the Chicago model. Matza (1964) also criticises the Chicago theories, claiming they predict too much delinquency and fail to account for why most offenders stop their offending behaviour as they mature. Caulfield (1991) is particularly damning of the subcultural approach, arguing that it dictates who will be members of a subcultural society and where they will live, so that is the only place where researchers will look. Caulfield

argues that subcultural theorists create images of monsters and devils who must .... “meet certain criteria – such as being at the lower end of class, race and gender hierarchies.” (p 229). Caulfield’s point highlights notions that the [re]production of class and racial stereotypes, particularly popular assumptions of gangs, may be generated by social scientists and where they look. It is indeed an irony that so many subcultural theorists, in attempting to highlight the inequities of the social structure, succeed in reinforcing negative social stereotypes of working class peoples and immigrants, which in turn makes chances of equality even less likely. Consequently, there exists a perpetuation of myths relating to what qualifies as a gang. As Sanday (1990) notes, a group of middle class youth apprehended on charges of a (gang) rape had many of the classic hallmarks of a gang including a name, regular criminal activities and claimed a ‘turf.’ At the trial of this ‘gang’ the judge noted similarities between this group and other gangs and yet the Gang Crimes Unit showed no interest in this particular gang. This Sanday (1990) argues, was due to the group emerging from a university fraternity.

In addition, empirical evidence suggests the Chicago school is perhaps too simplistic in its explanatory power of delinquent behaviour and in particular gang formation. Spergel (1984) found that gangs not only arose in disorganised neighbourhoods; they were also found in organised areas with effective institutions. This suggests that social disorganisation is not a prerequisite for gang formation. However Spergel (1984) did note that organised areas could also be marked by low socio-economic status, low family stability and had largely been abandoned by white populations who had moved out to the suburbs.

This last point seems to somewhat support some of the social disorganisation approach as it echoes the notion that poor areas populated by ethnic minorities are most vulnerable to gang formation. In addition, 90% of those segregated in the prison system into special gang units (mentioned in chapter 1) are Hispanics (Kassel 1998). However, other gang researchers argue that the arrest rate may not be particularly representative of the gang membership rate

(Spergel & Curry 1990). White gangs are also particularly underrepresented in media accounts of gang activity (Bursik & Grasmick 1995), which rely largely on stereotypes (Jankowski 1991). In support of these accusations, is the earlier evidence amassed by Savitz, Rosen and Lalli (1980) that while 14% of white youths claimed gang affiliation only 12% of black youths did so. This is supported by similar and more recent research (e.g. Spergel 1990). Here, the point made earlier in this chapter, that the stereotypes attached to gang membership may be reinforced by where social scientists look is given some validity. If social researchers look only in areas where the socio-economically deprived and ethnic populations live, there is the danger that explanations of gang membership will be offered only in terms of socio-economic deprivation and ethnic minority. A broader perspective that tests the null hypothesis is clearly vital if explanations as to why people join gangs are to be discovered.

Despite the failings and accusations levelled at Chicago theorists, it is possible to see many similar concepts associated with the development of the prison gang. Thrasher (1927) touched on notions of external threats leading to gang formation (e.g. Knox 1994) and notions of harsh legitimate sanctions leading to increased gang cohesion and secretiveness (Kassel 1998). Also, Thrasher (1927) noted the access to illegitimate means of material gain that gang membership afforded its members, a point reiterated by many prison gang researchers (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Buentello, et al 1991). More importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, both Thrasher (1927) and Shaw and McKay (1931; 1942) noted the failure of conventional institutions to control the populace. The family takes centre stage in the theory of cultural transmission and Thrasher (1927) noted the lack of family interest in the children, accusing families of neglect and in some cases, forcing the children onto the street. Thrasher also observed that some immigrant families were prevented from providing support to their children, due to customs and norms they [the parents] did not understand. Thrasher (1927) then goes on to describe the subsequent failure of institutions to provide support for these



children. Although Thrasher (1927) refers specifically to the concept of control by conventional institutions he seems to be describing how young people, lacking support, may be drawn to others in a similar situation. In short, notions of support, or rather the lack of it, thread throughout this early theory of gang development.

## 2.2 Strain Theory

The central concept of strain theory is that society sets universal goals for its populace and then offers the ability to achieve them to a limited number of its members. The resultant inequality of opportunity results in a strain on cultural goals. This, Merton (1938) proposes, leads to anomie (Durkheim 1893); a breakdown in the cultural structure due to an acute division between prescribed cultural norms and the ability of members to act in accord with them (Merton 1938). The consequence of anomie is that people adapt to their circumstances by adopting a specific form of behaviour (Merton 1938).

These behaviours, Merton (1938) argued, could be separated into five categories including: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. The behaviour adopted depends on the individual's acceptance or rejection of cultural goals and on his/her acceptance of institutional norms. This will depend on the extent to which they are governed by internalised prohibitions (or values) preventing employment of illegitimate means to achieve goals. Merton's (1938) first category, conformity, refers to a continued struggle to achieve cultural goals despite the realistic chance that they are unachievable. People in this category work harder and longer, maintain legitimate behaviour, endorse cultural aims and possibly lower personal aims, adopting new, more realistic goals (Agnew 1991). The second category, innovation, describes the endorsement of cultural goals whilst abandoning practices culturally prescribed to achieve them. For instance, the individual may consider financial gain to be a primary goal, but the doctrine of fulfilling this aim without law breaking behaviour is abandoned. Ritualism, Merton's third adaptation involves a scaling down of the cultural goals

of success whilst maintaining the rituals of societal rules. In other words, these people aim lower, but fervently abide by institutional norms by, for example, insisting on strict manners or customs even if they serve no purpose. Retreatism is Merton's fourth mode of adaptation and refers to the abandonment of both success goals and the institutionalised methods of achieving them. People in this category may be referred to as "drop outs." Some may be drug addicts, some alcoholics, some vagrants; all are individuals who at one time probably ascribed to the tenets of societal norms, but relinquished them. The final category Merton proposed is rebellion. In this category people try to change society's recognised structures and goals via revolutionary ideas or cult groups, characterised more by symbolic deviance than victimising crimes.

Here, there is some contention over the category of rebellion. Cohen's (1955) reactance theory depicts gang members as working class youth who experience a process of 'reaction formation.' Cohen (1955) explains that lower class youth experience strain resulting in a status frustration. Status frustration may be resolved by the youth associating with similar others in order to 'strike out' against middle class ideals and standards. In turn, this leads to the formation of a delinquent subculture where instant gratification, fighting and malicious destructive behaviour become the new values. It is a rebellion that is considered to be right precisely because it is wrong in the norms of the larger culture.

Although Merton's theory was entirely sociological in emphasis, Cohen (1955) included psychological variables in his account of how status frustration develops, whilst maintaining a socially determined perspective. Cohen argued that the individual child experiences frustration and tension due to the unequal opportunities offered in a meritocratic society that claims to operate on egalitarian principles of equal opportunity. Strain results when individuals are inadequately socialised to accept the legitimate means available to them. Inadequate socialisation includes; unstructured leisure time, a failure in the educational

system to provide sufficient resources and the child's misunderstanding of what school requires of him or her. Further examples of inadequate socialisation proposed by Merton include, meagre community resources and educational toys and facilities in the home. The child experiencing these social deprivations gradually sinks to the bottom of the educational hierarchy and experiences feelings of status frustration involving self-hatred, guilt, loss of self-esteem, self-recrimination and anxiety. The child blamed him/herself for the failure and coped with this by seeking alternative avenues for status achievement such as street gang membership (Cohen 1955).

On the other hand, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) noted how gang members blamed the system and not themselves for their social failure, and 'waged war' against society through expressions of anger and fighting, achieving honour through a form of 'macho' bravado and the creation of a fearsome reputation. This theory of differential opportunity, Knox (1994) notes, is often cited as a general theory of delinquency, when it was actually a theory of gangs. In it, Cloward and Ohlin (1961), like Merton (1938), explain a class difference in opportunity, but unlike Merton (1938), these authors argue that opportunity *for* delinquency is also limited in its availability. This differential availability of illegitimate means to resolve strain, dictates that lower classes have more in terms of opportunity to learn how to offend and will offend more frequently. These authors argue that Shaw and McKay (1939; 1942) failed to observe the differential opportunities to learn offending behaviour and therefore simply assumed that middle classes had less inclination to offend. Cloward and Ohlin's theoretical concepts reinforce the notions proposed by Sutherland (1937) that offending behaviour is dependent on a learning process afforded to younger people by older, more experienced, offenders. However, Cloward and Ohlin point out that Sutherland failed to address how access to the criminal schools varied across the social structure. In this way, Cloward and Ohlin unite two sociological traditions; access to legitimate means (Merton

1938; Cohen 1955) and access to illegitimate means (Sutherland 1937). Like Merton, Cloward and Ohlin argue that responses to strain will differ across class and that retreatist strategies exist for those who fail to achieve legitimately or illegitimately depending on their class of origin. Hence drug addicts and alcoholics will appear in middle classes due to their failure to achieve legitimately and in lower classes, when they fail to achieve using illegitimate means.

The main problem with this theory and strain theory in general, is that although it explains clearly why low-income youth become delinquent, any association between class and delinquency is inconsistent (Linden 1978; Johnson 1979; Rutter & Giller 1983). It also fails to explain why most lower class youth eventually lead law-abiding lives even though their economic status remains static (Goldstein 1991). Hirschi (1969) also points out that many delinquent youth do not experience the deprivations central to strain theory. Furthermore, research indicates that far from rebelling against middle class norms, many gang members actually ascribe to middle class values (Klein 1995; Sikes 1997). In an ethnographic study of female gang members, Sikes (1997) noted how most members expressed the wish to enter various professions such as nursing or teaching, despite a low attendance at school, a varied criminal record and a realistic chance of being killed whilst engaged in gang activity.

Such research seems to indicate that many gang members are optimistic in their expectations for their futures. This contrasts sharply with the depressive outlook one might expect from working class youth who recognise that their chances of legitimate success are blocked by the unequal class system imposed on them. It would seem that strain theorists overestimate many deviant youths' philosophic consideration of their sociological reality. It seems more likely that delinquent youth act more in accordance with the current state of their lives than they do with notions of blocked futures due to social inequity. A further criticism of strain theory is that it is often youth who have more money supplied by their families (i.e.

pocket money) than their contemporaries who become involved with gangs (Knox, & Tromanhauser 1991). This brings into question the concept that the lower the economic status of the individual, the greater likelihood there is of their subcultural affiliation. However, Knox et al. (1992) also noted that families of non-gang youth were more likely to help their children with homework than were families of gang involved youth. This is consistent with Cohen's (1955) argument that delinquents' families are often uninvolved with their children's school lives generally.

Clearly, like subcultural theory, strain theory fails to account for many of the observations related to gang behaviour. However, also like subcultural theory, strain theory highlights many issues related to support. Cohen (1955) in particular, noted the lack of support most deviant youth experienced at home and at school. In addition, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) note the opportunity to offend is dependent on the accessibility of adequate instructors on how to offend. If this is considered in another way, it is equally plausible that young people lacking sufficient support from conventional means such as the family gravitate towards available groups or individuals who take an interest in them and seem to offer some form of support. Also, part of the appeal of the street gang is that it is likely to be more available to young people seeking a sense of support than the more legitimate/conventional forms of support – if they even exist.

A further, major criticism of both strain and subcultural explanations of the reasons why individuals join gangs is the study by Short and Strodtbeck (1965). These authors conducted a systematic examination of White gangs, Black gangs, lower class youth and middle class youth using large samples of young people (over 500 in each group). This study is impressive in its methodology as it makes comparisons between all groups on a number of variables, using multiple sources of information and methodologies, including: systematic observations, interviews with gang and non-gang members and reports from gang workers.

This volume of work is particularly important as it tested the theories of Sutherland, Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin and found not a single gang that resembled any of the theoretical gangs proposed by these authors. Short and Strodtbeck (1965) also raise the question of just which culture delinquents oppose. They argue that the assumption that middle class white American culture is being opposed may not be accurate as so many ethnic minorities adhere to their own cultures. However, especially relevant to the purposes of this thesis, Short and Strodtbeck (1965) observed the effects of support and its relationship to gang membership

“Conceived somewhat more broadly, the social gratification of peer-group participation gives rise to we-feelings which, in some degree, operate as a compensation for failure in every strata of society and at every age.” (p. 271).

Clearly, even when the theoretical positions of researchers differ widely there are inevitably some common threads and common to each of the theories outlined so far is the concept that gangs provide support to their members.

### 2.3 Control Theory

Control theory or social bond theory (Hirschi 1969; Gottfredson & Hirschi 1990) effectively diverts the focus of explanation of deviancy from why offenders offend, to why conformists do not offend? The central premise of control theory is that people are inherently disposed to offend due to the short-term gains offending offers (e.g. immediate money). However, the social bond prevents most people from indulging in acts of deviancy, by operating on psychological constructs such as the individual's conscience. A breakdown in social bonds during childhood leaves the child free to act on his/her natural inclinations with no resulting negative affect. Here, control theory shares a common theme with the Chicago school, inasmuch as it refers to the breakdown of social organisations giving rise to deviant behaviour.

The consequence of ineffective social organisations for the child is an absence of self-control. Hirschi (1969) noted that the internalisation of norms facilitating self-control was mediated by an attachment to important others. Hirschi (1969) argued that adequately socialised children are concerned about the reaction of significant others to their own behaviour. The child will be committed to others and will do all he/she can to protect a precious relationship, including internalising the rules laid down by the significant other in the form of self-control. "Insofar as the child respects (loves and fears) his parents, and adults in general, he will accept their rules." (Hirschi 1969, p. 30). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) develop this idea further, explaining in their general theory of crime, .... "low self control is not produced by training, tutelage, or socialization" (p 95). The predominant cause of low self control is, argue the authors, ineffective child rearing. They propose that adequate child rearing resulting in the child's self control includes: monitoring the child's behaviour, recognition of deviant behaviour when it occurs and punishment of such behaviour. The result, they argue will be ... "a child more capable of delaying gratification, more sensitive to the interests and desires of others, more independent, more willing to accept restraints on his activity and more unlikely to use force or violence to attain his ends" (p 97).

This process, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) propose, is vulnerable to many impediments including: parents who do not care for their child, parents that care but are unable to provide adequate supervision, parents able to provide both care and supervision but unable to identify a behaviour as wrong, or parents who are disinclined or unable to provide punishment for the behaviour. To their credit, the authors emphasise that supervision and punishment should be conducted in a loving and not a punitive way (many authors contend that control theorists advocate severe sanctions e.g. Currie 1985) and that parental disappointment is a more effective control mechanism than is corporal punishment.

Homes most at risk of producing delinquent children, according to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), are those where the parents are criminal, a notion supported by a wealth of empirical research (e.g. West & Farrington 1977). This, the theory suggests, is due to the failure of many criminal parents to recognise the deviant behaviour of their children, as criminal. Single parent families are also at risk, not because a child necessarily needs the presence of two parents to be raised 'properly,' but from an increased likelihood that the lone parent is unable to adequately monitor the child's behaviour. This, the authors argue, is likely to occur particularly in the absence of psychological or support for the parent of the child from another adult. However, the situation is not necessarily eased by the introduction of a stepparent, as the new family member may have little time or affection for the child and thus do more to create discordance in the household than alleviate problems associated with child rearing. Similarly, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that the working mother puts her child[ren] at risk since there is a reduction in child supervision, due to the mother's absence arguably increasing the chances of delinquency, a notion noted in previous work e.g. Glueck & Glueck (1950).

School may help socialise the child, but only if the parents do not oppose the school's attempts to instil self-discipline into the child. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that school is the perfect vehicle for the socialisation process as one teacher may observe and instruct many children at a time. As the school has a clear interest in maintaining order and discipline, it can be expected to do what it can to control disruptive behaviour.

In addition Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) attempt to explain the decrease in criminal activity over time, maintaining that

... "even the most active offenders burn out with time, and the documented number of "late-comers" to crime, or "good boys gone bad," is sufficiently small to suggest that they may be accounted for in large part by misidentification



or measurement error.” (p 108).

The authors argue that other behaviours associated with low self-control such as smoking and drinking will satisfy the urge for immediate gratification following the cessation of criminal behaviour. This, they claim, demonstrates the consistency over time of the self-control variable.

Although Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) do not directly address the involvement of young people in gangs, their theory could be used to explain a general tendency to delinquent behaviour including gang involvement. Furthermore, this theory is not subject to the class bias apparent in other theories of delinquency (e.g. subcultural theory). Any child from any social class may be subject to inadequate socialisation and become delinquent. The theoretical concepts outlined by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) are supported, to an extent, by earlier, similar ideas such as those proposed by Matza (1964). Matza (1964) notes how delinquents, unrestricted by socialisation processes, enter a state of ‘drift,’ which stands midway between freedom and control. In a state of limbo between convention and crime, the delinquent ‘flirts’ with both until he/she neutralises the moral bond by citing unfair treatment as a justification for a criminal response. However, Matza (1964) accepts that the moral bond may exist before the advent of delinquent behaviour. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) dispose of this concept and argue that the moral bond is non-existent before delinquency. Theirs is a theory of all or nothing in either a socialised or a criminal direction.

There is also considerable empirical support for the control theory perspective of criminality. The deep influence of family factors on subsequent delinquency is well documented. Factors such as family criminality (Farrington, Gundry & West 1975; Osborn & West 1979); parental problems such as drinking or unemployment (Robins & Ratcliff 1978) poor parental supervision (Patterson 1982; Farrington & West 1990); and poor discipline practices such as excessive or erratic discipline (Snyder & Patterson 1987) all apparently

contribute to delinquent behaviour in children. Further, families of delinquent youth are more likely to show aggression to one another (Bandura 1973) and to spend leisure time apart (West & Farrington 1973).

Despite the empirical support that seems to lend credibility to control theory, there are a number of problems with this perspective. The hedonistic satisfaction cited by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) implies a sort of materialistic greed that is gratified by impulsive action. Such an attribute may be inherent, but this is an insufficient explanation of crimes that do not offer much in terms of materialistic gain, for instance vandalism. The theory offers very little explanation of the diversity of delinquent behaviour. For example, some young people become gang members whilst others offend alone, some will burgle whereas others attack individuals. Why such differences should occur, is ignored by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990).

Similarly, the authors stress the notion of impulsivity and its link to the need for instant gratification, declaring, ... "one of the defining features of crime is that it is simple and easy." (p. 92). As an explanation of criminal behaviour this is too simplistic. Many crimes require careful planning over a period of months, or even years. Admittedly, the result may be personally gratifying, but the immediacy of this gratification emphasised by the authors seems particularly ill conceived. In particular, the observation that some crimes require careful planning, time and thus patience indicates that some offenders *do* have self-control, thus casting doubt on Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) central tenet that offenders have no self-control. In addition, research shows and Gottfredson and Hirschi agree, that some forms of discipline discourage delinquency whereas others encourage it (Wells & Rankin 1988). Wells and Rankin (1988) concluded that discipline is not a simple solution to adolescent delinquency and that it [discipline] can lead to a greater likelihood of delinquency *regardless* of parental attachments. Gang research supports this idea, by pointing out that many gang

members claim their fathers were authoritarian, often using physical punishment against the children until many either left home, or retaliated with similar aggression (Klein 1995).

Although control theory touches on notions of support, its emphasis is nevertheless on control. Like the Chicago theorists, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) seem to consider people as objects that society does something to; they are blank pages on which society's rules or prescriptions for behaviour are etched. For instance, in the socialisation process outlined by Gottfredson and Hirschi the parent monitors the child's behaviour, recognises the deviance of the behaviour and punishes the child appropriately. The simplicity of this process ignores the complexity of human interaction. The child is considered to play no active part except for deviant behaviour. Notions of support for the child and a forum where the young person feels free to express concerns and opinions has no place in the notions of control proposed by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990). Ironically, they note how a lone parent may need the social support of another adult whilst meting out discipline and control over their child, but for the child, no such support is contemplated within control theory. It is arguable that the child, particularly an adolescent, will grow resentful of rules and punishments inflicted, if he/she believes his/her opinions and feelings are not also taken into account.

#### 2.4 Social support

The appeal of control theory is that it espouses rhetoric consistent with conservative policies of crime. As Cullen, Wright & Chamlin (1999) contend, such policies abound with dramatic appeal stirring the emotions of the populace "look at the victims whose lives are lost or ruined," acquitting the general public of blame "Society doesn't commit crime, offenders do" offering solutions that promise to resolve the problem "lock up the predators so they are scared straight and can't harm anyone else" (p. 196). Such conservative rhetoric seemed to weave its way through public opinion and policy decisions during the 1980s as the number of prisoners in the U.S.A. and Britain continued to increase.

The focus on a punitive judicial regime may have prevented the role of social support in criminal activity from being considered by criminologists, politicians and researchers. Despite this neglect, certain authors (e.g. Cullen 1984; Cullen, Wright & Chamlin 1999) argue that social support deserves far more attention than it has received to date. Although the appeal of control is perhaps understandable, its drawbacks prevent it from being a comprehensive explanation of criminal behaviour. This is why a closer examination of alternative or complimentary explanations involving concepts such as social support is justified. As this chapter has shown, influential theories of delinquency tend to touch on notions of social support, but do not develop the idea that social support may play a key role in both the advent and the discontinuance of criminal behaviour.

#### 2.4.1 Definitions of social support and its relevance to forensic psychology

To define social support, it is necessary to look to health psychology. Lin (1986) defines social support as ... “the perceived or actual instrumental and/or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners.” (p.18). Here it is possible to see that social support has two dimensions, it may be expressive (i.e. emotional) or it may be instrumental (practical assistance). The expressive dimension for Lin (1986)

... “involves the use of the relationship as an end as well as a means.

It is the activity of sharing sentiments, ventilating frustrations, reaching an understanding on issues and problems, and affirming one’s own as well as the other’s worth and dignity.” (p.21)

Other theorists maintain that the expressive dimension meets the need for love, esteem and identity, belonging and companionship (Vaux 1988); by provision of liking, love empathy and verbal assistance (House 1981); the meeting of a person’s social needs through interaction with others (Thoits 1982); and a reduction in the uncertainty about a situation for the self or other by enhancing a perception of personal control (Albrecht & Adelman 1987). The

instrumental dimension ... “involves the use of the relationship as the means to a goal, such as seeking a job, getting a loan. Or finding someone to babysit” (Lin 1986, p.20).

As Lin’s definition shows, social support may also be defined as actual (what people really receive) or perceived (what they think they receive). For the purposes of this thesis, perceived social support will be examined. This is due to the observations by some researchers that other people may intend to provide the individual with support, but inadvertently exacerbate a bad situation (Shinn, Lihmann & Wong 1984). In a prison setting, it is feasible that this sort of error may occur. Prisons are places where the covert culture is not always easy to assess, particularly for staff. A member of staff may believe that reporting the victimisation of one prisoner by another helps the victim, but the result may not be positive for the victim in terms of his/her relationship with other prisoners. In light of these considerations it is the contention of the current author that the important issue is the prisoner’s perception of the social support they receive and the benefits he/she believes it provides.

#### 2.4.2 Transmission and consequences of Social Support

Cullen (1994) points out that social support is not only provided by informal social networks such as family, friends, acquaintances and close personal relationships, it may also be delivered by the community and official agencies such as the criminal justice system. Vaux (1988) states that the provision of social support involves, listening, expressing concern, showing affection, sharing a task, care-taking, lending money, giving advice, making suggestions and socialising. People may supply behavioural assistance to others, feedback, guidance, comfort, intimacy, practical assistance, or referral to others who can help (Shumaker & Brownell 1984). Social support is transmitted through mediums of concern, assistance, valued similarity (i.e. we are in this together), positive interaction and trust (Brim 1974). Research also suggests that giving as well as receiving social support has positive

effects on the psychological well being of the individual (Coles 1993; Thoits 1995). Thoits (1995) notes how perceived emotional support is associated directly with better physical and mental health and usually protects against the impacts of major life events and strains by providing a buffering effect. In this way, social support may be seen as a protective factor against a life stressor where stress may be defined in terms of the "...relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being." (Lazarus & Folkman 1984, p.19). Using this definition, and considering the fears of prisoners noted in the previous chapter (e.g. Buentello, et al 1991; Adler 1994; Stevens 1997) few would argue with the view that imprisonment is a life stressor. Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume that the new prisoner will probably seek the support of others, as noted in Buentello et al's (1991) theory of prison gang development.

#### 2.4.3 The social support theory of crime

The notion that supportive relations are integral to healthy human development is a central tenet of a social support theory of crime (Cullen et al 1999). This perspective argues that human motivation is complex and cannot be reduced to an endless search for personal gratification. The need to receive and give support is a fundamental human potentiality and when it is developed, the risk of crime is reduced.

Empirical evidence is supportive of these concepts. Social support is related to the internalisation of empathy that protects against involvement in deviant behaviour (Karr-Morse & Wiley 1997). "At risk" children are thought to be protected from resorting to deviant behaviour if they receive social support, even when they experience a number of adversities (Rutter 1985). Intervention programmes supporting "at-risk" families are claimed to not only prevent the onset of deviancy but to also reduce offending behaviour after it has occurred (Yoshikawa 1994). Yoshikawa notes that successful interventions include instrumental and emotional support for families who experience child-rearing problems. As much as early

childhood interventions are desirable, they are not unique in their rates of success since the receipt of social support is negatively related to delinquency in adolescents (Timko & Moos 1996).

Cullen et al (1999) recognise the limited availability of empirical research but contend that social support theory has intuitive appeal. The authors declare, “The importance of being supported is consistent with the personal experience of knowing the value of having been helped in life” (Cullen et al 1999). They elaborate on this point by noting that people can imagine how living in dire circumstances will be detrimental to human development and place children at risk for crime.

#### 2.4.4 Social support and gang membership

However, Cullen et al’s (1999) appeal to our imaginations is not entirely necessary. The evidence that dire circumstances and the lack of social support links to criminal involvement is available, but it tends to have been ignored as the control perspective dominated western criminology. Gang researchers have noted for decades how membership results in a feeling of support (e.g. Yablonsky 1962; Short & Strodbeck 1965; Klein 1995; Huff 1996). Yablonsky (1962) notes the sense of comradeship, a ‘we’ feeling that gang members share with other members. Further evidence of the support gang members receive from membership is provided by Klein (1995):

“Belonging - having the status of gang membership, the identity with a particular gang, the sense (correct or otherwise) that in the gang there is protection from attack – becomes very important, very rewarding to the member. It provides what he has not obtained from his family, in school, or elsewhere in his community.” (p.78).

Klein (1995) notes how many gang members cited a need for companionship that they did not receive elsewhere. Similarly Vigil and Yun (1990) remark that gang members may consider

the gang to be a 'family' taking the place of non-existent or inadequate biological families. These authors add to this perspective by noting how many gang members have failed to form conventional attachment bonds and lack secure, strong ties within their families, resulting in the child being pushed onto the streets, an observation Thrasher (1927) also made.

Empirical evidence supports this and suggests that not only are many gang members neglected by their families, they are also often the victims of abuse within the family (Knox 1994; Sikes 1997). It is not difficult to envisage a need for social support as a motivating force for gang membership. However, as a note of caution, other researchers contend that gang members did not all emanate from bad or dysfunctional families (Jankowski 1991). Nevertheless, the logic of a social support perspective of gang membership does not demand that the family be dysfunctional. Lack of interest, or lack of familiarity with their children's lives (like Thrasher's (1927) families) may be sufficient to reduce levels of social support the child receives at home, as might the workload of parents. Examples of this include the observation (noted earlier) that the families of gang members do not provide routine supportive measures such as helping the children with their homework and also that gang members' families are not familiar with their children's friends (Knox et al 1992). Finally, only one study seems to have directly measured the influence of family social support on deviant behaviour (Frauenglass, Routh, Pantin & Mason 1997). This research revealed that the perceptions of social support from the family by Hispanic youth, related negatively to the levels of substance abuse, influence of deviant peers and gang membership of the adolescents.

From the above, it is feasible that gang membership is facilitated in part, by a need for a feeling of support that the member does not perceive as existing elsewhere, (e.g. family and school). Social support levels may also explain differences between gang and non-gang delinquents and non-delinquent youth. Non-delinquent youth may perceive their levels of social support from traditional (non-deviant) sources to be adequate. Similarly, lone



delinquents may receive what they perceive to be adequate social support, but from deviant sources such as offending family members. In this way, it could be that gang members will have the lowest levels of social support and that the other two groups differ only in terms of the offending or non-offending nature of their sources of support.

If the nature of social support is considered, it is possible to see how it might underpin the individual's response in a criminal, or non-criminal way. Social support, it would seem, enhances the individual's ability to cope with everyday occurrences and times of stress (Thoits 1995). It is feasible that an individual's coping strategies will be adopted from significant others either through advice or example. If the significant other is delinquent, then it is feasible that the individual will adopt similar offending coping strategies. This is not inconsistent with Sutherland's (1937), or Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) perspectives on availability of opportunity to learn how to offend. On the other hand, the non-delinquent youth is likely to adopt non-deviant coping strategies either through the advice or example of non-deviant others. The gang member may only have similar others (i.e. other gang members) to advise either verbally or by example and will therefore receive help consistent with the gang's ethos.

In this way, the emphasis in social support is not on the internalisation of significant others' rules (as control theorists propose), rather it would seem that it is the internalisation of coping strategies that is of relevance. This concept is supported by the evidence provided by Short and Strodtbeck (1965) who noted that gang boys lacked social skills and did not have the ability to role-play that other youth exhibited. Short and Strodtbeck noted how middle class children seemed to have social skills inculcated into them and that non-gang boys from working class backgrounds also displayed a variety of social experiences including the ability to mix with a wider range of people than did gang boys. Here, the authors seem to be saying that during the process of socialisation children can learn a variety of strategies that enable

them to cope with diverse situations and a variety of people. It is feasible that such strategies give the individual confidence and protect them against vulnerability to, for example, street gang membership.

Finally, the social support perspective of crime also explains why criminality decreases with age. As the adolescent ages, he/she is more likely to enter into a more intimate relationship. This may then provide them with the emotional social support outlined by Lin (1986). If that relationship is with a non-offending partner, then the individual will be socially supported from a non-criminal perspective and possibly learn alternative coping strategies not involving offending. However, if the relationship breaks down, then the offender may resort to earlier coping strategies (i.e. offending behaviours). This is consistent with research suggesting that during a close relationship such as a marriage, offending may stop, but following a marital break-up, some offenders resort to previous offending patterns (Farrington & West 1990). Similarly, research suggests that if an offender marries another offender, then there will not be a marked reduction in offending behaviour (Farrington & West 1990) and gang members who marry gang members do not discontinue offending patterns (Knox 1994).

#### 2.4.5 Social support and prisoner groups

It is possible to see that social support may moderate or increase the likelihood of offending behaviour, depending on who delivers it. It is also possible to see that social support is useful in times of stress or as a buffer against everyday circumstances. As Buentello et al (1991) outline in the theory of prison gang development, imprisonment may be a stressful experience for the prisoner. He/she will be devoid of his/her usual sources of social support (assuming other gang members or family members are not in the prison) and will experience a need to develop relationships with similar others in order to experience feelings of support.

In this way, the prisoner group developing from such a need could be considered as a positive entity, providing the prisoner with information and perhaps a feeling of security in what can be perceived as an unsafe environment (Adler 1994; McDermott & King 1995). The prisoner may be afforded coping strategies that enable him/her to overcome any negative affect associated with imprisonment. If this is the case, then it would be erroneous to identify all prisoner groups as potential gangs and take action against the group members, as some authors propose the American prison authorities do (e.g. Kassel 1998). As Buentello et al (1991) infer, it is not until the group develops into a powerful predatory entity that it becomes problematic in terms of other prisoners and prison authorities. In light of this, it is necessary to obtain as much information as possible relating to which prisoners are most likely to become prison gang members, before developing strategies for dealing with any such problem.

If the development of the prison gang is considered in terms of social support, it should be possible to assess which prisoners are most vulnerable to prison gang membership. Those prisoners who have little in terms of social support, like their street counterparts, are most likely to rely solely on the support of other prisoners. Those prisoners who receive social support from friends and family during their prison sentence are likely to need some form of social support from other prisoners, but are unlikely to become part of a criminal network such as a prison gang. This effect should be apparent *regardless* of the offending behaviour of those significant others external to the prison. Even an inclination to reoffend will not necessarily result in the prisoner taking the chance that he/she will have time added to his/her sentence by becoming involved in gang activity within the prison. This will be simply because they have someone to go home to and so they will want to secure release at the earliest possible date.

How a process of relationship evaluation might influence the prisoner's decision to join or ignore a prisoner group may be explained by social psychological models of group socialisation such as that proposed by Moreland and Levine (1982). This model of group socialisation proposes that three basic psychological processes underlie group membership: evaluation, commitment and role transition. If this model is considered in the context of a developing prison gang, it is possible to see how the prisoner and the group might evaluate one another's potential. The group offers the prisoner social support within the prison and the prisoner adds to the group's numbers and thus capacity for maintaining group-member safety. Commitment of member and group, according to Moreland and Levine (1982) occurs as the group and the individual assess the past, present and (anticipated) future rewards of their own and alternative relationships: any competing elements of group and alternative relationship merits will be assessed. However, for most prisoners the maintenance of satisfactory relationships with the prisoner group and family members is unlikely to be problematic, as the two relationships are contextually separate: prisoner friendships are confined to the prison and family relationships are external to the prison.

Nevertheless, a conflict of relationships may occur if the prisoner group becomes involved in illicit activities within the prison. At this point the prisoner must assess their group allegiance in light of the risk that more time will be added to the current sentence, thus preventing an early return to the family. Consequently he/she will have to assess what this risk means in terms of relationships with persons outside prison. If the prisoner has relationships that are important to him/her, then it seems unlikely that he/she will run the risk of an additional sentence, as it will involve even longer separation from those others. Prisoners who have no important relationships outside prison may be more willing to take the chance of added days in order to maintain the relationship with the prisoner group. As the prisoner group engages in criminal activity, the prisoner undergoes what Moreland and

Levine (1982) refer to as 'role transition': his/her commitment to the group rises or falls according to a re-evaluation of the group by the prisoner and the prisoner by the group. If the prisoner's competing allegiances are settled in favour of the family then his/her relationship with the group may end. This could be what Buentello et.al. (1991) describe when they observe how some prisoners will leave the group at different stages of prison gang development. Similarly, if several group members are not prepared to take the risk of an additional prison sentence, then the group may disintegrate as its membership dwindles. Again, the process of group dissolution is described, but not explained, in the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et.al. 1991).

### 2.5 Prisonization

In addition, the research noted in the previous chapter, shows that gang members have generally more convictions (Sheldon 1991), less involvement in incentive schemes and rehabilitation programmes (Huff 1996) and are more likely to have a problematic record within the prison (Ralph et al 1996). Although these findings should be treated with caution, they do suggest a higher level of prisonization is likely among gang members. Buentello et al's (1991) theory of prison gang development refers to prisoners in the early stages of prison gang development going through the process of prisonization. The concept of prisonization was first noted by Clemmer (1940) who noted how prisoners' attitudes would develop in favour of the prisoner code of behaviour and thus be integrated into the subculture of the prison. Clemmer noted that high levels of prisonization may be expected to be associated with: low socialisation during pre-penal life; the absence of positive relationships with persons outside the prison; the willingness to integrate into prisoner groups; acceptance of the prisoner codes of behaviour and a reluctance to associate with prison staff. Clemmer (1940) also pointed out that attitudes consistent with prisonization would be facilitated by association with prisoners who possess leadership qualities and who are also integrated into the prison

culture. Prisonized prisoners are reluctant to accept the work or recreational mandate of the prison and may indulge in sexual behaviour and/or excessive gambling (Clemmer 1940). Here, most of the behaviours Clemmer (1940) associates with prisonization also relate to prison gang membership and so it could be expected that if prison gangs exist in English and Welsh prisons, members would demonstrate characteristics associated with prisonization.

It is therefore plausible that if measures are taken of the variables that seem to be associated with gang membership (such as prisonization and social support) it may be possible to assess if these psychological constructs play a part in gang membership and consequently offer some guide as to who is most at risk of prison gang membership.

## 2.6 Summary

In order to assess the various motivations that underlie gang membership this chapter examined theories of delinquency that have dominated criminology this century. It noted that each theory did not provide an adequate account of either delinquency or gang membership. However, it also noted that each theory implicitly alluded to notions of social support, an area that remains under-examined within criminology or forensic psychology. The chapter then continued to outline the central tenets of a social support theory of crime and how these might relate to gang membership. Finally, the chapter considered the development of prison gangs in terms of social support and prisonization; two themes that seem to be particularly relevant to the development of prison gangs. As a result both social support and prisonization are principal concepts around which the research presented within this thesis is organised. To add to this, the following chapter outlines earlier work in the study of prison gangs in England and Wales, which provided the infrastructure on which the research reported in this thesis was founded.

## Chapter Three:

### Gang Activity in English Prisons:

#### The Prison Staff Perspective

This chapter presents a brief overview of some work that has looked at gang activity from the prison staff perspective. It reveals results indicating that events identified by American researchers as commonly associated with prison gangs (Fong & Buentello 1991) are also prevalent in the English and Welsh prison estate.

#### 3.1 Prison gangs in England and Wales

As noted in chapter 1, research has mentioned the possibility that gangs exist in English prisons (e.g. King and McDermott, 1995). However, it would also be easy to assume that English prisons do not have a prison gang problem since, if prison gangs, similar to those in America, were active in English prisons, their presence would be obvious. For instance, if gangs were a customary feature of English prison life, a much higher murder rate might be expected. As it is, murder in U.K. prisons is rare compared to many other countries (Bowker 1990).

One explanation for this could be that the higher levels of security in English prisons effectively encumber prison gang development/activity. For instance, in English and Welsh prisons, the official ratio of officers to prisoners ranges from 1:1.1 in Dispersal establishments (high security) to 1:5.5 in Category D (low security) (Function Report H.M Prison Service April 1998 - June 1998). Conversely, in America, even in high security prisons such as San Quentin, the ratio of officers to prisoners is 1:190 and even in the block where prison gangs are known to be active the ratio is 1:16. In England, even if there is a substantial deviance from the reported officer/prisoner ratios, (e.g. differences in the number of officers on wings), it seems likely there will be more supervision which could impede prison gangs.

Nevertheless, the impact of prison gangs on American prisons coupled with the findings of researchers in England such as King and McDermott (1995), suggests that such groups may exist or be developing in English prisons.

Further, as outlined in chapter 1, since community gangs have increased in number during the last 20 years (Thompson 1995) this increases the prospect that prison gangs with community roots, are currently active in English prisons. This is particularly likely if the ambition of street gangs to monopolise the drug trade (Thompson 1995) is considered together with the prevalence of drugs in prisons (e.g. Edgar & O'Donnell 1998). Similarly, as chapter 1 notes, there is an increased likelihood that members from the same street gang will end up in the same prison as the Prison Service strives to implement Woolf's (1991) recommendation that prisoners be held in prisons close to their homes.

Consequently, the English and Welsh prison estate could be importing a gang problem just as researchers such as Jacobs (1974) claim American prisons have done (see chapter 1). In addition, female prisons cannot be considered impervious to prison gang formation. Female establishments are often designed as a kind of neighbourhood with 'houses' defining the structure of the prison. These 'houses,' designed as a series of self-contained units in order to establish a pattern of 'home' and 'the neighbours' (Kelley 1970), could effectively encourage group cohesion and consequently prison gang formation. American research indicates that in female prisons there often exists a form of 'extended family' group that is more anti-authority and more group-orientated than other prisoners (Hefferman, 1972). Although these groups are not so common in England and Wales (Mandaraka-Sheppard 1986), their presence may indicate a gang-like potential. When added to Knox's (1994) findings outlined in chapter 1, that female prison gangs are active in America, it seems sensible to include female prisons in any examination of prison gangs in England and Wales.

In order to begin an evaluation of the possibility that prison gangs are active in



English and Welsh prisons, it seemed judicious to look for evidence of that activity. However, systematic research into the existence of prison gangs is scarce, since most research is based on descriptive accounts of the structure and impact of the prison gang. On the other hand, this work does provide a description of the types of activities associated with prison gangs and the impact prison gangs have on legitimate order and control in a prison (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Beird 1986; Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991; Stevens 1997). Consequently, it seemed sensible to begin an evaluation of prison gangs in the U.K., by examining the relationship between levels of order and control and the activities associated with prison gangs.

### 3.2 Identifying prison gang presence

In light of difficulties associated with the direct observation of prison gangs, American researchers consider prison guard perceptions of gang behaviour to be a meaningful avenue of information (Fong & Buentello, 1991). Based on their own research in Texan prisons, Fong and Buentello (1991) devised 23 questions, which they then posed to 181 officers, who had at least five years experience of prison gangs. The officers rated 11 items as key indicators of prison gang presence. These included: the emergence of prisoner cliques and secret racial groupings of prisoners; prisoners assaulting other prisoners; requests for protective custody and transfers; assaults of and verbal threats to staff; intimidation of prisoners' families; prisoner disciplinary violations regarding contraband goods; prisoners with gang-related tattoos and finally police reports of gang activity on the streets. Other American research notes similar indicators of prison gang presence. For example, Rush, Stone and Wycoff (1996) found that high levels of drugs; extreme political thought; Satanism; assaults on prisoners and staff; intimidation of prisoner families and frequent requests for transfer and protective custody marked prison gang presence.

However, Fong and Buentello (1991) note that the mere existence of key indicators does not necessarily imply prison-gang presence. For instance, prisoners request transfers for

many reasons unconnected to prison gang activity. The authors contend it is the *range* of activity and *frequency* with which the behaviours occur that attest to the presence of prison gangs. If, for example, a number of events occur “frequently” or “very frequently,” or there is a sudden rise in incidence, then there should be concern that a prison gang may be present.

### 3.3 An initial study

The study presented in this chapter was previously presented for examination as part of a Msc. Degree and has also been published (Wood and Adler 2001). However, it is presented here in a summary form since its findings provide the infrastructure for the research presented in this thesis.

In consideration of the methodological problems associated with prison gang research, it seemed that Fong and Buentello's (1991) staff-based model suggested a sensible way to begin exploring prison gang activity in England and Wales. This was due primarily to the limitations of alternative sources of information. For instance prison records may be erratic due to contradictory sources of information such as logbooks, landing books observation books and adjudication data. However, there was also a possibility that cultural differences would result in important information particular to the prison system in England and Wales being missed if the study relied solely on American measurements. Consequently, variables based on knowledge of the English prison system together with other American research (e.g. Stevens, 1997) were added to Fong and Buentello's (1991) model. For example, an item was created to assess whether staff felt that “groups of prisoners have more control over events in the prison”. This was in consideration of Stevens' (1997) findings that prison gangs flourish where they can control staff and other prisoners.

Similarly, items to assess the dominance of some prisoners by prisoner groups and the frequency of opposing groups' disputes were introduced since they might help to identify staff awareness of prisoners' group membership (stage 3 of Buentello et al.'s, 1991 theory). If such

groups exist, it would help to know if they are based on racial, regional, ideological or other criteria (Camp & Camp, 1985 and Rush, Stone & Wycoff, 1996). Consequently items relating to prisoner group formation based on these commonalities were introduced. Given that concerns and fear over personal safety have been found to proliferate in English prisons (Adler, 1998), additional items were also added in an attempt to assess the frequency of violence that leads to staff concerns for their own, or prisoners' safety. To avoid a demand effect, the phrase "prison gang" was not used. Finally, for clarity, Fong and Buentello's (1991) variable "prisoner possession of contraband" was divided into 4 specific variables concerning possession of alcohol, drugs, phone cards and tobacco as these were considered to be the most common forms of contraband in English and Welsh prisons.

### 3.3.1 Design of the study

American findings suggest that prison gangs function on their power (Stevens, 1997) and can lead to a breakdown in order (Camp & Camp, 1985). Consequently, this initial work set out to assess prison staff perceptions of prisoner power and control and to see if prison gang activity would predict these effects.

Since at this stage in the research there was no good reason to suspect gang-related activity occurred more in any particular category of prison, a comparison was made between reported gang related activity in six classes of English prison. These included: one Category A (dispersal); 5 Category B; 4 category C; 2 category D (open prisons); 2 Young Offender Institutions (Y.O.I's); and 2 Female prisons. The Y.O.I's were included due to Thompson's (1995) observations that street gangs are often predominantly adolescent. Similarly, female institutions were included due to the findings in America that female prisoners are also involved in gang formation (Knox 1994). Questionnaires were completed by a total of 374 prison personnel.

The questionnaire used (see Appendix 1) was an extension of that devised by Fong

and Buentello, (1991). Items included perceived levels of: physical assault by prisoners on staff and prisoners; verbal threats to staff; verbal and physical domination of prisoners by prisoner groups; the formation of prisoner cliques and groups formed along racial or regional lines; illicit possession of drugs, tobacco, phone cards and alcohol; prisoner membership of extreme political organisations (e.g. The British National Party) and attempts by such members to dominate prisoner groups; staff concerns for prisoner and staff safety; staff concerns over maintaining order and groups of prisoners exerting control within the prison; prisoner requests for transfers or protective custody; prisoners with gang-related tattoos; reports of extortion of prisoners' families; police reports of gang activities on the streets; and opposing groups of prisoners arguing over material possessions. In addition, participants were given a briefing sheet (see Appendix 2) outlining the study's aims and offering explicit information about confidentiality, consent and participants' rights.

### 3.3.2 Summary of main results

At such an early stage in prison gang research in this country, the main concern was staff perceptions of the frequency of gang-related events. The incidents that occur most frequently in English prisons were assessed from the percentage of staff rating an event as "frequent" or "very frequent." Table 3.1 shows the ten most frequent events, where the highest ranking event was rated as "frequent" or "very frequent" by a minimum of 76% of staff in each category; the second highest 67%; the third highest 62%; the fourth highest 53%; the fifth 52%; the sixth 43%; the seventh 37%; the eighth 30%; the ninth 30%; and the lowest rank was 29%.

Table 3.1 Ten Most Frequently Reported Gang Related Events in Each Class of Prison.

CLASS OR CATEGORY OF PRISON						
All	A	B	C	D	YOI	Female
1.Drugs	1.Drugs	1.Drugs	1.Drugs	1.Drugs	1.Prisoner Assaults	1.Transfer requests
2.Racial Groups	2.Racial Groups	2.Prisoner Assaults	2.Regional Groups	2.Alcohol	2.Racial Groups	2.Drugs
3.Transfer requests	3.Regional Groups	3.Transfer requests	3.Racial Groups	3.Transfer requests	2.Verbal Domination	3.Verbal Domination
4.Prisoner Assaults	4.Alcohol	4.Threats to Staff	4.Transfer requests	4.Phone cards	4.Drugs	4.Prisoner Assaults
5.Regional Groups	5.Transfer	5.Phone cards	5.Prisoner Assaults	5.Tobacco	4.Phone card	5.Racial Groups
6.Phone Cards	6.Assaults	6.Verbal Domination	6.Verbal Domination	6.Racial Groups	6.Transfer requests	5.Phone cards
7.Verbal Domination	6.Phone cards	7.Racial Groups	7.Protective Custody	7.Regional Groups	7.Tobacco	7.Tobacco
8.Threats to Staff	6.Verbal Domination	8.Protective Custody	7.Physical Domntion	8.Verbal Domination	8.Regional Groups	8.Regional Groups
9.Physical Domination	9.Physical Domination	9.Regional Groups	9.Phone cards	8.Prisoner Assaults	8.Threats to Staff	9.Threats to Staff
10.Protective Custody	10.Threats to Staff	10.Prisoner .safety.fears	9.Prisoner safety .fears	8.Physical Domination	8.Physical Domination	10.Physical Domination

In order to test the association between levels of gang-related activity and order and control, a series of hierarchical regressions were conducted. Results revealed that Fong and Buentello's variables successfully predicted staff perceptions that prisoner groups have more control in the prison than do staff (prisoner control). Similarly, Fong and Buentello's (1991) successfully predicted staff concerns regarding maintaining order in the prison (officer order). In both analyses the variables devised for use specifically in the English and Welsh prison estate added to the variance explained (Wood & Adler 2001).

Also of interest was where, i.e. in which categories, gang-related events were most frequent. Results revealed that respondents from the category C and Y.O.I. institutions perceived the highest number of prison-gang related incidents. However, the Y.O.I reports, although similar to category C, were also comparable with categories B and Female prisons. The lowest levels of events were reported in the category A prison and the category D establishments. Staff in the female institutions perceived less gang-related activity than category C staff only. Finally, category B establishments perceived more gang-related activity than did Category A prison staff, but less than Category C staff. They did not, however, differ from categories D, Y.O.I or female prisons.

### 3.3.3 Implications of this study and the rationale for further work

The results clearly indicate that levels of gang-related activity relate to a reduction in legitimate order and control in the English and Welsh prison estate. These findings support American claims that activities associated with prison gangs lead to control over officers and other prisoners (Camp & Camp, 1985; Fong & Buentello, 1991; Stevens, 1997).

In terms of individual categories of prison, the lowest levels of events were reported by Category A staff, where there is the highest officer: prisoner ratio. Gang-related events were reported as more frequent by staff in Category B institutions than Category A, but less frequent than Category C. These results may indicate that higher levels of prison staff

impede gang formation and/or activities. However, the finding that Category D (male open prisons) reported fewer gang-like events than Category C prisons seems to challenge this assumption.

Despite the lower staff levels in Category D prisons, this result is not really as surprising as it might appear. As noted earlier, Category D prisoners are usually serving short sentences, or nearing the end of long-term imprisonment. It is doubtful that any long-term prisoner, who had been problematic, would be considered suitable for an open prison. This notion is supported by claims that the Prison Service tends to be very cautious when classifying prisoners and even relies on over-secure classification (King & McDermott, 1995). If prisoners are over-classified by officials mindful of public disapproval following an escape, it is conceivable that only those most worthy of trust will be incarcerated in open prisons.

In addition, the results suggest the neglect of female prisons in prison gang literature is not justified. There were fewer gang-like events reported by staff in Female prisons than in Category C prisons, but female event levels did not differ from any other category. This seems to echo the picture of increasing female involvement in street gang activity argued by Campbell (1984). Similarly, the finding that Y.O.I. staff perceived high levels of gang-related events relative to other categories of prison indicates that young offenders may be involved in gang-related activity in prison just as they are reported to be on the streets (e.g. Thompson 1995).

It is clear that staff perceive high levels of many events argued by American researchers to be gang-related (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991) occur in English prisons (Wood & Adler 2001). Events such as drug possession; groups formed by race; requests for transfers; prisoner/prisoner assaults; and regional affiliations are perceived by staff as occurring in all categories of prison in this study. However, at such an early stage in the research, interpretations of these results can only be tentative. For instance, high levels of racial or

regional prisoner groups may be consistent with American findings that racial or regional criteria delineate prison gangs (e.g. Camp & Camp, 1985). Nevertheless, these groups could also reflect innocuous social support networks. In short, it does not follow that the high levels of negative activities are related to groups simply because they are visible.

Similarly, the high levels of requests for transfer do not necessarily imply prisoners want to leave the prison due to intimidation or physical assaults from other prisoners. There are many reasons why prisoners want transfers, the most obvious being a desire to be closer to home. That the highest numbers of transfer requests were found in female prisons supports this contention. Since there are few female prisons in England, many women will be incarcerated some distance from their families. Also, female prisoners may be more likely than male prisoners to be the main caregivers for dependants. Hence they may consider proximity to home to be vital in order to maintain contact with dependent children. Similarly, the high levels of prisoner/prisoner assaults reported by staff do not necessarily indicate gang activity. In the confined atmosphere of a prison, there are going to be altercations leading to assaults. Therefore, the high levels of assaults may result from individual prisoners' disputes and not prison gang activity.

Clearly, the results of this initial work cannot be considered as conclusive evidence that prison gangs do or do not exist in English prisons. In the absence of previous research into prison gangs in English prisons, these findings cannot be set within an appropriately dynamic context. Similarly, Buentello et al's (1991) theory of prison gang development needs to be extended so that it provides a clearer picture of the psychological processes that motivate prison gang membership. Issues of the support prisoners may receive from being members of a gang are alluded to in Buentello et al.'s (1991) theory, but are not developed in any substantial way. Similarly, Buentello et al (1991) discuss fear and the stress of imprisonment as affecting the newly imprisoned prisoner, but once more these issues are not



given the attention they deserve. If prisoners are drawn together and form groups, the underlying psychological explanations for this behaviour need to be explored. In particular, the need for social support in an unfamiliar and potentially threatening environment should be addressed as a possible motive for prisoner group formation and possibly gang formation.

Perhaps prison gang membership is not only founded on commonalties such as race or political persuasion, but also on commonality of inclination; issues not tapped in this initial study. For example, prisoners who wish to continue drug dealing may ally themselves with like-minded individuals who also happen to share other commonalties. In this way, the emphasis placed on race, politics and religious inclination may be secondary to shared involvement in criminal activity. Accordingly, Buentello et al's, (1991) model offers only a peripheral explanation of what draws prisoners to one another. Finally, Buentello et al's (1991) theory of prison gang development needs to consider the role that previous incarceration may play in the development of prisoner groups.

In terms of this early work, the measures depict the type of events that are likely to be salient (e.g. assaults on staff) but not necessarily the "norm". Nevertheless, staff perceptions of frequency may be influenced by the magnitude of the event to the individual respondent. Also, the assessment of events was wholly dependent on prison staff having knowledge of prisoners' activities. It is feasible that a sizeable number of events were not reported due to staff ignorance of many incidents. Furthermore, it is possible that structural, cultural or environmental differences between prisons influenced the results. For example, what is considered to be an offence in one prison may be perceived as negligible in another.

Nevertheless, the evidence offered from this initial work does give cause for concern that prison gangs may exist or be developing in English prisons and consequently merits further examination. When the drug levels in English prisons noted in the above study and elsewhere (e.g. Edgar & O'Donnell, 1998), are considered it makes the prospect of prison

gang development even more likely. Where there are drugs, there will be financial profit. For the prisoner who uses drugs, the group supplying them will offset what may be a modern day “pain of imprisonment” -drug deprivation.

In light of these findings, it would seem that exploration of the issue of prison gangs in greater depth is justified. In particular, the categories of prison identified in this study as having high levels of gang-related activity, need to be examined more closely. As useful as staff perspectives may be as a starting point in this research, there are clearly limitations to staff knowledge of prisoners’ behaviour. If knowledge of prison gangs is to be developed we need to have more detail relating to the factors that facilitate the formation of prisoner groups and the functions these groups serve for members. Bearing this in mind, it would seem that, despite the reservations proclaimed by American researchers (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991), the population best situated to offer any meaningful insight into these issues is a prisoner population.

### 3.4 Summary

This chapter outlined the findings of the initial work examining prison gang activity in English prisons. Surveys of gang-related activity were completed by 374 prison staff in 16 prisons that were representative of the English Prison Estate. Results indicated the highest levels of gang related activity to be in male category C prisons and Young Offender Institutions. The lowest levels of gang-related activity were reported in both category D and category A prisons with Female establishments reporting levels lower only than category C prisons.

The chapter concluded by noting how the levels of gang-related events reported in this early work justifies additional research. The results reported in this initial work also provide some insight into which particular categories of prison that merit further study. The chapter continued by pointing out the limitations with using prison staff as a source of information on

prisoner behaviour. It argued that, regardless of the reservations of American researchers (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991) there are some issues that can only be answered by prisoner populations. Therefore research using prisoner participants seems to be the most sensible way forward in terms of research into prison gangs. As a result, the next chapter outlines the development of a study designed to assess prisoners' perspectives of some of the issues relating to the formation and function of prisoner groups.

## Chapter Four

### Background and design of the current study

#### 4.1 Background

The previous chapter reported the results of a study into prison staff perceptions of events that might indicate prison gang presence. Reported levels of events suggest the possibility that groups of prisoners threaten order and control in English prisons. Category C prisons had the highest number of 'gang-related' incidents whilst Young Offender Institutions and Female prisons also reported high levels of 'gang-related' episodes.

These results, based on staff perceptions alone, cannot be considered as conclusive evidence that groups of prisoners possess gang-like qualities. As Chapter 3 notes, prison staff may fail to remember the frequency with which certain events occur or they may have their own reasons for offering a particular perspective of prison life. Issues such as low morale, lack of job satisfaction, or even stereotypical views of prisoners' behaviour may influence the levels of events staff report. Furthermore, Canadian research indicates that staff awareness of prisoner activity is limited (Cooley 1993). Cooley noted how prison guards were aware of only 2% of the property crime and 36% of the violent crime prisoners claimed they experienced. Adding to the possibility of staff ignorance, is the likelihood that even the most conscientious and observant staff members may misinterpret events. Street gang researchers maintain that several people indulging in the same activity at the same time and in the same place may be regarded as a group rather than "contiguous individuals" (p.67 Klein 1969). In a prison, the chances of such mistakes are increased by the close proximity of prisoners. Prison wings resemble micro-neighbourhoods where regulation of work and leisure activities means that prisoners become members of compulsory groups and consequently may be judged to be involved in the illicit activities of other 'group members'.

The problems associated with a staff only perspective have implications not only for staff reports, but also for the use of official prison data; a research methodology favoured by some (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Buentello Fong and Vogel 1991). If staff assessments of prisoner behaviour are not accurate, then it follows that prison records compiled by staff will reflect those inaccuracies. Added to this, the contradictory sources of official information noted in Chapter 3, i.e. log books, landing books, observation books and adjudication data which contribute to prison records in England and Wales, render prison records, at best, an erratic source of evidence.

The potential flaws in staff reports and official records as data sources for examining 'gang-related' events demonstrate how alternative sources of information on prison gang activity/existence need to be considered. The most logical alternative to the above methodologies would be to observe prisoner behaviour, although it would be impractical in many cases to do so, or, alternatively, to ask prisoners for their perceptions of 'gang-related' events in prison. Many American prison gang researchers have been reluctant to speak to prisoners about prison gang existence (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991). The assumption underlying this reluctance is that prisoners will not participate in research related to gangs, due to strict codes of secrecy adhered to by gang members (Fong & Buentello 1991). This has resulted in staff reports, along with the pitfalls outlined above, being used as a resource for assessing the characteristics and behaviour of prison gang members. Regrettably, research based on prison staff reports has also been used as a basis for prison policies aimed at curbing gang activity. The outcome of such policies is that many prisoners have taken legal action against the American penal system for falsely identifying them as prison gang members and subsequently subjecting them to punitive penal conditions (Kassell 1998). The litigious consequences of misidentification, that seems to result from staff reports, indicate that a more thorough investigation into prison gangs is necessary. Clearly, no

methodology is flawless but knowledge gained from prisoners seems as appropriate as information gained from any other available source. If research hopes to offer a meaningful account of its subject, ignoring completely the population of interest, in this case prisoners, seem to be imprudent. Of course collecting information from prisoners is wholly dependent on them co-operating with the research.

Some American authors have conducted qualitative research with prisoner populations and found that prisoners do offer information on the existence and impact of prison gangs (e.g. Stevens 1997). This is not as surprising as some authors suggest (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991). As Chapter 1 notes, in the U.S.A., staff reports of the number of prisoners involved in prison gangs indicates that very few prisoners are members of these groups. American researchers estimate that between 2% (Camp & Camp 1985) and 10% (Knox 1994) of male adult prisoners are gang members. Even considering the higher estimate, indications are that 90% of prisoners are not prison gang members and are therefore not bound by any gang's code of secrecy. If prison gangs are as predatory as the literature suggests then at least some non-gang prisoners will have been victimised by these groups. These prisoners may be willing, if assured of confidentiality, to speak to researchers. Adding to this is the prospect that even prison gang members may not be quite as reticent as Fong and Buentello (1991) argue.

Koehler (2000) reports a series of interviews with members of the highly organised La Nuestra Familia within Colorado state correctional facilities. La Nuestra Familia is a prison-based Chicano crime gang which has existed since 1968 (Koehler 1968) and whose presence in American prisons has been noted by several authors e.g. Lewis (1980) Camp & Camp (1985) Hunt, Riegel, Morales & Waldorf (1993). Koehler found that more than 90% of La Nuestra members were willing to be interviewed about their gang membership. There are, however, two important points that need to be made regarding Koehler's study. Firstly, the

level of co-operation from prison gang members Koehler reports does not necessarily indicate that gang members will readily assist with research. Koehler is an ex-prisoner and an ex-La Nuestra Familia member who subsequently became an academic. It may be that the common background he shared with the prisoners persuaded La Nuestra members to assist with his research. Secondly, Koehler admits that none of the gang members agreed to speak about their criminal activities within the prison. In terms of prison gang theory, these interviews offer little insight into the criminal activities of prison-based gangs. Still, in a highly organised and well-established gang such as La Nuestra Familia, it might be expected that members would be bound by codes of silence as Fong and Buentello (1991) argue.

Clearly, the participants in Koehler's study did not consider themselves to be wholly inhibited in this way. If even highly organised gang members can be persuaded to assist with research, it might be expected that other, perhaps less well-organised prison gang members, would also be willing to speak to researchers. Consequently there seems to be no real justification for ignoring prisoners as a source of data whereas there seems to be a lot of potential in conducting interviews with prisoners on the subject of prison gangs. As a result, the current study was designed to investigate prison gang existence and activity, based on prisoner reports.

#### 4.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were threefold:

1. It aimed to assess prisoners' perceptions of gang-related events and to see which categories of prison appear to be most vulnerable to these events.
2. To establish whether the levels of events as perceived by prisoners relate to legitimate order and control in the prison.

3. To explore prisoners' demographic, institutional and psychological characteristics to see if they correlate with involvement in gang-related activity.

Since participants in this study were prisoners and not staff, an interview design was considered to be appropriate. This was due to the possibility that some prisoners would have literacy problems and consequently have difficulty reading a questionnaire, which in turn, may result in a biased sample. A further reason why an interview methodology was selected was that response rates are likely to be higher (de Vaus 1991) and prisoners might be more willing to co-operate in an interview where they could be offered personal reassurance of confidentiality.

#### 4.2.1 Gang-related events scale

In consideration of the results reviewed in Chapter 3, the first scale in the current interview schedule examined prisoners' reports of events associated with prison gang existence. The scale in the current study (see Appendix 3) used the same variables as the study reported in Chapter 3, and so was also based on the model proposed by Fong and Buentello (1991). Events assessed included levels of: physical assaults by prisoners on staff and prisoners; verbal threats to staff and prisoners; physical domination of prisoners by prisoner groups; formation of prisoner cliques and groups being formed along racial or regional lines; illicit possession of drugs, tobacco, phone cards and alcohol; prisoner membership of extreme political organisations e.g. British National Party and domination of prisoner groups by these members: prisoner concerns for own or other prisoners' safety; belief that staff may not maintain order and perceptions that prisoner groups exert control within the prison; prisoner requests for transfers or protective custody; prisoners with 'gang-related' tattoos; prisoner reports of extortion of their families by other prisoners; knowledge



of gang activity on the streets related to the prison and opposing prisoners arguing over material possessions.

As Chapter 1 indicates, the maintenance of order and control may be undermined as gangs acquire power (Fong & Buentello 1991; Stevens 1997) within the prison. The current scale was designed to see if prisoner reports would predict their perceptions of the levels of order and control staff maintained within the prison. The scale was designed to address two specific research questions, namely; which prisons are most vulnerable to gang-related activity in England and Wales and are gang-related events associated with a decrease in the legitimate order and control in English and Welsh prisons as they are in prisons in America?

#### Limitations of this scale

Clearly, to know the levels of activities that may be related to prison gang presence offers little more than the prospect that prison gangs might be active in the English and Welsh prison system. Without more definitive information, there is the danger that innocuous prisoner groups may be considered to be prison gangs and action taken accordingly. Any policies introduced to negate the perceived adverse effects of prison gangs could, without accurate implementation, actually exacerbate the problem of prison gangs. Kassel (1998) contends that in the U.S.A., inaccurate perceptions of the nature of gangs and arbitrary criteria for identifying members, has led to enhanced gang cohesion and the allegiance of more prisoners to groups. This notion is consistent with gang literature that argues how increased gang cohesion results from the perception of external threats and is not due to the internal attributes of group members (Klein & Crawford 1968; Knox 1994). Subsequently, the punitive response of American prison authorities may be viewed as an external threat to which prisoners respond by forming cohesive groups. In order to avoid the possibility of the replication of such negative consequences in England and Wales, more understanding of the composition of prisoner groups and their involvement in 'gang-related' activities is needed.

#### 4.2.2 The construction of a second scale

In light of the above, a second scale was added to the interview schedule (see Appendix 4). The aims of this scale were to assess prisoners' perceptions of their own and other prisoners' involvement in gang-related events and to explore some of the facilitating factors associated with informal groups in prison. As Chapter 1 notes, prison gangs may form within the prison (Indigenous theory; e.g. Buentello et al 1991) or they may result from the importation of street gang members who re-group following incarceration (importation theory; e.g. Jacobs 1977). As these two models are not mutually exclusive and some prison researchers claim they explain more variance when used together than separately (Paterline 1999), the current study did not focus on either as a potential origin, since prison gangs could develop from either or both roots. Consequently, issues such as prisoners' associations with other prisoners before incarceration were recorded as were connections formed within the current prison. Other issues examined included: facilitators of prisoner groups (e.g. perception of danger and shared characteristics); the existence of groups (recognition of groups as groups by self and others); the organisation of prisoner groups (leadership, rules and hallmarks such as tattoos); and the activities of prisoner groups (victimisation, protection, trades and criminal involvement with people outside prison). A five-point Likert-type scale was employed to record prisoners' agreement with statements about their own and other prisoners' group behaviour within the prison (self and other) and open-ended questions were used in order to explore further possibilities not covered by the statements

The first research question to be addressed by this second scale was which factors facilitate prisoner groups. Buentello et al's (1991) theory of prison gang development contends that the newly incarcerated prisoner, deprived of his/her usual form of support, perceives the prison environment as a potential danger (Duffee 1989), and leads to the prisoner seeking the company of similar others in order to cope with feelings of isolation and

fear. The first scale in this study did not assess prisoners' perception that the prison environment may be dangerous. If prisoners perceive the prison as potentially dangerous then, as research suggests, this could lead to the formation of prisoner groups as prisoners band together for protection against the perceived danger (e.g. Knox 1994).

Research conducted in English and Welsh prisons suggests that prisons are places where violence is an accepted part of prison culture, particularly in male prisons (Scruton, Sim & Skidmore 1991). If violence is an accepted part of prison culture, then it is not unreasonable to assume that fear of violence will also be a part of prison culture. Fear and its incidence in English and Welsh prisons is not a frequently documented aspect of prison life, but the available evaluations indicate the prevalence of fear in the English prison estate (Adler 1994; King & McDermott 1995, O'Donnell & Edgar 1998). The Home Office Report conducted by the Chief Inspector of Prisons (1991) recorded how newly sentenced prisoners were ...

“...fearful of their likely treatment by other prisoners and staff, ignorant of ...the system's expectations of them...they feel rejected and isolated” (p. 15)..

Further, Toch (1977) predicted that group membership would result from the violent milieu of prison since:

“Aggression makes the abuse of others the measure of pride; it cements membership in retaliatory or predatory groups.” (p.64).

It seems reasonable, in light of such evidence, to consider that the experience of fear in prison may act as a facilitator for group membership and therefore merits examination.

However, even if the prison environment is not considered dangerous it might be expected that new prisoners will still be fearful until they recognise that particular prison's lack of environmental threat. As a result, the second scale asked prisoners to state how much they agreed that they themselves felt in danger on first entering the prison (self). On the other

hand, if the prison does not pose a threat to prisoners then it might be expected that prisoners should disagree with statements suggesting other prisoners are in danger when entering the prison (other). Building on this, prisoners were asked how much they agreed that prisoners new to this prison are in danger from other prisoners. Taking into consideration the possibility that prisoners would perceive the prison as a dangerous environment, further statements were designed to assess if prisoners considered that their group was protective of its members against other prisoners (self). Similarly, prisoners were asked if they believed other prisoners also felt protected via group membership (other).

Although the first scale in this interview schedule assessed the existence of prisoner groups based on the shared characteristics most often associated with prison gangs e.g. race, region of origin and political ideology (Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991; Rush, Stone and Wycoff 1996), it did not address all the issues raised by previous research in terms of shared similarities. For instance, as Chapter 1 notes, Stevens (1997) reports a process known as 'Juvenilisation' may facilitate gang formation where 'Juvenilisation' involves gang formation based on prisoners' shared knowledge of a previous prison. Although research conducted in English and Welsh prisons has not directly examined this issue, there is evidence that previous incarceration experience increases the risk that prisoners will victimise other prisoners (O'Donnell and Edgar 1998). If prisoners who have previous incarceration experience are more prepared to victimise other prisoners, then it seems reasonable to consider that they may also become involved in groups that victimise, such as gangs. This is because a prison gang might offer the victimiser member protection, which in turn reduces the chance of successful retaliation by victims.

In view of this possibility and Steven's (1997) assertions that 'Juvenilisation' acts as a facilitator for prison gang formation, interview variables assessing prisoners' group formation based on shared incarceration experiences were included in this scale. Prisoners were asked to

indicate how much they agreed with statements asserting that prisoners are likely to be friends with prisoners who have shared previous incarceration experiences even if they did not know each other at that time. In addition, open-ended questions asking how the prisoner chose his/her friends and how he/she believed other prisoners chose their friends were asked. These variables were included in order to obtain any additional information on the formation of prisoner associations that might not have been tapped by previous research such as Stevens' (1997).

In addition, in order to assess the regularity of group association, prisoners were asked to agree or disagree with a statement that they mix with the same prisoners most of the time. Finally, on the issue of shared similarities, this scale also included items assessing prisoners' previous associations with other prisoners outside prison. Likert-type statements measured the extent to which prisoners agreed they had known other prisoners before coming into prison and open-ended questions asked prisoners in what capacity they had known other prisoners. Like the other questions in this protocol, measures of 'self' and 'other' were taken.

To know that prisoners experience fear and seek the company of similar others does not necessarily signify their group membership. In order to assess the existence of prisoner groups, variables assessing prisoners' recognition of other prisoner groups as groups and their perception that their own group is perceived as such within the prison were taken. This was due to this study's definition of a group as existing when three or more people define themselves as members of it and when its existence is recognised by at least one other (developed from Brown's 2000 definition) outlined in Chapter 1.

Prison gangs in America are noted for their structure (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991). It is thought that the more highly structured the group, the more able it is to involve itself in criminal activities both inside and outside the prison (Buentello et al, 1991). The structure of the gang and the rules it employs enables it to maintain an air of secrecy and to conduct gang

business in a clandestine manner (Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991). Gang structure also allows the group to maximise its power and control within the prison (Stevens 1997). In the consensual definition of a prison gang, it is usually regarded as a group of prisoners, with a leader, whose negative behaviour adversely impacts on the prison that holds them (Huff 1996). Although the operational definition employed throughout this thesis (see Chapter 1) imposes less stringent criteria, it is useful to know if prisoner groups are structured in any way similar to the American definitions. Knowledge of prisoner group structure helps explain at what stage of prison gang development prisoner groups have reached, in terms of Buentello et.al's (1991) theory of prison gang development. With such knowledge it is then possible to determine the likelihood that some, all, or none, of the prisoner groups in English and Welsh prisons are structurally analogous with prison gangs in American prisons. Consequently, variables asking prisoners to agree or disagree with statements on leadership of their group, the adherence to a set of rules devised by the group and the wearing of clothes or tattoos to delineate the group as a distinct entity, were devised. Again, prisoners were asked for their perceptions of their own and others' behaviour.

Even if prisoner groups do exist, are a function of perceived danger and shared characteristics; protect group members from other prisoners, have a leader, abide by rules and wear some form of insignia denoting the group's existence, it does not necessarily follow that the group has gang characteristics or even gang potential. Many other groups, for example the average football team, satisfy several of the criteria outlined above. Prisoner groups also meeting the above could be considered as having reached Stage 3 of prison gang development as delineated by Buentello et.al. (1991). However, as the authors point out, groups in this stage are not engaged in the illicit activities of the prison gang: the primary function of stage 3 groups is protection of group members. Also, even though groups in this stage may progress to become full-blown prison gangs they may also disband (Buentello et.al. 1991).

Consequently, although the criteria outlined earlier in this chapter are important in the study of prison gangs, it is the *behaviour* of the group that sets it apart from other prisoner groups. Just as street gangs may be differentiated from other community groups by their criminal activities (e.g. Klein 1995) so it is that the defining difference between the prison gang and an innocuous prisoner group is illicit behaviour.

Prison gangs function on financial profit and power and one of the ways that the gang acquires and maintains both finance and power is by the victimisation of other prisoners (Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Fong and Buentello 1991; Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991; Stevens 1997). As mentioned earlier, no direct research into prison gang activity in English and Welsh prisons has been conducted to date, but research into victimisation and bullying in the English and Welsh prison estate has documented intimidation and assault as common occurrences (e.g. Dyson & Wozniak, 1997; O'Donnell & Edgar 1998).

However, the focus in both the bullying literature and intervention programmes devised to address this behaviour is the individual prisoner: his/her group membership is not considered. This omission is surprising as the Chief Inspector of prisons reported ten years ago that bullies often become agents for prisoners who organise various prison rackets associated with money lending and tobacco and drugs trades (Woolf 1991). Other studies also record group involvement in victimisation of other prisoners. As noted in Chapter 1, King and McDermott (1995) mentioned the possibility that prison gangs exist in English prisons and that, of the five English prisons in their study, one reported the continuing rivalry of incarcerated community gangs. Others reported intimidation and violence from groups of prisoners involved in a narcotics trade. In addition, a number of prisoners quoted by O'Donnell and Edgar (1998) recall how they were victimised by groups of other prisoners:

“Every week I would get parcels in the post. Four boys would come on to me. First they asked me for a loan. So I was giving them ½

oz here and there. Then they started demanding it. They threatened to slash me.”

“...Now I’m frightened to go upstairs and use the phone if they’re there. I phone now in the morning before they get up.”

“These black boys come into my cell and say: ‘Right I’m taking your radio’. I didn’t want to get in a fight, so I said: ‘Take it’. (p.273)

In addition, the high levels of drugs reported in Chapter 3 and elsewhere (Edgar & O’Donnell 1998) offer potential financial rewards, as do trades in phone cards, tobacco and alcohol. High levels of physical assaults, verbal and physical domination can become the means by which prisoners intimidate and control other prisoners, all aspects that may be reflected in high levels of requests for transfer and protective custody. The existence of this potential for financial profit coupled with the high levels of intimidation noted earlier and recognised as common prison gang behaviour (e.g. Buentello et.al, 1991) clearly warrant further investigation and so the current study was designed to examine the role of prisoner groups in these activities.

Consequently, prisoners in the current study were asked to report on their own and other prisoners’ group involvement in criminal activities such as violent behaviour to other prisoners. Additional, open-ended questions were added in order to determine where in the prison violence occurred, at what time of day and how it was most likely to arise, for instance from an argument or planned assaults. This was because any policies devised to counteract such behaviour need to consider not only the frequency of such events but also the likely venues for these occurrences. Prisoners were also asked to agree or disagree with statements referring to their own group and other prisoners’ group involvement in illicit trades.



Statements referring to illicit trades were not explicit inasmuch as they did not specify which trades prisoners might be involved in. This was for two reasons: the first scale in this interview protocol examined perceived levels of drugs, tobacco, phone cards and alcohol and so further questions of this nature were considered redundant. The second reason was that researchers are not necessarily adept at determining exactly which goods prisoners might value. As Goffman (1961) observes, in total institutions such as prisons, where deprivation dominates, even the smallest trinket may take on a value it would not normally have. Bearing this in mind, it seems somewhat ill advised for the researcher in a prison setting to make any assumptions relating to valuable currency. Consequently, it seemed more appropriate to ask for prisoners' opinions rather than constrain responses to the researcher's conception of what might be valuable currency in a prison. For this reason, statements were followed by open-ended questions asking prisoners to clarify what materials they and/or other prisoners traded whilst in custody.

As prison gangs in America are thought to have power bases extending into the community, this study also looked at the involvement of prisoner groups in illicit activities with people outside prison. This should offer some insight into the extent to which such groups have become organised. Prisoners were asked to agree or disagree with statements that their group is involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison (self). They were also asked to agree/disagree with statements inferring that other prisoner groups are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison (other). The aim of this scale was to address a number of research issues by identifying some of the factors that contribute to the formation of prisoner groups involved in gang-related activity. For instance does Juvenilisation play a role in the formation of prisoner groups as speculated by Stevens (1997) or are prisoner groups more likely to be founded on shared regional or racial origin. In addition, the scale was designed to examine some of the gang-related activities prisoner groups may be involved in

by examining prisoners' perception of their own and other prisoners' involvement in these activities in a quantitative and qualitative way.

If the previous scales identify that prisoner groups in England and Wales do resemble prison gangs, what they cannot do is identify the prisoners most likely to become members of such groups. As noted in Chapter 1, Kassel (1998) argues that in America, the identification of prisoners as prison gang members is beset with problems. Prison staff record an incident as 'gang-related' if it involves a prisoner identified by staff as being a gang member (DuBois 1995). The American Department of Corrections uses 17 separate criteria by which prisoners are judged to be gang members (Kassel 1998).

The problem with this, as argued in chapter 1, is that the 17 criteria are based on judgements of the Department of Corrections' Security Threat Group and not on empirical research. Consequently, as noted earlier, the Department of Corrections spends a great deal of time in Court defending law-suits filed by prisoners claiming they have been falsely identified as gang members. Arguably in a litigious society such as the U.S.A. these lawsuits would occur even if the prisoners were correctly identified as gang members. However, even if the American penal authorities are able to identify prisoners correctly, without the support of independent empirical research, the system becomes vulnerable to accusations of biased judgement and victimisation of prisoners. In the absence of rigorous empirical research, the 'solution' to the existence of prison gangs seems to rest solely on punitive measures which some maintain actually increase gang membership and group cohesion (Kassel 1998). Evidently, empirical research leading to a clearer understanding of the characteristics of prisoners vulnerable to prison gang membership is needed to devise policies which address individual and institutional needs in order to ameliorate any prison gang problem.

As Chapter 1 notes, research exploring differences between gang and non-gang prisoners suggests a number of characteristic dissimilarities between the two groups. Gang

members are more likely to have reported drug and alcohol problems, to have never been employed, and to have been arrested in excess of 15 times (Sheldon 1991). Sheldon also found that gang prisoners were more likely to be serving longer prison sentences, were more likely to have used a weapon in their last offence and have committed offences, particularly drug and fighting offences, within the prison. Ralph et.al. (1996) noted that gang members were more likely than non-gang prisoners to have previous convictions, previous prison sentences and have been placed in solitary confinement than non-gang prisoners. Gang members were also more likely to serve longer portions of their sentences than non-gang members, probably due to days being added to their sentence following disciplinary action within the prison.

#### 4.2.3 The third scale - Prisonization

Buentello et.al's (1991) theory of prison gang development describes how the newly incarcerated prisoner adopts the attitudes and behaviours consistent with the prisoner code of conduct. This process of Prisonization (Clemmer 1940), explained more fully in Chapter 2, refers to a set of attitudes associated with a willingness to integrate into prisoner groups; an acceptance of prisoner codes of conduct and a reluctance to associate with prison staff. As noted in chapter 2, Clemmer (1940) argued that prisonized attitudes resulted from associating with prisoners who are integrated into the prison culture, particularly if they possess leadership qualities. Prisonized attitudes are also indicated by a reluctance to accept work and recreational directives and an indulgence in excessive or deviant sexual behaviour and/or excessive gambling. Despite the uncertainties, outlined in Chapter 1, concerning gang and non-gang prisoner comparisons, most of the attitudes and behaviours linked to prisonization have been consistently associated with prison gang membership (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991). From this, it could be expected that prison gang members would display attitudes consistent with Clemmer's (1940) notions of prisonization.

It is therefore possible that measures of prisonization may offer insight into which prisoners are most likely to be vulnerable to gang membership in prison. For the purposes of the present study, a scale assessing prisonization was adapted from Thomas and Zingraff's (1976) Organizational Structure and Prisonization Scale (OSPS). Some changes were made to the scale so that the statements would be appropriate for use with adult male and female prisoners as well as young offender populations (see Appendix 5). Participants responded to a 5-point Likert-type scale, indicating how much they agreed or disagreed with statements signifying attitudes consistent with: a reluctance to associate with prison staff any more than is necessary; a condemnation of prisoners who confide in staff; a desire to carry out only what is absolutely necessary in terms of formal prison activities; a belief that staff should be told only what they want to hear if prisoners want to leave prison soon; an intention to stick to one's own beliefs and not adopt the attitudes of staff; an assessment of whether prisoners believe they have more in common with staff or other prisoners and an assessment of a determination not to allow anyone to push them around and get away with it.

If this scale does demonstrate that prisoners who are involved in prisoner groups and 'gang-related' activities hold attitudes more consistent with prisonization than do other prisoners, this knowledge may help in the identification process of prisoners vulnerable to prison gang membership. However, what it will not offer is any insight into *why* some prisoners and not others are susceptible to prison gang membership. If prison policies are to be shaped in order to combat the threat prison gangs may pose to the prison and other prisoners then it is crucial that the motivation for such group membership is examined.

#### 4.2.4 Fourth and fifth scales: prisoners' perceptions of social support

Central to the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et.al. 1991) is the notion that the prisoner, bereft of his/her usual forms of social support, seeks the company of other prisoners in order to feel a sense of belonging in an uncertain environment. Chapter 2 notes

how gang researchers have observed that street gang membership satisfies a need for support and friendship (e.g. Short & Strodbeck 1965; Klein 1995). Klein (1995) also argues how street gang membership, in addition to fulfilling a need for companionship, offers a sense of protection from attack. It is conceivable that prisoners entering the uncertain environment of a prison will experience the same satisfactions as street gang members from group affiliation.

This may be particularly true if the prisoner perceives his/her environment as a potential threat. Prison gang research notes that prison gangs offer members many benefits (see Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion) including protection and access to illicit trades and goods. However, as noted earlier, only a very small number of prisoners become members of prison gangs (Camp & Camp 1985; Knox 1994) despite the benefits gang membership may offer. This suggests that the majority of prisoners do not rely on the social support of a gang during a prison sentence. The theory of prison gang development (Buentello et.al. 1991) suggests that many prisoners join the budding gang in its early stages of development, but leave as the group progresses towards gang status: no theoretical explanation is offered for this. Perhaps the explanation as to why prisoners leave the group lies in an examination of alternative forms of social support available to the prisoner. What is not known is whether alternative forms of support are chosen by some prisoners in preference to prison gang membership and if so why might this be the case.

Literature examining social support (see chapter 2) suggests that social support is a bi-dimensional construct that may be expressive (i.e. emotional) and/or instrumental (i.e. practical assistance) (Lin 1986). Lin (1986) adds that social support may stem from two sources: strong ties and weak ties. Strong ties involve the sharing of an intimate and confiding relationship and, argues Lin (1986), provide the most valuable form of support in both instrumental and expressive terms. Weak ties primarily provide the individual with a social network that offers access to information and instrumental support: it is a reciprocal network

involving mutual obligations between network and individual. Lin (1986) contends that strong ties, rather than weak ties, promote the mental health of the individual due to the emotional support derived from shared confidences in the context of an emotional bond. This form of support provides the individual with a feeling that he/she is cared for, loved and valued. In a prison environment it is possible that the prisoner, in order to cope with any threats of everyday prison life (Duffee 1989) will draw on both weak and strong forms of social support. Strong ties, seem more likely to originate from those with whom he/she has an emotional bond such as family members and may help maintain the prisoner's mental health throughout the sentence. On the other hand, weak ties provide the prisoner with instrumental support in the form of information and resources and so feasibly in a prison are likely to come from other prisoners or staff. The provision of social support in this way should provide a buffering effect, which has been identified as a key protective factor against the impact of major life events (Thoits 1995), and few would argue that imprisonment is not a major life event for many prisoners.

However, the prisoner who has little in the way of strong ties (for definitional ease hitherto referred to as the family) is likely, during incarceration, to rely on weak ties in the form of the prisoner group and feasibly become more committed to the group than the prisoner who does have family support. As Vigil and Yun (1996) note (see chapter 2) gang membership may compensate for a non-existent or inadequate family. In the English and Welsh prison population an astonishingly high number of people have spent time in local authority care (Walmsley, Howard & White 1992) suggesting some form of familial disruption. Walmsley et.al.'s survey revealed that 26% of adult offenders and 38% of prisoners under age 21 have at some time been placed in care. This compares with approximately 2% of the general population. In addition, research examining youth crime and social support has revealed a positive association between deficient family support and

delinquency (Licitra-Kleckler & Waas 1994) and a negative association between familial social support and Hispanic youth gang membership (Frauenglass et al, 1997, see chapter 2).

The value of the family in terms of crime reduction is well documented. As Wright and Wright (1992) concluded from their review of the literature on family ties and recidivism,

“Among convicted criminals, maintaining an active family interest while incarcerated and the establishment of a mutually satisfying relationship after release were associated with decreases in subsequent reoffense.” (p.54).

Adding to this is the observation that rehabilitation decreases recidivism more than any of the competing correctional practices such as incapacitation (e.g. Cohen 1983; Visher 1987) and punishment-orientated programmes (e.g. Andrews & Bonta 1994). The value of family ties in the life of the prisoner are also reflected in the Home Office inquiry (1991) into prison disturbances in which recommendations were made that prisoners be held close to home in order to maintain family ties.

Just how the family might influence prisoner group membership within prison can be explained by social psychological models such as Moreland and Levine's (1982), outlined in chapter 2. As Moreland and Levine point out, the individual assesses the merits of future relationships by examining their potential in light of past relationships. However, in a prison setting the prisoner faced with the possibility of joining a prisoner group is only likely to feel a need to assess the past, present and future rewards of his/her affiliations if one relationship seems to threaten the maintenance of the other relationship.

Nevertheless, the mere existence of external relationships may not be sufficient to prevent the prisoner becoming involved with prisoner groups intent on criminal activity. It is the maintenance of the relationship throughout the period of confinement that is important in terms of the support it gives the prisoner enabling him/her to cope with the prison sentence. Few would disagree with the notion that maintaining family relationships whilst in prison is a

difficult process and different families will have different problems with which to contend. For example, some families will experience financial hardship making frequent visits to the prisoner impossible and so for the purposes of research, assessing objective measures of social support such as number of visits may merely reflect socio-economic differences and not the relevance of the support to the prisoner. If the prisoner perceives that his/her family members are doing everything possible to support him/her throughout the prison sentence, then it seems likely that those family ties will continue to be important enough to influence the prisoner's behaviour in prison. If, however, the prisoner considers significant others are unable/unwilling to offer support during the prison sentence, then it is possible that the prisoner will resort to alternative sources of support in the prison. It is therefore the perceived rather than objective measures of social support from significant others coupled with the prisoner's expressed levels of satisfaction with that support that has theoretical importance in terms of prisoners' behaviour within prison.

Inasmuch as the above proposes the role of social support and its influence on prisoner behaviour during incarceration, there are likely to be exceptions to this proposition. Prisoners who take drugs and wish to continue doing so throughout their prison sentence are less likely to be influenced by the levels of social support they receive from family. Research shows that although some prisoners use their time in prison to stop taking drugs (Shewan, Reid, MacPherson & Davies 1995) and social support from the family has been linked to their success (Swann & James 1998). Other prisoners, however, become members of groups in order to access drugs (Hughes & Huby 2000). Hughes and Huby argue that the procurement of drugs and related equipment such as needles makes the establishment of social networks of particular importance. In this way, for drug using or addicted prisoners the weak ties of prisoner social networks may become more important than the strong ties of family bonds. If



this is the case then it might be expected that prisoners who take drugs whilst in prison will be less likely to be influenced by the existence of and satisfaction with familial social support.

Considering all of the above, the fourth scale in this study examined prisoners' perceptions of the social support they receive from family and friends outside prison. The scale used for this was the Significant Others Scale (SOS) originally devised by Power, Champion and Aris (1988). Two versions of the scale are available: SOS(A) in which seven individuals such as father and mother are specified on the scale; and SOS(B) in which the respondent selects the seven individuals to be rated. For the purposes of the current study both versions were employed: SOS(A) (see Appendix 6) to assess family relationships and SOS(B) (see Appendix 7) to assess supportive relationships within the prison. The prisoner respondent rated each target individual on two emotional and two practical social support functions. Each target individual was rated on the level of support received and the level of support the respondent considers to be ideal. Scores are derived from the actual and ideal levels of social support prisoners receive and any discrepancies between these two measures. On a scale of 1 (never) to 7 (always) prisoners were asked to provide actual and ideal ratings for each individual. For instance prisoners were asked whether they could talk to frankly and share their feelings with this person; whether they could lean on and turn to the person since being in prison; whether this person provided practical help during the prison sentence; and how much time was spent socially with the person before the prison sentence. Each measure was repeated for each family member e.g. partner, mother, father, closest brother or sister, other brother or sister, closest son or daughter and best friend.

The fifth scale assessed the same perceived levels of social support but from unspecified individuals within the prison. No information was taken on the individuals rated except whether they were a prisoner or a member of staff. This was due to the possibility that some prisoners may rely on staff and not other prisoners for support. If this was the case it

could be expected that such prisoners would be unlikely candidates for the prison gang since prison gang research indicates gang prisoners will not associate with members of staff more than is necessary (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991). The questions used in this scale were the same as those used in scale four with one exception; instead of asking if the prisoner spent much time socially with this person before coming into prison, the question asked how much time they spent socially with this person whilst inside prison.

The aim of this scale was to assess the research question of how levels of satisfaction prisoners experience with the instrumental and emotional social support they receive from their families and significant others in the prison relate to the prisoner's involvement in gang-related activity. Table 4.1 shows the scales that formed the interview schedule for the study.

Table 4.1: Scales forming the interview schedule for this study

Scale	Aim of scale
Gang-related events	To assess prisoners' perceptions of frequency of gang-related events in the prison
Group formation and activities	To establish prisoners' perceptions of self and other involvement in gang-related events. To discover the facilitating factors of prisoner group formation
Prisonization	To assess prisoners' attitudes consistent with prisonization
Social support received from significant others outside the prison	To assess the perceived and ideal levels of social support prisoners receive from significant others (family) outside the prison
Social support received from significant others inside the prison	To assess the perceived and ideal levels of social support prisoners receive from significant others inside the prison.



### 4.3 Summary

This chapter explained how the interview schedule used in the current study was devised. It builds on previous work, outlined in chapter 3, by developing an interview schedule suitable for use with a prisoner population. Of interest, are the levels of gang-related activity, the basis for prisoner group formation and the gang-related functions of such groups. In addition, the interview schedule sets out to assess some of the characteristics of group members to see if prisoners are for instance, prisonized in the way that the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991) suggests they might be. Finally, the interview schedule examines some of the possible motives of prisoner group membership in the form of satisfaction with the social support prisoners receive from others both inside and outside the prison.

However, a newly devised interview schedule needs to be examined for potential flaws before it may be considered as appropriately devised to examine the issues of interest with the population of interest. Consequently, the interview schedule was used initially in a pilot study to examine its suitability for the main study's aims. The findings of the pilot study and the subsequent adjustments made to the interview schedule are outlined in the next chapter.

## Chapter Five:

### Methodology

Before interviewing a cross section of the prison population it is essential to confirm that the interview schedule is sufficiently clear to be understood by potential participants, regardless of their individual learning abilities. Consequently, before running the main data collection, a pilot study was carried out firstly to see if participants clearly understood the questions in the interview schedule and secondly, to see if responses indicated that the previously untested questionnaires needed fewer, more or alternative questions.

#### 5.1 The Pilot study

##### 5.1.1 Ethical considerations

As the purpose of the study was to examine aspects of prisoner behaviour in prison, the objectives of the study were not announced in any of the participant prisons before the data collection. Although advertising a study and asking for volunteers is customary practice in a prison setting, it seemed sensible not to alert prisoners to the specific nature of the current study. This was because prisoners involved in gang-related activities might either intimidate other prisoners into not participating or try to influence prisoner responses. Due to this, prisoners who were asked to participate were not fully briefed as to the specific aims of the study until they were alone with the researcher.

In addition, since most prisoners were asked to participate by prison staff, there was a chance that the voluntary nature of the study may not have been made absolutely clear to each potential participant. Consequently, before the interview began, the prisoner was fully informed of the aims of the study and to the possibility that they may find some of the questions sensitive. Also at this point, the participant was reminded that he/she was free to withdraw from the study at any time without retribution. It was also made clear that the study was confidential and anonymous, but, in accordance with Prison Service preconditions,

confidentiality could not be guaranteed if any intention to harm themselves or another person, or of any plans to escape were disclosed to the interviewer. Every participant was also given a briefing sheet, which reiterated all the information they had been given verbally. The briefing sheet also contained his/her participant number and a telephone number to call should they want to withdraw from the study at a later date.

### 5.1.2 Participants

Forty participants took part in the pilot study. They were selected from one category B establishment, one Female prison and one Young Offender Institution, as prisoners in these categories were likely to share the demographic and institutional characteristics of the main study sample. Of the pilot sample, 15 were male adults with an age range of 23 – 74 years, and a mean age of 39 years, 15 were female prisoners whose ages ranged from 21 – 47 years with a mean of 31 years and 10 were young offenders with an age range of 17 – 21 years and a mean of 19.5 years. The sample age range overall was 17 to 74 years and the overall mean age was 31 years. The length of time prisoners expected to serve in prison (not the length of sentence) ranged from 5 months to 25 years with a mean of 4 years and the number of prison sentences served by participants, including the current sentence, ranged from 1 to 11 with a mean of 2. Only 1 prisoner (from the category B prison) who was approached and asked to participate refused to do so.

### 5.1.3 Procedure

Each interview took place in a room in the prison that allowed for total privacy. Once the participant was fully briefed as to the aims of the study and his/her rights, the interview began. The order in which questionnaires were presented to participants was randomised to prevent an order effect. However, the random presentation of questionnaires would not necessarily prevent an order effect arising from the organisation of items within the questionnaires. To control for this potential impact on the results, items on the questionnaires

were rotated to produce 4 different versions of the questionnaire. Each respondent was then randomly presented with one of the 4 versions of each questionnaire. Each question in the schedule was read to the participant to offset any literacy differences between respondents.

If at any point, a participant had a problem understanding a question, the question was re-worded and the difficulty noted so that changes could be made to the main study questionnaires. Also, since the study dealt with potentially sensitive issues the researcher explained to each participant that if they found any question upsetting that the interview could be terminated immediately and the researcher would go and get anyone in the prison that the prisoner would like to speak to. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, at the end of which the participant was asked if he/she had any questions. Before leaving, the participant was thanked for taking part and given the briefing sheet (see Appendix 8).

## 5.2 Changes to the interview schedule

Following the pilot study a few changes were made to some of the questionnaires. Firstly, the scale assessing prisoners' perceptions of gang-related events was altered from its original 4 point Likert scale where: 1 = 'never', 2 = 'sometimes', 3 = 'frequently', 4 = 'very frequently', to a 5 point scale which included 3 = 'Don't know' (see Appendix 3 for original and revised versions). This was due to the original scale not allowing for a neutral response and some prisoners indicating that they had no idea of the frequency of an event. Secondly, a few prisoners were confused by how often 'sometimes' and 'frequently' implied. In order to make this clearer, the 5 point scale was altered so that 1 = 'never', 2 = '1-10 times', 3 = 'Don't know', 4 = '11-20 times' and 5 = 'more than 20 times'. In addition, instead of asking prisoners how often they had encountered each event per se, they were asked how often they had encountered each event in the previous 6 months. This change was considered necessary since some prisoners expressed difficulties trying to remember the frequency of events over a period of perhaps some years. It also helped ensure a more standardised temporal aspect to the

frequency of events in the prison since the original scale allowed for an indefinite recall period. In such instances clearly it would be possible to get an inaccurate assessment of an event's frequency due to differences in the length of time prisoners had spent in a particular establishment.

Two questions were removed and two added to the questionnaire assessing the formation and function of prisoner groups (see Appendix 4 for original and revised versions). Both 'How did you decide who to be friendly with when you first came in here?' and 'Some prisoners wear clothing or tattoos to show they belong to a group or gang' were removed as they effectively duplicated other items in the interview schedule. The questions added to the schedule were 2 open-ended questions. The first was a follow-up question to the statement; 'Some groups of prisoners are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison.' The open-ended follow-up asked prisoners who had agreed with the earlier statement 'what sort of illegal activities?' Similarly, if prisoners agreed with the statement 'My friends and I are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison' they were then asked 'What sort of illegal activities?' These questions were added because, surprisingly, several participants in the pilot study offered examples of illegal activities they and other prisoners were involved in with others outside the prison. The addition of these questions would offer insight into the extent and nature of activities prisoners were involved in with individuals outside the prison.

In terms of demographic/institutional information collected from prisoners, 3 questions were added. The first was the ethnic origin of the participant, the second was the length of sentence the prisoner was serving and the third was how long the prisoner had been in the current prison. Ethnic origin was thought to be relevant due to the self-classification of the prisoner having a possible bearing on how he/she perceived him/herself in terms of race. For example, prisoners of mixed race may consider themselves to be either black or white and

if prisoner groups formed along racial lines as suggested by gang researchers (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985) this may have some influence on who the prisoner chooses to associate with in the prison. Similarly, length of sentence may be relevant in terms of involvement in gang-related events as previous research suggests gang involved prisoners generally serve longer sentences (e.g. Sheldon 1991). Equally, it seemed possible that if prisoners were serving long sentences, they may be more tempted into prisoner group membership since any material benefits such membership might offer, could make a long sentence more comfortable. Finally, a question asking prisoners how long they had been in the prison was added to the interview schedule. This was due to pilot prisoners indicating either a familiarity or a lack of familiarity with the dynamics of that particular prison. Consequently, this question acted as a check to confirm that the prisoner had actually been in the prison for at least six months before the study. It would also offer some indication if the length of time a prisoner had been in the prison related to his/her involvement in gang-related activity. For instance, it is possible that in order to be involved in gang-related activity prisoners would need some time to become acquainted with other prisoners and the prison system. In terms of prison policy and decisions regarding moving prisoners from one institution to another, this kind of information could be useful.

The social support questionnaires were altered by adding three unspecified individuals to the 'friends and family' and 'in prison' questionnaires (see Appendices 6 and 7 for original and revised versions). These were people that the prisoner might perceive as persons they (the prisoner) support in an emotional/instrumental sense. These unspecified individuals were added due to several prisoners' comments that the social support they were able to provide to others was as important to them as the social support they received. Social support research documents how giving, as well as receiving, social support is conducive to the psychological well being of the individual (Coles 1993; Thoits 1995). From this, and the importance that



prisoners participating in the pilot study seemed to attach to supporting significant others, it seemed possible that providing social support to others inside or outside the prison, may relate to prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity. However, since prisoners cited a range of different people to whom they offered support, no assumptions were made as to whom these individuals might be. For instance, some prisoners mentioned children, some parents and some spouses. Consequently, it was considered sensible to allow prisoners to nominate the individuals they supported and not constrain choice to researcher led options. Finally, since no problems were identified with the scale assessing how consistent prisoners' attitudes were with prisonization, no changes were considered necessary for this scale.

### 5.3 The main study

#### 5.3.1 Participants

Three hundred and sixty prisoners were selected from 9 prisons (the methods for this are explained more fully in procedure). These were: 4 category C (medium/low security); 2 Female establishments (not classified for security: hold females from 15 years old); 2 Young Offenders' Institutions (male offenders aged 15-21 years) and 1 Category B prison (medium/high security). The selection of these particular categories was based in part on the total number of prisons within each category and in part on the findings of the survey of prison staff reported in Chapter 3, indicating that category C prisons, Young Offender Institutions, female prisons and category B prisons seemed to be especially vulnerable to gang-related activity. Dispersal prisons (Highest security) and Open prisons (Low security) were not included in the current study as the staff study indicated that these prisons were not particularly vulnerable to gang-related activity. Table 5.1 shows the demographic/institutional variables of the sample according to the category of prison in which they were held.

Table 5.1: Demographic and Institutional characteristics of the participants in the main study

Demographic/ Institutional characteristics	Category of prison						
	<u>All</u>	<u>B</u>		<u>C</u>		<u>YOI</u>	<u>Female</u>
		Medium/ High security		Medium/ Low security		Males aged 15-21 years	All age groups
N	360	40	158	81	81		
Mean Age (in years)	30.45(10.44)	31.00 (7.73)	35.00 (10.08)	19.41 (2.8)	32.50 (9.2)		
Percentage of white and non-white prisoners	78% white 12% non- white	88% white 12% non- white	79% white 21% non- white	70% white 30% non- white	80% white 20% non- white		
Mean no of prison sentences served	2.78 (2.56)	4.43 (3.02)	3.45 (2.87)	1.95 (1.61)	1.47 (1.25)		
Mean length of current sentence (in years)	6.51 (7.04)	6.25 (7.04)	8.29 (7.88)	2.97 (1.42)	6.63 (7.41)		
Mean length of time expected to serve (in years)	3.59 (4.29)	3.65 (4.32)	4.64 (4.98)	1.64 (.86)	3.55 (4.29)		
Mean time served in current prison (in years)	1.27 (2.32)	.90 (1.23)	1.59 (3.15)	.80 (.52)	1.32 (1.73)		

### 5.3.2 Procedure

Since the procedure and ethical considerations for the pilot study were very successful in terms of apparent participant satisfaction and a successful response rate, the procedure for the main study was kept the same as it was for the pilot study. Selection of participants

differed according to the prison. In some prisons every 5<sup>th</sup> prisoner was selected from a list of all prisoners, whereas in other establishments whichever prisoners happened to be available were approached by either the researcher or prison staff. Consequently, the sample was more opportunistic than random.

No prisoners being held on remand were selected to take part in the study, since they were less likely than convicted prisoners to be aware of the activities of all the other prisoners. Also, it seemed feasible that remand prisoners, even if they were involved in or aware of, criminal activities in the prison, would be less willing to respond to questions, since they were still awaiting a formal judgement on their case. Similarly, as the results of this study depended largely on prisoners being aware of the gang-related events occurring around them, prisoners who had been in the prison for less than 6 months were excluded from the study. This was due to the possibility that it may take time for prisoners to become fully aware of many gang-related events in the prison. Also, since prisoners were asked to consider the preceding six months when responding to the questions, it would be pointless having some participants who had not spent that length of time in the prison. Of the potential participants approached to take part in the current study, only 5 refused. These were 3 prisoners held in category C institutions and 2 prisoners in the category B establishment.

#### 5.4 Summary

This chapter outlined the completion of the pilot study, which aimed to ensure the interview schedule was comprehensible and appropriate. Some changes were made since some items in different scales effectively duplicated one another. In addition, changes were made in order to standardise the time scale prisoners were asked to consider when reporting frequency of gang-related events. In this way, at least some of the potential recall problems individuals might experience should be overcome. Also, prisoners' opinions of what they considered to be important in terms of social support indicated that some provision needed to

be made to include individuals to whom prisoners offered support in the schedule. Similarly, since many participants elaborated on the types of crime they and other prisoners were involved in with individuals outside the prison, it seemed sensible to include items referring specifically to this in the main study. Once suitable changes had been made the main study was conducted and the data analysed using SPSS for Windows.

## Chapter Six:

### Analyses of the data:

#### Quantitative results

The aim of this chapter is to examine some of the factors that may help identify the levels of gang-related activity in the English and Welsh prison estate. In addition, it examines some of the variables that may offer a clearer indication of which prisoners are most likely to be involved in gang-related events.

Initially the data analyses set out to establish the levels of gang-related events reported by prisoners and to examine the level of events by category of prison. In addition, the analyses examined the possibility that respondent characteristics such as ethnicity, age, number of prison sentences served and length of sentence related to prisoners' reports of the occurrence of gang-related events. Also, the data were examined to see if the key indicators of prison gang presence would predict reduced legitimate order and control, since these are the effects identified by American as associated with prison gang activity (e.g. Stevens 1997).

Finally, the data were explored to examine the formation and function of prisoner groups and their gang related activity by gender, age, number of prison sentences served and length of current sentence in order to establish which particular prisoners are most likely to be involved in gang related activity. In addition, analyses examined the psychological variables such as dissatisfaction with social support and prisonization to see if prisoners involved in gang-related activity could be identified in terms of their attitudes and the social support they give to and receive from others.

#### 6.1. Prisoners' perceptions of the frequency of gang-related events

The first scale used in the current study was designed to assess prisoner perceptions of the frequency of events thought to be gang-related. As Chapter 4 explains, the scale consisted of 25

items; 14 devised by Fong et al (1991) and 11 devised for examination of the prison gang issue in the English and Welsh prison estate. Before any analyses of prisoners' responses to this scale were conducted, an internal reliability analysis was carried out, which indicated that the scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .86$ ). The scale was also examined for normal distribution of data and the skewness value of .28 indicated that the distribution was within the acceptable boundaries of normality.

If prisoners do perceive gang-related events occur in the prison it is useful to have some idea of the frequency with which these events occur as this may offer some insight into whether gang-like groups are active in the English and Welsh prison estate. As noted in Chapter 4 research indicates that it is the *frequency* with which the events occur that gives the clearest indication of prison gang presence (e.g. Fong et al 1991). However, as argued in Chapter 4, it would not be sensible to assume that the activities of prisoners in a U.K. prison estate will mirror those of their counterparts in America. Consequently, there is a need to know *which* gang-related events occur most frequently in the English and Welsh prison estate before conclusions can be drawn concerning prison gang activity in England and Wales.

In order to get a descriptive sense of the type and frequency of gang-related events, the percentages of prisoners in the sample as a whole who reported an event as occurring frequently (11-20 times) or very frequently (more than 20 times) within the preceding 6 months were calculated (see Table 6.1). As the table shows, a large number of prisoners reported many gang-related events as occurring 'frequently' or 'very frequently' in prison. The most common events reported were 'prisoners possessing drugs', 'prisoners possessing more phone cards than they are allowed' and 'groups forming to home location.' These particular events were all considered to be frequent or very frequent by 50% or more of the sample. Between 30-50% of the sample considered 'excess tobacco', 'groups forming according to race', 'formation of close-knit groups'

'requests for transfers' and 'verbal domination of prisoners by groups', to occur frequently or very frequently. Fewer prisoners (10-30%) considered 'requests for protective custody', 'groups arguing over material possessions', 'possession of alcohol', 'physical domination of prisoners by prisoner groups' and 'groups verbally threatening staff', to be frequent or very frequent occurrences within the prison. Events considered by the fewest numbers of prisoners to be frequent or very frequent included: 'secret racial grouping', 'groups having more control in the prison than do the staff', 'groups threatening the safety of staff', 'prisoners believing that staff might lose control in the prison', 'prisoners with tattoos indicating gang membership', 'prisoner members of organizations such as the British National Party', 'concerns for personal safety', 'prisoners' families being threatened by prisoner groups', 'prisoner groups physically assaulting staff', 'prisoner members of organizations such as the British National Party attempting to dominate prisoner groups in the prison'.

On the other hand, what these descriptive reports do not make clear is whether the frequency of events are the same for all prisons, or if prisoners in different categories report different levels of gang-related events.

Table 6.1: Percentage reporting gang-related event as occurring frequently (11-20 times) or very frequently (20+ times) in the previous 6 months

Gang-related variable	Percentage	N
Group A (Drugs)		
Prisoners possessing drugs	70.7	254
Group B (trade/cohesion)		
Prisoners with more phone cards than allowed	49.9	179
Groups forming according to home location	49.7	178
Prisoners with more tobacco than allowed	46.1	165
Group formation according to race	45.8	164
Formation of close-knit groups	44.1	158
Requests for transfer within prison	44.0	158
Verbal domination of prisoners by groups	38.9	140
Group C (confrontation)		
Requests for protective custody	29.6	106
Groups arguing over material possessions	23.5	84
Possession of alcohol	20.6	74
Physical domination by groups	17.0	61
Prisoners involved in outside gang activity	12.3	44
Physical assaults on prisoners by groups	12.3	44
Groups verbally threatening staff	11.2	40
Other less-frequent events		
Secret racial groupings	7.5	27
Groups having more control over events in prison than staff	6.1	21
Groups threatening the safety of staff	5.8	20
Belief that staff might lose control of prison	4.5	16
Tattoos indicating gang membership	4.2	15
Prisoners belonging to outside organisations (e.g. British National Party)	4.2	15
Concerns for personal safety	2.2	7
Prisoners' families being threatened by prisoner groups	1.4	5
Groups physically assaulting staff	0.8	2
Members of outside organisations such as British National Party attempting to dominate prisoner groups	0.6	2

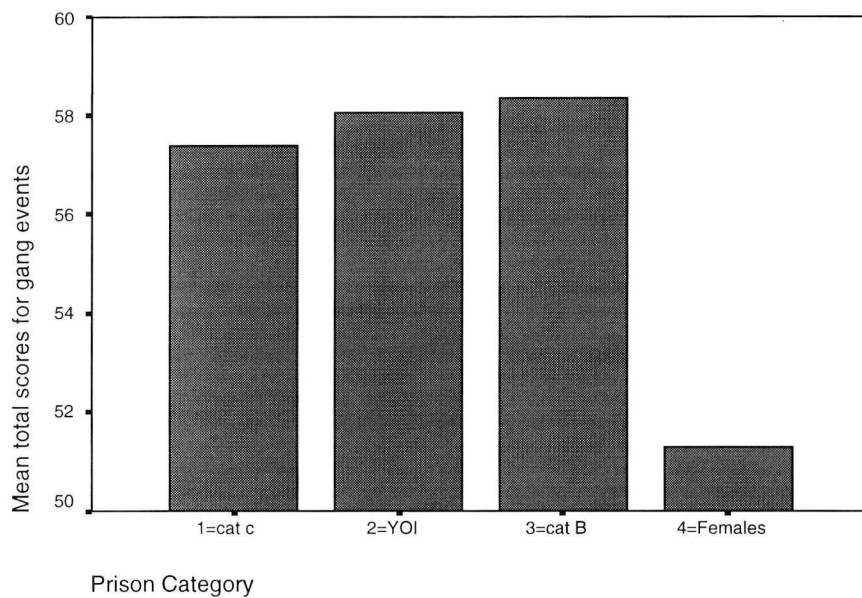


### 6.1.1 Categories of prison and gang events

To gain a clearer picture of which categories of prison experienced the highest levels of gang-related events, the individual scores for each event were summed to give a total score for each participant. A one-way ANOVA was then used to compare categories of prison based on these totals. The analysis revealed a difference between levels of events according to category of prison,  $F(3,355) = 873.76, p < .005$ .

Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's H.S.D ( $p < 0.05$ ) was used to establish how the categories differed. Results revealed that male prisoners in Categories B, C, and YOI did not differ from each other in terms of perceived gang events, but female prisoners reported fewer gang-related events than male prisoners in all categories (see Figure 1).

Figure 6.1: Differences between categories of prison in total levels of gang-related events



The minimum possible score was 25 and the maximum possible score was 200.

### 6.1.2 Most frequent gang events by category of prison

Table 1 shows the gang-related events reported as most frequent by prisoners. To examine where the events occur most frequently i.e. in which categories of prison, events reported as frequent/very frequent by more than 10% of the sample were divided into 3 sets, A, B and C (See Table 1). The first set (A) contained only drug possession. This was because drug possession was cited as frequent/very frequent by 20% more prisoners than any other event. The second group (B) was based on events reported as frequent/very frequent by 39 – 49% of prisoners and included items that seemed to indicate some sort of trade and group formation/cohesion. The third category (C) was based on events reported as frequent/very frequent by 11-30% of prisoners and included events that seemed to indicate some form of confrontational features of group activity. Finally, the fourth category included events reported as frequent or very frequent by up to 8% of the sample and was not delineated by any clear theme.

To identify which categories of prison were most vulnerable to these events a one-way anova compared category of prison by group of event. For drug possession (A), the results indicated no difference between categories of prison,  $F(3, 354) = 1.60, p = 0.19$ . This indicates that although categories of prison differ in terms of gang-related events overall (see above), the frequency of drug possession does not differ between categories (cat B mean = 3.98; cat C mean = 4.14; Y.O.I. mean = 3.85; female mean = 3.78). For the second set of events the analysis revealed that the frequency of events did differ between the categories,  $F(3, 355) = 7.25, p < 0.001$ . Post hoc analysis indicated that these events occurred with similar regularity across all male institutions, but were less common in female prisons (cat B mean = 22.58; cat C mean = 23.01; Y.O.I. mean = 21.91; females mean = 19.05). For the third set of events the anova indicated a difference between institutions  $F(3, 355) = 3.15, p < 0.05$  and the post hoc analysis demonstrated that the difference occurred between female prisons and Young Offender

Institutions (Y.O.I.'s) only (cat B mean = 15.83; cat C mean = 15.54; Y.O.I. mean = 15.96; females mean = 13.75). However, Female prisons and Y.O.I.'s did not differ from any other categories.

Consequently, it appears that although the results indicate female prisons differ overall from male prisons in terms of gang-related events, they do not differ from male institutions in their levels of drug possession. Nevertheless Female prisons did differ from all male institutions on the second set of events (trade and cohesion), but were comparable with all male institutions except Y.O.I.'s on the third set of events (confrontational events).

#### 6.1.3 Perceptions of gang event frequency and characteristics of prisoners

As this study relied on a self-report methodology it is possible that the reported levels of gang-events may not be a function of the category of prison but rather a function of the personal and social characteristics of the prisoner respondents. To explore this possibility, the effects of personal and institutional characteristics on prisoner responses were examined using one-way Analyses of Variance and correlations. In particular, prisoners' perceptions of gang-related events were examined according to the respondent's ethnic origin, age, number of prison sentences served and length of the current sentence. Each of the variables included in the analyses were used as the independent variable and the total number of gang-related events was used as the dependent variable for each analysis. Gender was not included in these analyses, as the comparison of prison categories had already established that males perceive gang events as more frequent than do females.

#### 6.1.4 Ethnic origin

Three hundred and fifty six of the 360 participants declared their ethnic origin 74% of these were white and 22% were non-white. Differences in perception of gang-related events

between the two groups were examined using a One-way ANOVA. No differences were found  $F(1, 354) = 1.049, p=0.31$ .

### 6.1.5 Age

To see if the prisoner's age had an impact on his/her perceptions of gang events a correlation was carried out. Results revealed a negative correlation between age and participants' perceptions of gang events,  $r = -.12, n = 359, p<0.05$  indicating that younger participants perceived gang events as more frequent than did older participants.

### 6.1.6 Number of prison sentences served

It seems possible that the number of times a prisoner has been in prison may also influence his/her perception of gang-related events. Familiarity with the prison system and indeed with different prisons may result in prisoners comparing different times and places with their current institution, which may then be considered by the prisoner as having more or less gang-related events than other prisons and be reported accordingly. To examine this effect, the sample was split into 2 groups: prisoners serving a first prison sentence ("naïve") and prisoners serving a subsequent prison sentence (recidivists). The sample was divided in this way because 46.4% of the participants were serving a first prison sentence. A One-Way ANOVA revealed that recidivists reported more gang-related events than did "naïve" prisoners (See Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Mean gang event frequency by type of prisoner ('naïve' vs. recidivist)

	"Naïve" prisoners		Recidivist prisoners		
	N	Mean	N	Mean	F
Perception of gang event frequency	165	53.69	193	58.54	10.75*

\*  $p<0.005$

### 6.1.7 Length of current sentence

It is also possible that the length of prison sentence could influence prisoners' perception of gang-related events in the prison. To examine this, sentence length was correlated with total gang events perceived. Results indicated that length of current sentence did not relate to participants' perceptions of gang events,  $r = -.051$ ,  $n = 359$ ,  $p = .34$ .

It is clear, from the above results, that younger prisoners and recidivist prisoners perceive gang events as more frequent than do older and "naïve" prisoners. However, length of the prisoner's current sentence and his/her ethnic origin do not relate to his/her perceptions of the level with which gang-related events occur in the prison.

### 6.2 Gang events as predictors of perceptions of 'staff order' and 'prisoner control'

Previous research suggests that high levels of gang-related events would also be linked to two key features of prison gang existence, namely a reduction of legitimate order and control within the prison (Stevens, 1997). Therefore, if the variables used in this study are satisfactory measures of prison gang existence, they should be able to predict prisoners' perceptions that staff may lose order in the prison and perceptions that prisoner groups have more control than staff. Consequently, hierarchical regression analyses were used to examine gang-related activity in terms of legitimate order and control in the prison system.

The first step in each regression included only the items devised by Fong et al (1991) namely: the emergence of prisoner cliques and secret racial groupings of prisoners; prisoners assaulting other prisoners; requests for protective custody and transfers; assaults of and verbal threats to staff; intimidation of prisoners' families; prisoner disciplinary violations regarding contraband goods (split for the purposes of this study into possession of alcohol, drugs, phone cards and tobacco); prisoners with gang-related tattoos and finally police reports of gang activity on the streets. In the second step of each regression the additional variables, devised for use in

England and Wales, were introduced to see if they raised the power of prediction. The additional items included: dominance of some prisoners by prisoner groups, the frequency of opposing groups' disputes, groups formed along racial and/or regional lines and staff concerns for their own or prisoners' safety. Based on Steven's (1997) findings the first regression used prisoners' perception that staff might lose order in the prison' (staff order) as a dependent variable and the second regression used prisoners' perception that prisoners have more control over events in the prison than do staff (prisoner control).

#### 6.2.1 Predictors of perceived 'staff order'

Results showed that 28% of the variance was predicted by Fong et al.'s (1991) variables and this step reliably predicted the dependent variable (see Table 6.3). The second step also reliably predicted 'staff order' increasing the variance explained to 29%. Table 3 shows the variables, which had significant Beta values in the second step of the hierarchical regression.

Interestingly, the variables shown by the model to be important predictors of 'Staff order' all seem to be related to the undermining of authority in both overt and covert ways. For instance, prisoner groups physically and verbally assaulting staff may be seen as direct challenges to staff authority and are consequently overt in nature. However, the threat to prisoners' families and membership of outside organisations such as the British National Party may be considered as more covert challenges to the legitimate order in the prison.

Table 6.3 Significant Beta coefficients predicting ‘Staff order’ in second step of the hierarchical regression

Model	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Prisoner groups physically assaulting staff	.16	2.91	0.004
	Families threatened by prisoner groups	.23	4.60	0.000
	Prisoner groups verbally threatening staff	.28	4.79	0.000
	Prisoners belonging to outside organisations such as the British National Party *	.15	2.27	0.02

Step 1: Adj.  $R^2 = .28$ , df 14, 328, F = 10.71, p < 0.001

Step 2: Adj.  $R^2 = .29$ , df, 24, 318,  $R^2$  change = .03, F = 6.78, p < 0.001

\* indicates variables added specifically for the purposes of the current study.

### 6.2.2 Predictors of perceived ‘prisoner control’

The second hierarchical regression tested Fong et al’s (1991) variables and the additional variables as predictors of prisoners’ perceptions that prisoner groups have more control over events in the prison than do staff. In the first step, Fong et al’s variables explained 13% of the variance and significantly predicted prisoners’ perceptions that prisoner groups have more control in the prison than staff. The second step also reliably predicted the dependent variable, explaining 15% of the variance (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Significant Beta coefficients predicting 'prisoner control' in step 2 of the hierarchical regression

Model	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Prisoners possessing alcohol	.12	1.97	.049
	Prisoners requesting protective custody	.12	1.97	.050
	Prisoner groups verbally threatening staff	.14	2.08	.039
	Groups of prisoners verbally dominating other prisoners	.18	2.53	.012
	Prisoners forming groups according to race	-.14	-2.07	.040
Step 1: Adj. $R^2 = .13$ , df, 14, 338,		F = 4.59, p<0.001		
Step 2: Adj. $R^2 = .15$ , df, 24, 314, $R^2$ change = .04,		F = 3.36, p<0.001		

In terms of the indications from previous research (e.g. Stevens 1997) that the presence of prison gangs undermines staff order and leads to increased prisoner control, the above results indicate that the variables used in the current study do assess prison gang activity. Of the variables identified as important predictors in the model; prisoners requesting protective custody, verbal threats to staff and verbal domination of other prisoners all seem to imply some form of intimidation of staff and other prisoners and therefore echoes previous gang literature that suggests intimidation is a key activity of prison gangs (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985). Also, prisoners possessing alcohol may necessitate more prisoner control than even the possession of drugs, since alcohol is more difficult to conceal than other forms of contraband such as drugs, phone cards or tobacco, as it is a copious substance. Finally, the formation of groups according to race as a predictor of prisoner control, may indicate, consistent with previous gang literature (e.g. Buentello et al, 1991; Knox 1994) that prisoners perceive prisoner control as a threat and group according to commonalities for protection.



### 6.3. The formation and function of prisoner groups

As discussed in Chapter 4, the previous scale may assess the frequency of prisoner group gang-related activities, but what it cannot indicate is which prisoners are most likely to be involved in these activities. By asking prisoners about personal involvement in gang-related activities it should be possible to determine some of the characteristics of those involved and, just as crucial, those not involved in gang activity. Also, by assessing prisoners' perceptions of their own and other prisoners' behaviour it is possible to gain a better picture of the lines along which prisoner groups are formed and the functions they serve for members. Consequently, the second part of this study examined the formation and function of prisoner groups and how certain factors such as social support and 'Prisonization' might influence prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity.

#### 6.3.1 Prisoner groups: formation and activities.

With the intention of examining the formation and function of prisoner groups the second scale in this study took both quantitative and qualitative measures of the formation and gang-related activity of prisoner groups. However, this chapter will consider only the quantitative measures, the qualitative assessments of prison gang formation are discussed in Chapter 7. For the quantitative assessment, prisoners were asked to agree/disagree with statements referring to personal behaviour and the existence and behaviour of their group. Consistent with the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991) statements assessed prisoners' reports of personal and other prisoners' involvement in group violence, group trades, group leadership, the wearing of distinctive clothing or insignia indicating membership, group involvement in illegal activity with individuals outside the prison, group protection of members and the existence of rules specific to the group. In addition, prisoners were asked to agree/disagree with statements referring to personal and other prisoners' behaviour concerning, drug taking habits, feelings of

fear on entry to the prison, association with other prisoners before coming into the prison and continual association with the same group of prisoners.

### 6.3.2 'Own-gang involvement'

The twelve original items used to assess prisoners' personal involvement in gangs were aggregated to create 1 scale ('own gang involvement') resulting in a total 'own gang involvement' score for each prisoner. However, one item, 'I was afraid when I first came into this prison' was subsequently removed from the scale as scale reliability assessments indicated that its removal would increase the scale's reliability to an acceptable .75. The mean score for 'own involvement' was 33 and the standard deviation was 5.66, where the highest score a prisoner could get was 55 and the lowest was 11.

However, a high or low 'own gang' score gives little indication of *which* activities prisoners are most involved in within the prison. It seems highly unlikely that prisoners will be equally involved/uninvolved in all gang-related activities and so it is useful to know something of the most frequent gang-related activities prisoners admit to being associated with. To get a clearer picture of this, the percentage of prisoners who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with each item was calculated (see Table 6.5).

As the table shows, most prisoners reported associating with the same prisoners most of the time, many knew other prisoners before coming into the prison and more than half the sample admitted that they and the prisoners they associate with protect each other from other prisoners. Similarly, nearly half the sample agreed that their group have their own rules and are involved in trading in illegal materials and/or extra supplies of legitimate materials. Nearly 40% reported that they and their friends were recognised as a group within the prison and over a third admitted to taking some form of drugs. In addition, just over a quarter of the sample admitted to involvement in illegal activities with people outside the prison. Just over an eighth of the sample admitted to

behaving violently or having a group leader and only 10 prisoners admitted to wearing clothes or tattoos to indicate group membership.

Table 6.5: Percentage of prisoners ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ with statements suggesting ‘own gang involvement’

Statement	Percentage	N
I mix with the same prisoners most of the time	85%	306
I knew some of the other prisoners before I came in here	68%	244
The prisoners I mix with protect each other from other prisoners	56%	201
My friends and I have our own rules that we stick to	44%	158
Sometimes my friends and I trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies	44%	158
Other prisoners and prison staff see my friends and I as a group	39%	140
Sometimes I take drugs	36%	129
My friends and I have at some time been involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison	26%	93
Sometimes my friends and I are violent to other prisoners	12%	43
When I’m with my friends one of us usually takes charge	12%	43
My friends and I wear clothing or tattoos to indicate our group membership	2.8%	10

### 6.3.3 'Other' group formation and behaviour

As discussed in Chapter 4, in order to get a comprehensive picture of gang existence and behaviour in prison, it seemed prudent to also take measures of prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' group membership and activity. Twelve items were used to develop a scale assessing an overall measure of prisoners' perceptions of other involvement. A Cronbach's Alpha of .72 indicated that the scale was reliable. The mean score for 'other involvement' was 43.2 and the standard deviation was 5.00 where the lowest score possible was 12 and the highest was 60.

As with the total scores for 'own gang involvement,' the percentages of prisoners 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with each statement can give a clearer picture of the kinds of gang-related events prisoners perceive other prisoners to be most involved in (see Table 6.6).

As the table shows, nearly the entire sample agreed that some prisoners were friends before coming in to the prison. Similarly, more than 300 prisoners agreed that friendship could be facilitated by previous imprisonment and that prisoners groups protected members from other prisoners. Eighty percent of the sample reported some prisoner groups to be involved in trading illegal materials and/or extra supplies and over 70% agreed that some groups had their own rules. A similar number agreed that prisoners stick together in groups and that previous incarceration could facilitate current friendships even if the prisoners did not know each other during the earlier sentence. Unlike the reports of 'own gang' involvement where only 12% admitted to being violent to other prisoners, 70% of the sample reported other prisoner groups to be violent. Over two thirds of the sample believed other prisoners would join groups to access drug supplies and just under two thirds reported other groups' involvement in crime with people outside the prison. Just under half the sample reported other groups to have a leader and just over a quarter perceived new prisoners to be in danger when coming in to the prison.

Table 6.6 Percentage of prisoners ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ with statements relating to other prisoners’ gang involvement.

Statement	Percentage of prisoners who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with the statement	Number
Some prisoners were friends before they came in here	95%	342
Prisoners who have done time before at the same prison are more likely to be friends in here	86%	309
Some groups of prisoners look out for each other i.e. protect each other from other prisoners	86%	309
Some prisoner groups trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies	80%	288
Some groups of prisoners have their own rules that they stick to	72%	259
Prisoners often stick together in groups	71%	255
Prisoners who have previously done time in the same place are likely to be friends now even if they didn’t know each other then	70%	252
Some groups of prisoners are violent to other prisoners	70%	252
Prisoners who take drugs often join groups to get drugs	68%	244
Some groups of prisoners are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison	63%	226
In some groups of prisoners there is one person who is like a leader	49%	176

#### 6.3.4 Characteristics of prisoners and perceptions of ‘other’ involvement

Just as with prisoners’ perceptions of the levels of gang-related events, it is possible that the perceptions prisoners have of other prisoners’ involvement in those activities may be influenced by demographic/institutional variables. To examine this a series of analyses were

conducted to look for the possible effects of ethnic origin, age, number of sentences served and length of current sentence on prisoners' reports of 'other' gang involvement.

#### 6.3.5 Ethnic origin

To see if prisoners' perceptions of other involvement was influenced by the ethnic origin of the respondent a one-way Anova was conducted comparing white and non-white reports of the total levels of other gang involvement. The analysis revealed that white respondents (mean = 43.66) perceived other gang involvement to be higher than did non-white respondents (mean = 41.56),  $F(1, 354) = 10.91, p < 0.005$ .

#### 6.3.6 Age

To see if prisoners' perceptions of 'other' involvement were influenced by the age of the respondent, a correlation was carried out. Results revealed that older participants perceived higher levels of 'other' gang involvement than did younger respondents,  $r = .13, n = 357, p < 0.05$

#### 6.3.7 Number of prison sentences served

A one-way Anova revealed that there was no difference between naïve prisoners' and recidivist prisoners' perceptions of 'other' gang involvement,  $F(1, 356) = .59, p = .44$ .

#### 6.3.8 Length of current sentence

A correlation analysis was conducted to see if the length of the participant's current sentence related to his/her report of the level of 'other' gang involvement. Results revealed no relationship between length of sentence and level of 'other' involvement reported,  $r = .06, n = 356, p = .27$ .

#### 6.3.9 Comparisons of 'own gang' and 'other gang' involvement

The above tables seem to indicate that prisoners report other prisoners as being more involved in most gang activity than they themselves are. To examine this further, the total scores for 'own gang involvement' were compared to the total scores for 'other gang' to see if there was

a reliable difference between prisoners' reports of their own and other prisoners' gang activity. A paired-sample t-test indicated that prisoners reported their personal involvement in 'gang-related' activity ( $M=33.03$ ,  $S.D. = 5.66$ ) to be less than that of other prisoners ( $M = 43.19$ ,  $S.D. = 5.00$ ),  $t(359) = 31.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . However, this difference may be due to participants wanting to present themselves in a favourable light to the interviewer (e.g. Gudjonsson 1992) by not admitting to the actual level of personal involvement in gang-related activity.

#### 6.4 Social support and prisonization scales

Before running analyses using the measures of social support and prisonization reliability analyses were carried out. Table 6.7 shows the Cronbach's Alpha for the social support prisoners perceive they receive and give to individuals outside and inside prison.

Table 6.7: Reliabilities of overall social support scales (given and received)

Social support received from	Cronbach's Alpha	Social support given to	Cronbach's Alpha
Spouse/partner	.72	Person 1 outside prison	.72
Mother	.84	Person 2 outside prison	.65
Father	.87	Person 3 outside prison	.78
Closest sibling	.87	Person 1 in prison	.82
Other sibling	.86	Person 2 in prison	.88
Child	.72		
Friend	.54		
Person 1 in prison	.80		
Person 2 in prison	.83		
Person 3 in prison	.78		

Usually a Cronbach's Alpha of between .7 and .8 or more is considered to be reliable (Bryman & Cramer 1999). Consequently, the Alpha values of .54 for friend and .65 for person 2 outside prison appear to have less than ideal reliability. The removal of one item, the 'ideal instrumental help' from friend resulted in an increase of the scale's reliability to .73. However, no item removal would increase the reliability of the scale for person 2 outside prison.

#### 6.4.1 Scales assessing dissatisfaction with social support

To get an idea of prisoners' dissatisfaction with the social support they give to and receive from others, indices of dissatisfaction with social support were calculated by subtracting the prisoner's perceived levels of support from their reported ideal levels. Four indices were calculated: Dissatisfaction from family, indicating the prisoner's dissatisfaction with the social support he/she receives *from* his/her family; dissatisfaction to family, which indicates the prisoner's dissatisfaction with the social support he/she *gives to* his/her family; dissatisfaction from significant others *in* prison, indicating the prisoner's dissatisfaction with the social support he/she receives *from* individuals important to him/her *in* the prison; and dissatisfaction *to* significant others *in* prison, which indicates the prisoner's dissatisfaction with the social support he/she *gives to* individuals important to him/her *in* the prison. As mentioned in Chapter four, the significant others in the prison are individuals nominated by the prisoners and can therefore be other prisoners or members of staff. Once the indices of dissatisfaction had been calculated they were also tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (see Table 6.8)



Table 6.8: Cronbach's Alphas for Dissatisfaction scales

Cronbach's Alpha	Dissatisfaction with support received from prison	Dissatisfaction with social support given to individuals outside prison	Dissatisfaction with support received from individuals in prison	Dissatisfaction with social support given to individuals inside prison
	.74	.72	.35	.74

In particular, the Alpha of .35 indicates the dissatisfaction scale for social support received in prison is unreliable. To examine this further, the overall dissatisfaction scales were broken down into the emotional and instrumental components for each individual prisoner cited. It appears that if removal of dissatisfaction with emotional support from person 1 were removed the reliability would improve marginally, but not to an ideal level.

Following this, a factor analysis was carried out on the items in the scale. The component matrix indicated that dissatisfaction with social support received from inside prison had 2 dimensions (see Table 6.9) with dissatisfaction with social support from persons 1 and 3 loading on to 1 dimension and dissatisfaction with social support from person 1 loading on to the second different dimension.

Table 6.9: Component Matrix for dissatisfaction with social support in prison

	Component	
	1	2
Dissatisfaction with emotional ss from person1	-7.52E-03	<b>.73</b>
Dissatisfaction with instrumental ss from person 1	.37	<b>.66</b>
Dissatisfaction with emotional ss from person 2	<b>.76</b>	-.34
Dissatisfaction with instrumental ss from person 2	<b>.64</b>	-.28
Dissatisfaction with emotional ss from person 3	<b>.77</b>	.25
Dissatisfaction with instrumental ss from person 3	<b>.48</b>	2.72E-02

From the factor analysis it would appear that person 1 could in some way differ from persons 2 and 3 in terms of levels of dissatisfaction prisoners express. However, as the prisoners were asked to nominate persons 1, 2 and 3 the scale, as a whole, can be considered as an individualistic measure and for this reason it may not be possible to achieve high reliability. For example, some authors e.g. Ajzen and Driver (1991) argue that using individualistic measures cannot generate high reliability as it ..... “was NOT selected according to criteria that assure internal consistency” (p 193). Ajzen and Driver (1991) argue that it cannot be assumed that the beliefs people readily have access to will be consistent. It is likely, argue the authors, that people hold ambivalent beliefs that they apply when asked to generate individualistic nominations. In the case of the social support measures used in this study, it seems that the inconsistency of the dissatisfaction scale above is more than likely due to prisoners expressing ambivalent beliefs about the nature of the social support they receive from inside prison. This may be particularly true since prisoners were asked to nominate either other prisoners or members of staff as a source of social support and it is feasible that prisoners will indeed hold ambivalent beliefs about these ostensibly different individuals. Taking this possibility into consideration the scale was not divided into 2 subscales as the factor analysis suggests is possible.

#### 6.4.2 Prisonization

Reliability analysis using Cronbach’s Alpha indicated that the Prisonization scale has a less than ideal reliability of .5208, which was not improved by deleting any items. Descriptive data were generated to check for anomalies in the data, but none were found and as no item deletion improved the scale reliability, a factor analysis was conducted.

As table 6.10 shows, the principal components matrix indicates 3 separate dimensions of prisonization. From the items the separate scales seem to indicate, 1. Hostility to authority: 2. Alienation from both staff and other prisoners: and 3. Inflexibility of attitude and behaviour. Each

component was examined for reliability, however, the Cronbach's alpha for each was lower than the alpha generated for the prisonization scale as a whole: .50, .27 and .33 for components 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Similarly low reliabilities were obtained when the factor analysis was rotated and so it seemed sensible to use the original scale for the purposes of analysis, but to bear in mind the less than ideal reliability when interpreting the results of analyses.

Table 6.10: Component Matrix for Prisonization

Prisonization item	Component		
	1 Hostility to authority	2 Disaffection from staff and other prisoners	3 Inflexibility in attitude and behaviour
1 No more than you have to	<b>.499</b>	.457	2.218E-02
2 Tell staff what they want to hear	.356	<b>.401</b>	-.338
3 I keep myself to myself	.246	<b>.607</b>	-.127
4 I spend more free time with staff than prisoners (reversed item)	<b>.689</b>	-.487	-.231
5 It's weak to tell staff personal problems	<b>.413</b>	.268	-.307
6 No one pushes me around and gets away with it	.371	.112	<b>.624</b>
7. I have more in common with staff than other prisoners (reversed item)	<b>.690</b>	-.525	-.124
8 I stick to my own beliefs, not staff's	.442	5.889E-02	<b>.633</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

### 6.5 Predictors of gang involvement

As Chapter 1 points out, a principal problem associated with gang activity and membership in a prison setting is identifying which prisoners are involved. Bearing this in mind, one of the main objectives of the current study was to establish some of the personal, psychological and institutional factors that characterised gang members. To examine the relationship between some of the factors mentioned above and prison gang membership, a series of multiple regressions were conducted. Of interest were the demographic variables such as age and gender of those prisoners admitting to gang activity and also institutional variables such as length of sentence and number of sentences served. Also, multiple regressions were used to examine the relationship between psychological variables such as prisonised attitudes and dissatisfaction with social support and prison gang membership. Since past research indicates that gang members are usually younger than other prisoners (Ralph et al 1996), are usually male (Knox 1994), have longer sentences and are sentenced more frequently than non-gang prisoners (Sheldon 1991), these demographic/institutional variables (for ease referred to as demographics) were entered into the analysis first. The previously unexplored psychological variables were added in the second step to see if they added to the variance explained. As some respondents did not supply data for all variables, it seemed sensible to replace missing data with the mean for the variable under examination. This was to maintain an optimum number of respondents for each analysis and allowed all the data supplied to be used rather than discarded, as they would be in analyses that excluded cases listwise or pairwise.

Initially a hierarchical regression examining prisoners' 'own gang involvement' was carried out on the whole sample of 360 prisoners. The variables entered into the first model included the demographics: ethnicity (white or non-white); gender; time served in current prison; number of prison sentences served; age and length of current sentence. The dependent variable

was 'own gang involvement.' The anova revealed that the first step reliably predicted the dependent variable and explained 19% of the variance. It indicated that younger male prisoners serving a subsequent sentence were more likely to be involved in gang-related activity.

In the second step, the psychological variables were added to the model to see if these, together with the demographic variables, resulted in an increase in the variance explained. Dissatisfaction with social support: from the family; to the family; from significant others *in* the prison, to significant others *in* the prison and prisonization were all included. Results showed that this step also reliably predicted the dependent variable and accounted for a further 7% of the variance.

The second step (see Table 6.11) shows the important predictors of 'own gang involvement' to be age; number of sentences served, gender, prisonization and dissatisfaction with social support offered to significant others in prison. The other dissatisfaction variables were not important predictors of the dependent variable. The direction of the Beta coefficients indicated that young males who hold attitudes consistent with prisonization, who have also served a number of prison sentences and are less dissatisfied with the social support they offer to significant others in prison are most likely to be involved in gang-related activity.

**Table 6.11: Model Summary showing step 2 for all prisoners' 'own gang' involvement**

Model	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Age	-.21	-3.83	.000
	Gender	-.17	-3.60	.000
	Number of prison sentences served	.27	5.50	.000
	Dissatisfaction with social support (I & E) to others in prison	-.11	-2.24	.026
	Prisonization	.27	5.55	.000
Step 1: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .19, df, 6, 359,		F = 15.14,	p < 0.001	
Step 2: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .26, df, 11, 359, R <sup>2</sup> change = .08,		F = 12.71	p < 0.001	

### 6.5.1 Prisoners involved in gang activity

To get a clearer idea of the differences between prisoners' involvement in gang activity than the Beta values in a regression can offer, it is useful to examine the mean differences between the groups as this offers more relative values. Consequently, a series of independent T-tests was carried out. Specifically, age, gender, number of prison sentences served and ethnicity were examined.

### 6.5.2 Age

Age was split at the median (28 years) and the lower age group was compared with the higher age group. As 50.4% of the sample was aged 28 or less, those who were 28 were included in the lower age group and prisoners aged 29 and over were included in the higher age group. A t-test revealed that prisoners aged 28 or less ( $M = 31.76$ ,  $S.D. = 5.20$ ) were more involved in gang-related activity than were prisoners aged 29 or more ( $M = 29.88$ ,  $S.D. = 5.90$ )  $t(355) = 3.19$ ,  $p < 0.005$ .

### 6.5.3 Gender

An independent T-test was carried out to see if there was a reliable difference between male and female prisoners in terms of 'own gang involvement.' Results revealed that male prisoners reported more 'own gang involvement' ( $M = 31.58$ ,  $S.D. = 5.60$ ) than did female prisoners ( $M = 28.01$ ,  $S.D. = 4.94$ ),  $t(357) = 5.19$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

### 6.5.4 Number of prison sentences served

As the regression analysis in 3.4 indicated that number of prison sentences was an important predictor of 'own gang involvement,' a comparison was made between prisoners serving their first sentence ("naïve" prisoners) and prisoners serving a subsequent sentence (recidivists). A t-test revealed that recidivists ( $M = 32.41$ ,  $S.D. = 5.02$ ) reported more personal

involvement in gang activity than did “naïve” prisoners ( $M = 28.94$ ,  $S.D. = 5.02$ )  $t(356) = 6.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

#### 6.5.5 Male recidivists - all ages

The results seem to imply that male recidivists under the age of 29 are most involved in gang-related activity. However, to examine this group in a meaningful way would involve comparisons with “naïve” males in the same age range. The N for “naïve” males (61) was considered to be too low to offer reliable regression analyses on the number of variables that need to be examined.

Nevertheless since recidivism and gender consistently predict ‘own gang involvement’ the implication is that there is something about male recidivists that differs from other prisoners in terms of gang involvement. To look at this in more depth, a hierarchical multiple regression was carried out examining the demographic and the psychological variables that predict ‘own gang involvement’ of male recidivists ( $N=174$ ). Results indicated that both steps of the regression were reliable. In the first step, the demographic variables including number of prison sentences served and age, accounted for 11% of the variance. Both Age and number of sentences served were important predictors of male recidivists’ gang activity. The direction of the Beta values indicated that the younger the prisoner and the more sentences he has served the more likely he is to be involved in gang-related activity. In the second step the psychological variables; prisonization, dissatisfaction with social support given to and received from ‘family’ were added to the model as were dissatisfaction with social support given to and received from significant others in prison. The variance explained increased to 21%. Table 6.12 shows the significant coefficients for the second step of the regression analysis.

Table 6.12: Reliable coefficients of the hierarchical regression examining male recidivists

Step	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Age	-.21	-2.82	.005
	Number of prison sentences served	.23	3.35	.001
	Dissatisfaction with social support given to significant others in prison	-.20	-2.79	.006
	Prisonization	.26	3.74	.000
Model 1: Adj. $R^2$ = .17, df 3, 91,		F = 7.17,	p < 0.001	
Model 2: Adj. $R^2$ = .31, df, 8, 86, $R^2$ change = .17, F=6.19,		p < 0.001		

From the Beta coefficients shown in Table 12 it is evident that Dissatisfaction with social support offered to others in prison is an important predictor of 'own gang' involvement and the direction of the Beta value shows that prisoners involved in gang activity were more likely to be satisfied with the social support they offer to individuals *in* the prison. In addition, prisonization, age and number of prison sentences served also predicted recidivist prisoners' involvement in gang activity. The direction of the Beta coefficients for these variables indicate that younger prisoners who have served more than 1 prison sentence and who hold attitudes consistent with prisonization are more likely to be involved in gang activity within the prison. The other Dissatisfaction variables were not reliable predictors of 'own gang involvement.'

#### 6.5.6 Males serving 1<sup>st</sup> prison sentence - all ages

To examine more closely the differences between male recidivists and male naïve prisoners, the regression analysis used with recidivists was repeated using male naïve prisoners (N=102). Results indicated that in both steps the only variable predicting 'own involvement' was Age.



Table 6.13: Reliable coefficients of hierarchical regression for male naïve prisoners

Step	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Age	-.24	-2.42	.017
Model 1: Adj. $R^2$ = .08, df 1, 102,		F = 9.38,	p < 0.005	
Model 2: Adj. $R^2$ = .10, df, 6, 102, $R^2$ change = .07, F = 2.88,		p < 0.013		

The coefficients for the regression (see Table 6.13) indicate that Age was an important predictor of first time offenders' gang involvement just as it was for recidivist prisoners' involvement. However, unlike the results using recidivist prisoners, in the second step prisonization was not an important predictor of 'own gang involvement.' None of the dissatisfaction variables were important predictors of involvement in gang activity.

#### 6.5.7 Male and female recidivists

Although the results indicate that overall male prisoners are more likely than females to be involved in gang events it is possible that the genders will share some similarities. For instance, female recidivists, like their male counterparts, may be more involved in gang activity than are female naïve prisoners. To explore this further, an independent T-test was carried out to see if recidivist females were more involved in gang activity than were "naïve" females. Results revealed that female recidivists ( $M = 30.89$ ,  $S.D. = 4.21$ ) were more likely to be involved in gang related activity than naïve females ( $M = 27.19$ ,  $S.D. = 4.86$ ),  $t(79) = 2.93$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

As recidivist females, like their male counterparts, reported more involvement in gang related activity, it seemed sensible to include female data in any analysis of recidivism and gang activity. To examine recidivist prisoners' involvement in gang activity, a hierarchical regression was used. In the first step, the demographic variables, gender, age, number of sentences served and ethnicity were entered. Ethnicity was included as it may take on an importance when looking

at male and female recidivists that it did not have for male prisoners alone. In the second step, prisonization, dissatisfaction with social support given to and received from significant others *outside* prison were added to the model, as were dissatisfaction with social support given to and received from significant others *in* the prison. The results revealed that both steps of the model reliably predicted 'own gang involvement' with the first step accounting for 18% of the variance and the second step for 31% – a significant increase. In the first step, Age and number of prison sentences both maintained their earlier importance as predictors of 'own gang involvement' and the directions of the Beta values suggested that the younger the prisoner and the more prison sentences he/she has served the more he or she was involved in gang-related activity.

Table 6.14: Reliable coefficients of hierarchical regression for male and female recidivists

Step	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Age	-.19	-2.82	.005
	Number of prison sentences served	.23	3.35	.001
	Dissatisfaction with social support given to significant others in prison	-.20	-2.90	.004
	Prisonization	.27	4.10	.000

Model 1: Adj.  $R^2$  = .11, df 4, 191, F = 6.68,  $p < 0.001$

Model 2: Adj.  $R^2$  = .21, df, 9, 191,  $R^2$  change = .12, F = 6.51,  $p < 0.001$

Table 6.14 shows that in the second step of the regression, Age and number of prison sentences are reliable predictors of 'own gang involvement' as are dissatisfaction with social support given to significant others in prison and prisonization. The direction of the Beta value indicates that prisoners involved in gang activity are likely to be more satisfied (less dissatisfied) with the social support they give to significant others in prison. The Beta coefficient for

prisonization indicates that the more prisonized the prisoner's attitudes, the more likelihood there is that he/she will be involved in gang activity within the prison.

However, it is particularly interesting to note gender no longer predicts gang involvement with recidivist prisoners in the same way it did with the whole sample. This indicates that female recidivists did not differ in levels of 'own gang' involvement from male recidivists. On the other hand, since gender differences in involvement in gang activity were apparent in earlier analyses, it was possible that the above result could be a function of an interaction effect between gender and the other predictors. To check this, hierarchical regression analyses were used to look for interactions between gender and number of sentences served, gender and dissatisfaction with social support given to significant others in the prison and gender and prisonization. No interaction effects were found and so it can be assumed that the effects of the predictors on levels of gang involvement were the same for both male and female recidivists.

#### 6.5.8 Significant others in the prison

As dissatisfaction with the level of social support recidivist prisoners give to significant others *in* the prison predicted 'own gang involvement' it was worth examining whom prisoners nominated as significant others within the prison. Of the 192 recidivist participants, 81 nominated exclusively fellow prisoners as individuals they offer social support to in the prison. A further 48 prisoners maintained they did not give social support to anyone, 24 reported they gave social support to only members of staff and 39 reported providing social support to both prisoners and staff.

A one way Anova revealed differences between levels of gang involvement depending on who the prisoner supported in the prison,  $F(3, 188) = 6.37, p < 0.001$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that prisoners who supported no one were not as involved in gang activity as prisoners who claimed to support only prisoners and prisoners who claimed to support prisoners and staff.

However, prisoners who supported only fellow prisoners, only staff, or prisoners and staff did not differ in terms of gang involvement. Table 6.15 shows the mean levels of gang involvement of prisoners categorised by the individuals they offer social support to within the prison.

Table 6.15: Descriptives of ‘own gang involvement’ categorised by the individuals prisoners support in the prison

Significant others prisoner supports	N	Mean level of ‘own gang involvement’	S.D
No-one	48	29.96 a	5.89
Prisoners only	81	33.74 b	5.03
Staff only	24	30.71 a, b	5.81
Prisoners and staff	39	33.69 b	5.81

.a & b indicate pairwise differences

#### 6.5.9 Male and female – “naïve” prisoners

To examine more closely the differences between male and female recidivist and male and female naïve prisoners’ ‘own gang involvement’ a hierarchical regression using the same variables as the above analysis was conducted using only male and female naïve prisoners. Results showed that the first step of the regression accounted for 12% of the variance explained and the second step accounted for a further 8%. In the first step, age and gender were important predictors of ‘own gang involvement.’ The direction of the coefficients indicated that gang involved naïve prisoners were likely to be younger and male.

Table 6.16: Reliable coefficients of hierarchical regression for naïve male and female prisoners

Step	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
2	Age	-.19	-2.57	.011
	Gender	-.26	-3.56	.000
	Dissatisfaction with ss offered to family	-.16	-2.13	.035
	Prisonization	.28	3.83	.000

Model 1: Adj.  $R^2 = .12$ , df 3, 165,  $F = 8.53$ ,  $p < 0.000$

Model 2: Adj.  $R^2 = .20$ , df, 8, 165,  $R^2$  change = .10,  $F = 6.09$ ,  $p < 0.001$

The coefficients shown in Table 6.16 indicate that in the second step of the regression, important coefficients were age, gender, prisonization and dissatisfaction with the social support prisoners offer to the family. None of the other dissatisfaction variables predicted prisoners' involvement in gang activity in prison. The directions of the coefficients suggest that younger, male prisoners who hold attitudes consistent with prisonization are likely to be involved in gang-related activity. The direction of the Beta value for dissatisfaction with social support offered to the family indicates that prisoners who are more satisfied with the social support they offer to family are also more likely to be involved in gang activity in prison.

Interestingly, the importance of gender in this analysis suggested that unlike recidivist prisoners where no gender difference was apparent, male naïve prisoners are more likely to be involved in gang activity than female naïve prisoners. In order to check that there were no sex differences in terms of the antecedents of involvement in gang-related activity identified in this analysis, hierarchical regressions were conducted to look for interaction effects between gender

and prisonization and gender and dissatisfaction with social support offered to family. No interactions were found.

## 6.6 Summary

The results outlined in this chapter suggest that gang-like activities do occur in prisons in the English and Welsh prison estate and the categories most vulnerable to these activities are categories B, C and Young Offender Institutions. The results also indicate that prisoners do not differ in their perceptions of gang-related events according to their age, ethnic origin, or the length of sentence being served. However, prisoners serving a subsequent prison sentence perceive gang-related events as more frequent than do prisoners serving a first sentence.

As the variables used in this study successfully predicted two key features of prison gang activity, i.e. a reduction of legitimate order and control (e.g. Stevens 1997), it seems that gang-related activities associate with prisons in the English and Welsh prison estate much as they do in the U.S.A. The results also indicate the measures employed in this study are adequate in terms of assessing the effects of gang activity in prison.

When asked about personal involvement in gang-related events, it is not particularly surprising that prisoners reported other prisoners as being more involved than they themselves were. However, in terms of identifying which prisoners are most likely to be involved in gang events, the data consistently suggested that younger, male prisoners who have served more than 1 prison sentence and hold attitudes consistent with prisonization, are particularly likely to be involved in gang-related activities. The highly significant levels of prisonization in each of the analyses also suggests that had the reliability levels of this variable been higher then its role in gang activity is likely to have been even more pronounced.

When prisoners' gang activity was examined in terms of those serving a first prison sentence ("naïves") and those serving a subsequent prison sentence (recidivists), certain

differences did begin to emerge. For instance, male “naïve” prisoners’ involvement in gang activity was predicted by age alone, whereas when male and female naïve prisoners’ data were examined, prisoners more involved in gang-related activity were likely to be younger, male, hold attitudes consistent with prisonization, and be more satisfied with the social support they offered to the family. This was particularly interesting given that gender did not interact with any of the other predictors indicating there was no difference between male and female prisoners in terms of the predictor variables, only a difference in levels of involvement in gang-related activity.

In contrast, recidivist prisoners involved in gang activity were not more likely to be male, but they were likely to be younger, hold attitudes consistent with prisonization and have served more prison sentences. Unique to this group was the finding that they were more likely to be satisfied with the social support they offered to significant others in prison. Further analysis revealed that prisoners who did not support anyone in the prison were less likely to be involved in gang activity than prisoner who supported fellow prisoners, fellow prisoners and staff, or staff only.

The surprising feature of these results overall, is the finding that both “naïve” and recidivist prisoners involved in gang-related activity report higher levels of satisfaction with the social support they offer to significant others. However, the two groups differed in terms of the individuals that they supported. Naïve prisoners were more satisfied with the social support they offered to the family whereas recidivist prisoners were more satisfied with the social support they offered to significant others within the prison. These results are interesting and challenging inasmuch as they contrast with the concept that prisoners join prisoner groups in order to gain the support of other prisoners. It would seem that prisoners involved in gang-like groups perceive themselves as individuals providing support rather than receiving it.

In terms of informing theory and the core concepts of this study, the results offer some support for existing ideas and some surprises. For example, it is not a surprise that age should relate so strongly to involvement in gang-related activity, since American research indicates it is central to gang involvement (e.g. Ralph et al 1996). Similarly, the finding that prisoners involved in gang-related activity are more likely to be male, confirms American findings (e.g. Knox 1994). Also the relationship between gang-related activity and legitimate order and control reflects American findings that gangs flourish where they exert power and control over others. The findings that prisonization relates so strongly to 'own gang' involvement fully justifies its position in Buentello et al's (1991) theory of prison gang development. This is perhaps even more so given the low reliability of the prisonization scale. Had its reliability been higher, it would probably have had an even stronger relationship with 'own gang' involvement.

However, the results also indicated that gang involved prisoners, far from being the fearful individuals described by Buentello et al's (1991) theory, perceived themselves as individuals providing support to significant others. This finding flies in the face of the key assumption of Buentello et al's theory that prisoners would join prisoner groups in order to get the support they can no longer access from usual sources. Finally, the strong relationship between recidivism and involvement in gang-related activity appears to offer support to Sheldon's (1991) proposition that gang members would have more convictions than non-gang members. However, the lack of specificity in Sheldon's research i.e. do the findings refer to overall convictions or prison sentences alone and does the research refer to prison gang members or gang members in prison, makes it difficult to be certain that the current results lend weight to Sheldon's observations.

Nevertheless, as Chapter 4 points out, although the quantitative questions used in the current study should offer some insight into the formation and to some extent, the activities of



prisoner groups, there are limitations to the information quantitative questions satisfy. For instance, it is not clear from the results so far quite how gang-related events occur within the prison or how gang-like groups are formed. The next chapter examines these issues in some depth, since in terms of policy and, indeed, the development of psychological theory; it is useful to understand gang-related activity in some detail.

## Chapter Seven:

### Qualitative evaluations of prisoner group formation and gang-related activity

Inasmuch as quantitative data goes a long way towards satisfying a principal aim of psychology, to make generalisations about people, an aspiration to which the current thesis is no exception, as a methodology, it is not without its limitations. Even when conceived from the most established theory, quantitative methodologies impose a structure on participants that offers them limited flexibility of response; an issue which may be particularly important in settings such as a prison.

Any researcher entering the prison setting will be in unfamiliar territory. Even if he/she was once a prisoner, their experience of prison will be limited to either male or female establishments and their knowledge of 'prison life' is likely to have been shaped by a number of factors such as the political/social climate at the time of their imprisonment, the behaviour/characteristics of other prisoners and prison staff during their incarceration and even factors such as their age, length of sentence and personal circumstances may have shaped their experiences of imprisonment. Taking this into account and adding to it other factors such as changes in penal policy, staffing levels and impact of individual managerial styles, it is unlikely that any researcher could claim to fully understand the experience of imprisonment. Even more unlikely is the possibility that researchers are capable of understanding how the experience of imprisonment will impact on different individuals. Consequently, the current study, in addition to collecting quantitative data, also used a number of open-ended questions in order to achieve a clearer understanding of how prisoners perceive the issues of prisoner group activity in prison.

Moreover, the use of open-ended questions may provide a greater insight into certain theoretical points and as a result help to develop the largely untested theory of prison gang development. Accordingly, this chapter outlines prisoners' responses to a number of open-

ended questions relating to behaviours claimed by researches such as Camp & Camp (1985) and Fong and Buentello (1991) to be characteristic of prison gangs. Activities such as violence within the prison, how prisoners choose friends in the prison and the involvement of prisoner groups in criminal activities inside and outside the prison were all examined using open-ended questions. Furthermore, the responses were used to generate several stepwise regression analyses to see if prisoners' perceptions of trades, friendships, previous associations and involvement in criminal activity during incarceration predict involvement in prison gang activity. Stepwise regressions were selected to examine the data since all the analyses were entirely exploratory and consequently there was no theoretical basis for selecting variable entry in a specific way. Specifically, the analyses were conducted primarily to discover which variables contribute most in terms of building a model that explains gang activity in a prison population.

### 7.1 Group violence in prison

One of the key features of the prison gang is its involvement in violent behaviour (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985). However, in order to gain a better sense of gang activity in prison, it is useful to have some knowledge of when, where and how the violence occurs. For instance, it is possible that group involvement in violent behaviour involves a certain amount of pre-planning; equally it is possible that group violence may result from spontaneous confrontations. Either way, in terms of remedial action and adding to existing knowledge of prisoners' collective behaviour, it helps to have a clearer sense of the underlying features of violent behaviour within prison.

#### 7.1.1 When violence occurs

If prisoners 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that groups of prisoners are violent to other prisoners, they were then asked when the violence occurred. Two hundred and forty three prisoners (68% of the sample) responded to this question. Although responses varied

considerably, the most frequent (92 responses) indicated violence could happen at any time. The diversity of prisoners' reports demonstrated the ubiquitous nature of violence in prison. Examples such as queues for the phone, on the way to church, during gym, whilst watching television, in the yard and during showers all suggested that violence could occur at almost any time. However, some common themes did emerge from this question. For example, periods of socialisation and recreation were cited 60 times and 39 of these indicated association time as the most common time for violent incidents to erupt.

Eighty-two replies pointed out that acts of violence are most likely to occur on days involving financial transactions as this was when prisoners are more likely to have money or goods. Examples of specific points in time when violent incidents occur included pay day, canteen day and periods immediately after visiting time,

“..when someone's been on a visit and drugs have been received....it gets intimidation and threats.” (214)

“..when there's drugs about.....usually about quarter to four, after a visit.”  
(236)

Forty-five responses demonstrated how violence may result from a failure to honour debts at an appointed time,

“ Thursday is payday, Friday is canteen. You pay up on Saturday....if you don't it all happens.” (13)

Although most prisoners claimed violent events could occur at any time, some noted certain times of the day are better than others, particularly for planned attacks,

“Yeah violence occurs normally in the mornings...it's the best time to get someone like because if you've gone to bed the night before with something on your mind and you need to deal with it the best thing to do is get up early before the doors open ....and you're walking behind the officer as he's

opening the cell doors...so by the time you come to the enemy cell no doubt he's not in the same frame of mind as you are..his door cops you fly straight in and probably he's still in his bed. You do the business...there's a lot of activity going on on the landing ..yeah..cos people are all up in the morning , there's a lot of shouting going on...it's you know... it's smothered...you know the noise drowned it out..and it's cool.”

Twenty seven responses indicated that violence could also be related to conditions within the prison, these included: when the number sharing cells increases especially if the weather is hot, when there are no visits, when prisoners are released following long periods locked in cells, prisoners not respecting other prisoners' personal space and after lock up. Violence was also likely to occur following release from the cells, as scores resulting from insults exchanged through cell windows, were settled,

“shouting out windows, cussing each other's families....it leads to fights in the morning or the evening.” (120)

Some occasions when violence could erupt were mentioned only once, these included: in church, when the 'top dog' wants to keep control, when prisoners run out of tobacco, when stealing, during the delivery of medication and when someone 'grasses' on another prisoner.

#### 7.1.2 How violence occurs

Previous research indicates that prison gang activities, including acts of violence, are more likely to be covert than overt (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985). If this is the case, then it seems likely that prisoner gangs would plan their acts of violence in order to avoid detection by prison staff. To clarify this point, prisoners who agreed that some groups of prisoners are violent to other prisoners were asked how the violence occurred, 239 (66% of the sample) responded to this question. One hundred and twenty nine responses indicated violence resulted from spontaneous outbursts following arguments or disputes, whereas 75 responses

claimed violence to be mostly planned. However, 35 of the total number of responses indicated that both spontaneous and pre-planned violence occurred. One prisoner commented on how group violence differed from individual violence,

“If it’s planned it’s a group thing.....not a one to one thing.” (179)

In addition, another prisoner, who claimed both spontaneous and pre-planned violence occurred, revealed that violence would often differ according to whether it was planned or spontaneous,

“...if it’s pre-planned it’s usually a slashing. If it’s spontaneous it’s usually ‘cos of comments and’s a fight....” (72)

Many prisoners claimed that the spontaneity or pre-planning of violence was dependent on the reason for the violence. For instance, 59 responses revealed personal comments and minor disputes often led to spontaneous violence,

“..it’s mostly arguments over the silliest things. A lot of the time it’s to save face.” (343)

Prisoners’ interpersonal relationships cited 76 times, were also offered as reasons for spontaneous violent events. Interestingly, of these, only 1 person referred to racially motivated attacks. Other explanations for violence included arguments over girlfriends, loss of face, a lack of respect, insults aimed at one another’s families, personal hygiene and ‘bad moods,’

“They slag each other or their families off. If someone cusses your family you *have* to stand up for them...” (102).

Seven responses indicated how legitimate group activities, such as education classes would facilitate both spontaneous and pre-planned violence and 1 prisoner claimed territorial issues such as cell takeovers could result in violent behaviour. Only 4 responses indicated that new prisoners were targets of violence, whereas 6 prisoners reported that on discovery of a

prisoners' 'unacceptable' offence, spontaneous violence would erupt. Referring to sex-offenders one prisoner noted the certainty of such violence,

"...when they find out there's an s.o.... a bacon about....it's guaranteed" (166)

In contrast, 37 responses cited debt as the reason for all violence and some prisoners mentioned that 'double bubble' (a 100% interest rate) made debt and hence violence even more definite. It also appears that in prison an individual may get into debt over almost any product, however drug and tobacco debts cited 21 times appear to be common reasons why violence may occur,

"Nine times out of ten it's drugs.....or a spoon of sugar!" (10)

"...it's drugs. Yesterday a chap was beaten up by five inmates over drugs he couldn't pay back." (322)

Although prisoners offered non-debt-related reasons for pre-planned violence, these also often involved drugs. Twenty-one responses indicated drugs as the root cause of all pre-planned violence. For example, one prisoner observed how violence is planned when prisoners receive information that another prisoner already has, or is expecting to receive, drugs,

"it's all over drugs....if they find out someone's got drugs they band together and take it off 'em." (220)

"It's planned....it's when drugs are due. Word gets round about incoming shipments."

Prisoners also described some of the methods used by groups to mete out the violence,

"There's all sorts of ways...for instance one'll stand guard and the other two'll beat 'em up." (13)

One prisoner noted that not all confrontations resulted in violence, as when challenged by a group, a lone prisoner would often surrender whatever it was the group wanted,

“They want drugs...groups of four go up to them....if the guy co-operates there’s no violence.” (292)

### 7.1.3 Where violence occurs

Prisoners were also asked where in the prison the violence takes place. As male and female prisons may differ in structure since some female prisons resemble small housing estates (see chapter 1) and male prisons often conform to the traditional cell and wing structure, this might have an impact on where violence occurs within the prison. In light of this, male and female responses to this question were considered separately. Of the 244 (68% of the total sample) responses 50 were female (63% of total female sample) and 193 were male (69% of total male sample).

Sixty-three male and 19 female responses indicated ‘anywhere’ as the place violence was most likely to occur. General areas mentioned included wings, cited 17 times by male prisoners and 1 female prisoner and social areas cited 17 times by male prisoners and once by female prisoners. Similarly, the exercise yard was cited 17 times by male prisoners and once by female prisoners. Of the more specific areas, showers were mentioned 58 times by male prisoners but were not cited at all by female prisoners, although 1 female respondent did claim violent events occurred in the bathrooms. In the same way, cells were mentioned 58 times by male prisoners, whereas female prisoners mentioned cells only 3 times. On the other hand, female respondents referred to houses and dormitories (cited 15 times) as the most common place for violent incidents. One female prisoner noted how the house structure of the prison facilitated violent behaviour,

“..it’s because of the way it’s built, it’s so easy to get bullied, it’s so easy to get um.. intimidated.....it’s very easy to get beaten up. The officers can’t ...can’t look after the place properly even if it was staffed to the maximum...”

Another female prisoner noting the ease with which violence can occur in ‘houses’ observed,



“The front door is locked in the evening but the women are able to associate within the house from when the screw goes off at 9 o’clock until next morning at a quarter to eight. If the screw knows there’s a problem then um babysitters which are night screws normally spend the night on the house...but this doesn’t always alleviate the problem and.....er there has been rape on the house when somebody’s had drugs and um the women have raped a woman to get the drugs off ‘em.” (209)

Interestingly, 28 male responses reported how the violence would occur out of sight of prison staff, whereas only 5 female responses mentioned this. However, 2 female prisoners who did note violence occurred out of staff sight stated that the violence usually took place in the houses because they are out of sight of staff. Hence it is possible that one of the reasons houses were mentioned so many times by female prisoners is because some areas inside the houses are out of staff view,

“In the house, where staff can’t see.” (219)

“...on the house after 9 o’clock cos no officers are on.” (217)

“It’s always on the house at night time.....when the screws go off” (220)

Of the prisoners who mentioned violent events occurring out of staff sight, 3 male and 1 female response(s) revealed that violent events would often occur in the ‘blind-spots’ of the CCTV cameras. As one male prisoner reported,

“It all goes on in the showers cos even though there’s a camera in there... it’s got like a blind spot” (120)

This is interesting as it indicates that even where surveillance cameras are employed, violence can still occur without staff being aware of it. However, not all prisoners considered staff presence as a deterrent to violent behaviour; as one male prisoner noted,

“....they just start fighting anywhere.....screws aren’t very brave.” (113)

In contrast, another male prisoner claimed that violence occurred out of staff sight in order to avoid staff stopping it. Somewhat surprisingly, there was no mention of prisoners being concerned about the legitimate reprisals that would result from acts of violence within the prison,

“In the gym or showers....where staff can’t break it up.” (84)

Other, less frequently cited areas in the prison where violence occurred included: the gym, cited 7 times by male respondents and once by female prisoners, landings mentioned 6 times by males and twice by females, the T.V. room was cited 5 times by males and once by females and the canteen was mentioned 5 times by males and once by females. Some areas in the prison were mentioned only by male prisoners, these included; the laundry room, cited 4 times, corridors, mentioned 6 times and stairwells, cited 4 times. Similarly, some areas were mentioned by female respondents but not by males: these included the trolley route (cited once) and medication time/at the doctor’s, which was cited 3 times.

## 7.2 Prisoners’ perceptions of goods traded by other prisoner groups

If prisoners agreed with the quantitative question, “Some prisoner groups trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies.” They were then asked, “What sort of materials and/or extra supplies do they get?” The objective of this question was to determine prisoners’ perceptions of the kind of goods that are traded in prison and to see if any particular goods are linked to prisoners’ perceptions of others’ gang involvement.

Of the 360 prisoners interviewed two hundred and eighty four prisoners gave examples of goods traded in prison by prisoner groups. In total 88 different materials were mentioned as being objects of trade with some prisoners naming up to 16 different profitable goods. However, of the 284 responses, 255 (90%) claimed prisoner groups deal in drugs. Many prisoners were non-specific about the types of drugs traded, but some did name specific drugs. This resulted in some prisoners giving one response only and others giving

several responses referring to different kinds of drugs. As a result, the number of times some form of drug trade was mentioned totalled 433. Table 7.1 shows each of the drugs mentioned specifically by prisoners and the number of participants who cited it. Some prisoners named more than 1 drug, but each drug was mentioned only once by each prisoner.

Table 7.1: Specific drugs cited by prisoners as traded in the prison

Drug	Number and percentage of respondents who cited it
Heroin (brown/smack/stone)	130 (46%)
Cannabis (weed, puff, dope)	129 (45%)
Cocaine (coke/rock)	27 (10%)
Ecstasy (E)	15 ( 5%)
Crack	8 ( 3%)
L.S.D. (acid)	4 (1%)
Amphetamine(speed/whiz)	3 (1%)

As the figures in Table 1 indicate, most prisoners who responded to this question perceive drug trading as a widespread activity in prison. One prisoner’s comment helps to illustrate some of the extreme lengths that prisoners go to in order to generate further trade and generate sources of supplies,

“If somebody didn’t take drugs other prisoners would perhaps force them to take drugs so that that would be another source of their supply because that person would then get hooked and would probably try and get drugs in.” (232)

### 7.2.1 Medication

Prisoners also claimed that various forms of medication were traded within the prison. Although it is possible to consider medication as another form of drug, there are certain dissimilarities that may be important. Firstly, the drugs outlined above are illegal substances whereas medication, although probably traded in much the same way as the illegal drugs, are legal substances. Consequently, although prisoners trading in medication are probably aware that their behaviour contravenes prison rules, they may regard this form of trade to be less serious than the trade in illegal drugs. Secondly, it is possible that medication and drugs differ in terms of source. Illegal drugs must enter the prison by means of some external contact i.e. through visitors etc. and so essentially results from the community. Conversely, a trade in medication may have its roots within the prison since prisoners who are prescribed these substances may subsequently trade them to other prisoners. Both forms of trade have implications for the Prison Service, but in potentially different ways and so for the purposes of this thesis, drugs and medication will be treated separately.

Of the 284 responses, 55 indicated medication was a form of trade in the prison. Types of medication traded varied considerably, 15 responses were not specific about the type, 10 mentioned pills/tablets, 8 said steroids, 7 cited valium, 2 mentioned Tamazipan, 2 said amytryptaline and 2 reported 'downers'. Examples of medications mentioned only once include; diazepam, benzodiazepines, sleeping pills, painkillers, dutonium, and morphine.

A closer examination of the data seemed to indicate that many of the prisoners who cited medication as a common trade were female. In light of this it seemed probable that female prisoners were more likely to trade in medication than males and if so, it may be the case that females did not trade in drugs to the same extent as did males. To examine this possibility in more depth, a one-way Anova was conducted comparing male and female responses in terms of trades in medication and drugs (see Table 2). The results indicated that

female prisoners reported more trade in medication ( $M = .28$ ,  $S.D. = .79$ ) than did males ( $M = .12$ ,  $S.D. = .48$ )  $F(1, 357) = 5.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , but there was no difference between the genders in terms of trading in other drugs,  $F(1, 357) = 0.001$ ,  $p = .97$ .

### 7.2.2 Phone cards, cigarettes and alcohol

Gang research (e.g. Fong & Buentello 1991) notes how prison gangs flourish via a trade in contraband goods. Apart from drug trafficking, the current study was particularly interested in a trade in tobacco, phone cards and alcohol since these were some of the more obvious trades prisoners might be involved in. Accordingly, 144 responses reported a trade in tobacco, 140 cited a trade in phone cards and 30 responses indicated a trade in alcohol.

### 7.2.3 Other goods

Although other goods were mentioned less frequently than drugs, tobacco or phone cards, prisoners' responses indicated that a diverse range of materials are traded within prison. For instance, 45 responses mentioned a trade in some kind of food. Examples of foods mentioned include biscuits, chocolate, tea bags, sugar, yeast, sweets, juice and 'munch.' Forty-four responses reported a trade in clothes/jewellery such as trainers and gold. Twenty-four responses cited electrical/electronic goods such as Walkmans, stereos, Game Boys and mobile phones and 21 responses mentioned trades in personal effects such as toiletries, hairdressing equipment and shampoo. Sixteen responses noted how some groups of prisoners traded in some form of finance, specifically money or double-bubble (the 100% taxation system organised by prisoners) and 10 responses reported trades in stationery/educational material. Although the kind of educational material was not made clear, specific stationery items such as stamps and writing paper were mentioned. Nine responses noted a trade in sexually related material such as pornography, explicit photographs of wives/partners and homosexual material and four responses claimed there was a trade in weapons, although no specific weapons were mentioned.

Finally, fifty-nine responses did not clearly belong in any specific category and so were classed as miscellaneous, examples of items in this category include: 'anything of value', foil (although may be drug related), contraband, canteen, favours, batteries, glue, workshop stuff, equipment, rations, kitchen stuff, games and 'mags'. Although some of these responses could be referring to goods such as tobacco (i.e. canteen) since the prisoners did not specifically name the items they referred to, for the sake of caution the response was classified as miscellaneous.

#### 7.2.4 Other prisoners' trades as predictors of 'other gang involvement'

To examine the issue of prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' trades in more depth, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted to see if any specific trade items predicted prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' gang involvement. To transform the data for purposes of quantitative analysis, dummy variables were created where a score of 1 indicated the trade was cited, regardless of the number of times it may have been mentioned, or 0 where the trade was not cited. Prisoners who had not been asked this qualitative question were also included in the analysis because they had indicated in the preceding quantitative question that prisoner groups did not trade in any goods within the prison and consequently their responses could be considered as a 'no' for all forms of trade.

Variables entered into the analysis included trades in: drugs, alcohol, phone cards, tobacco, finance, medication, weapons, miscellaneous items, clothes and jewellery, sexually related material, food, stationery and electrical/electronic goods. The analysis generated 4 regression models with the final model accounting for 21% of the variance (see Table 7.2). As the model shows, drugs, clothes, sexual material and food are the four primary trades predicting other prisoners' gang involvement. The magnitude of the Beta coefficients indicate that drugs and clothes are the most important trades in terms of explaining other prisoners' involvement in gang activity. The importance of drugs, given the results in chapter 6 is not

surprising, but the importance of the other variables offers some insight into the material possessions that have some value in a prison. As Chapter 1 notes, Sykes (1958) points out, prisoners are denied five basic needs including access to material goods. It appears that prisoners involved in gang-related activity may help offset in part, at least some aspects of this particular basic need.

Table 7.2: Trades predicting ‘Other gang involvement’

Model	Variable	B	t	p
4	Drugs	.349	7.305	.000
	Clothes	.175	3.574	.000
	Sexual material	.111	2.303	.022
	Food	.104	2.139	.033
<hr/>				
Model 4: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .205		df 4,355	F = 22.83	p<0.001

### 7.3 Prisoners’ personal involvement in trades in the prison

If prisoners agreed with the question “Sometimes my friends and I trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies” this was followed by the open-ended question “Trade in what?” The aim of this question was to assess the sorts of materials that prisoners trade in prison. Of the 360 participants, 156 (43%) responded to this question. In total, prisoners gave 65 different responses, again citing a wide range of different trades.

#### 7.3.1 Prisoners trading in drugs

Once again the most frequently cited ‘own trade’ was drugs, with prisoners offering 99 drug-related responses. Of these, 13 were non-specific, for instance reporting ‘drugs,’ whereas 86 responses gave the names of the drugs they trade. Table 7.3 shows the type of drug prisoners admitted to trading and the number of prisoners citing it. Although some

prisoners claimed they traded in more than 1 type of drug, each prisoner named each drug only once. One prisoners' comment illustrates the importance of drugs in a prison setting,

“C...H...bacco..and cards....they are ways of survival in prison.” (326)

Table 7.3: Type of drug and number of prisoners admitting to trading it

Drug	Number and percentage of respondents trading it
Cannabis (weed/ puff/ dope/ C)	39 (25%)
Heroin (brown/smack/stone/H)	35 (22%)
Ecstasy (E)	4 (3%)
Cocaine (coke/rock)	3 (2%)
Crack	3 (2%)
Amphetamine(speed/whiz)	2 (1%)

### 7.3.2 Medication

Thirteen responses indicated prisoners trading in medication. Of these, 3 were non-committal about the type of medication and 10 cited specific medicines. Examples of named medication include, Mellanil, steroids, sleeping tablets, Benzodiazepines, Valium, Diazepam and Tamazipan. As with other prisoners' trades a one-way ANOVA was conducted to see if there was a difference between men and women's 'own trades' in medication, however, the analysis revealed no difference,  $F(1, 153) = 1.360, p = .25$ . This result indicates that, unlike their perceptions of other prisoners' trades, women do not admit to trading in medication more than do men.



### 7.3.3 Phone cards, tobacco and alcohol

As stated earlier, prisoners' trades in phone cards, tobacco and alcohol was of particular interest in this study. Of the 156 responses admitting personal involvement in trades within the prison, 94 admitted trading in tobacco, 85 admitted trading in phone cards and 8 admitted trading in alcohol.

### 7.3.4 Other goods

Prisoners also admitted to an involvement in the trade of a diverse range of other products within prison including food, which was mentioned 26 times. Types of food traded include, biscuits, yeast, sugar, peanut butter, chocolates, sweets, fruit, coffee and juice. Ten responses indicated a personal involvement in a trade in clothes and jewellery, specific examples offered include, trainers, shoes and watches. Eight responses mentioned a trade in personal effects such as toiletries, toothpaste and perfume and 6 indicated involvement in a trade in electrical goods such as Walkmans, Gameboys, stereos and mobiles. Five responses admitted to trading in stationery such as stamps and writing paper and 4 admitted involvement in some form of financial trade such as double bubble. Only 1 prisoner admitted to trading in sexually related material, referred to as 'porn' and only 1 prisoner admitted to trading in tools for weapons. Other examples of materials mentioned once include, reading material, magazines, contraband and violence,

“Cards...H....C....I've also traded in violence....I was given half a gram of smack to beat someone up.” (324)

### 7.3.5 Miscellaneous goods

As with prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' trades, a miscellaneous category was created for items that seemed to belong in no particular category. Twenty-three responses were assigned to this category including; 'anything' (cited 8 times), 'kitchen stuff' (cited 3 times) and 'canteen' (cited 3 times).

### 7.3.6 'Own trades as predictors of 'own gang involvement'

In order to look for trades that might predict prisoners' 'own gang involvement' a stepwise multiple regression was carried out. Once more this analysis included all participants and again responses were scored as cited = 1 and not cited = 0. Six models were generated for this analysis, Table 7.4 shows the coefficient values of the variables predicting 'own gang involvement' in the final model, which accounted for 42% of the variance. Interestingly, the two most important predictors i.e. drugs and tobacco, both have addictive properties, which may mean the supplier can more or less name his/her price and know that prisoners anxious to feed their addiction will agree to it.

Consequently, if one of the aims of the prison gang is, as Stevens (1997) argues, the acquisition of finance, then trading in addictive substances should prove to be not only lucrative but also consistent. As for the other trades, it would appear that those involved in gang-related activity in the prison trade in a multitude of goods as indicated by the presence of 'miscellaneous' in the regression model. As for the importance of food in terms of gang-related activity, since food is strictly controlled in a prison it could be the case that acquisition of food for trading purposes necessitates the kind of networking a gang may have in order to maintain supplies and distribution. Similarly, getting hold of and distributing alcohol is unlikely to be simple due to difficulties associated with transporting and concealing it in a prison setting. Again, a network of individuals involved in this trade may help ease such difficulties.

Table 7.4: The Final Model for Trades that predict 'own gang involvement'

Model	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
6	Drugs	.40	8.87	0.000
	Tobacco	.27	5.97	0.000
	Miscellaneous	.13	2.98	0.003
	Alcohol	.13	3.23	0.001
	Food	.10	2.34	0.020
	Finance	.09	2.21	0.028

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Adj.  $R^2 = .42$ ,       $df$  6, 353,       $F = 43.55$ ,       $p < 0.001$

#### 7.4 Other prisoners' associations with each other before incarceration

Prisoners were asked to agree/disagree with the statement "Some prisoners were friends before they came in here." If they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement they were then asked, "How did they know each other?" The aim of this question was to see if prisoners perceive gang formation as originating within the prison as argued in the theory of prison gang formation (Buentello, et al 1991) or as originating from the streets as suggested by Jacobs (1977). Of the 360 prisoners in the study 333 (93%) gave 637 responses to this question.

##### 7.4.1 Regional origin

Three hundred and twenty five responses indicated 'regional origin' as the basis for other prisoners knowing each other before coming into the present prison. Prisoners' responses included 'home area' cited 126 times, 'from outside' cited 98 times, the 'street' cited 51 times and 'school' cited 22 times. Other instances where home area was mentioned include, 'grew up together', mentioned 12 times, 'work' mentioned 6 times, 'from same manor,' cited 4 times, 'neighbours', mentioned 3 times, 'same background' mentioned twice and 'kids' homes,' cited once.

#### 7.4.2 Social activities/connections

Similarly, 103 responses were offered by 83 (25%) prisoners indicating other prisoners knew each other due to some form of social activity/connection. Although there may be some similarities between social activities/connections and area of origin, these responses were not considered to be synonymous with area of origin for 2 reasons. Firstly, although examples such as 'pubs' and 'clubs' could be taken to indicate pubs or clubs in the prisoner's hometown, there is a possibility that prisoners had travelled to pubs and clubs outside their local area. Secondly, the concept of social activities/connections seems to indicate a degree of intentional association with other offenders that may not exist with, for example, 'grew up together' or 'from school' or 'work.' This could be an example of the subcultural associations referred to by researchers such as Sutherland (1937) (see Chapter 2) who argued that the process of deviancy is facilitated through association with individuals who are 'carriers' of criminal norms. Consequently, it is possible that if prisoners have formed social relationships with other offenders before incarceration, they continue those associations along with any related offending behaviour during imprisonment. Such a concept does not necessarily apply to prisoners who happen to originate from the same geographical area or co-exist in the same schools etc. Accordingly, social connections were considered separately from area of origin for the purposes of analysis.

Of those who mentioned social activities/connections 30 responses claimed that prisoners knew each other 'socially,' 25 indicated prisoners knew each other through mutual friends, 19 maintained that some prisoners were friends before coming into the prison, 14 reported that prisoners were related to one another, 9 mentioned social connections made through pubs and clubs, 3 claimed prisoners 'came from same group,' and a further 3 claimed prisoners were business partners before coming into the prison.

#### 7.4.3 Prison system

Fifty-eight responses indicated that prisoners knew each other due to the prison system. Of these, 48 claimed previous associations were formed in other prisons, which may refer to the current or a previous sentence and 10 referred specifically to previous prison sentences.

#### 7.4.4 Criminal activity

In addition, 137 responses referred to other prisoners knowing one another through criminal activity. Of these, 43 indicated that prisoners knew each other as they were co-defendants, 40 claimed prisoners knew each other 'through crime,' 33 claimed prisoners knew each other through 'drugs,' 17 mentioned that prisoners had 'done a job together,' 2 mentioned that prisoners knew one another through prostitution and 1 cited prisoners were friends due to youth offending.

#### 7.4.5 Miscellaneous

Fourteen responses did not fit clearly into any of the above categories and so were classified as miscellaneous. These included, word of mouth (reputation), mentioned 3 times, racial groups and same sentence were both mentioned twice, and several single responses including, 'seen them before,' 'court appearance,' 'bail hostels,' and 'alcoholism' were offered.

#### 7.4.6 Previous associations as predictors of 'other gang' activity

Using the data from respondents to this qualitative question, a stepwise regression analysis was carried out to see if particular forms of previous association would predict prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' gang involvement. The analysis produced 3 models each accounting for a small percentage of the variance of 'other gang involvement (see Table 5). The first model included only one variable 'previous associations through crime' and the second model also included 'previous associations through crime but added 'from home.' The

third model (see Table 7.5) added ‘socially’ to the model. The Beta values indicate that as each of the variables increase so does ‘other gang involvement’ and that the most important predictor is prisoners’ previous associations with others through crime.

Table 7.5: Previous association coefficients predicting other prisoners’ gang involvement for each model

Model	Variable	B	t	p
3	Through crime	.17	3.15	.002
	From home	.14	2.57	.011
	Socially	.11	2.03	.043
<hr/>				
Model 1: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .022		df 1, 358	F = 9.02	p < 0.005
Model 2: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .035		df 2, 357	F = 7.43	p < 0.005
Model 3: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .043		df 3, 356	F = 6.37	p < .001

7.5 Prisoners’ personal association with other prisoners before incarceration

Prisoners were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “I knew some of the other prisoners before I came in here.” The aim of this question was to identify if prisoners involved in gang activity already knew other prisoners before incarceration as this might help clarify some of the issues related to the origins of prison gangs. For example, if prisoners most involved in gang activity already knew other prisoners before incarceration then this might lend some weight to Jacobs’ (1977) argument that gangs in prison originate from the streets and re-form following incarceration (importation theory). Similarly, if prisoners involved in gang activity in prison did not know other prisoners before imprisonment then this might indicate they form new associations following imprisonment (indigenous theory) as implied by the theory of prison gang formation (Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991). However, merely identifying that prisoners knew other prisoners before coming into their present prison cannot be taken as support for arguments in favour of importation theory, as it is possible that

prisoners knew each other due to associations formed in other prisons. If this is the case then it might imply prison gang origins lie within the prison system and are not imported from the streets. Consequently, it was necessary to clarify how prisoners knew each other before imprisonment and so if prisoners agreed they knew other prisoners before coming into the prison, they were then asked, “How did you know them?” Of the 360 prisoners in this study 243 (68%) gave a total of 384 responses to this question.

#### 7.5.1 Regional origin

One hundred and seventy responses indicated prisoners knew other prisoners due to region of origin. Examples of responses include, “from same area” which was offered 64 times, “outside” offered 54 times, “the street” offered 26 times, “school” was offered 14 times and “grew up together was offered 5 times. Other, single responses include for instance, “homeless organisations,” “work,” and “children’s homes.”

#### 7.5.2 Social activity

For the same reasons as with prisoners’ perceptions of other prisoners’ relationships, social contacts were kept separate from area of origin. Thirty-six responses indicated they knew other prisoners socially before entering the prison. Of these, 15 claimed to be ‘friends’ with other prisoners before prison, 8 maintained they knew others ‘socially’, 4 indicated they knew other prisoners due to mutual friendships and a further 4 said they were related to other prisoners. Three responses indicated membership of the same street gang as other prisoners and 2 reported having met other prisoners in pubs or clubs.

#### 7.5.3 Prison system

One hundred and forty five responses indicated individuals knew other prisoners by means of the prison system. ‘Other prisons’ was mentioned 126 times, ‘from a previous sentence(s)’ was cited 15 times and ‘remand’ was offered 4 times.

#### 7.5.4 Criminal activity

In addition to the above responses, 28 replies indicated respondents knew other prisoners through criminal activity. The most frequent of these (17 responses) was that they knew each other 'through drugs' although whether this was due to trading or consumption was not made clear. Nine responses indicated some form of unspecified 'crime,' 1 response indicated a co-defendant and another claimed to be the target of the same 'police operation' as another prisoner(s).

#### 7.5.5 Miscellaneous responses

Five responses were either too vague to clearly belong to one of the above categories or differed sufficiently from other responses to merit a separate category. These were classified as 'miscellaneous' and included, 'through business' mentioned twice, 'same sentence' mentioned once, 'reputation' cited once and 'from wing' also mentioned once.

#### 7.5.6 Previous associations as indicators of 'own gang involvement'

As before, a stepwise regression analysis was carried out to see if how prisoners knew other prisoners could predict 'own gang involvement.' Four models were generated by the analysis. Table 7.6 shows the significant coefficients for the final model indicating that prisoners who knew other prisoners through crime, home or prison were more likely to be involved in gang-related activity. Knowing other prisoners socially also predicts 'own gang involvement' but not to the same extent as the other variables.



Table 7.6: Coefficients for the final model explaining ‘own gang involvement’ from Prisoners’ Previous associations.

Model	Variable	B	t	p
4	From home	.21	4.12	.000
	From crime	.20	3.89	.000
	From prison	.19	3.67	.000
	Socially	.10	1.97	.049
<hr/>				
Model 1: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .073		df 1, 358	F = 29.23	p < 0.001
Model 2: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .097		df 2, 357	F = 20.29	p < 0.001
Model 3: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .12		df 3, 356	F = 17.71	p < 0.001
Model 4: Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .13		df 4, 355	F = 14.36	p < 0.001

#### 7.6 The formation of prisoner friendships in the prison

To know whether prisoners knew other prisoners before coming into prison does help to identify the number of prisoners who had previous associations before entering the prison, which according to some researchers (e.g. Jacobs 1977) explains the origin of some prisoner gangs. However, what cannot be assessed from this information is whether prisoners choose to mix with their former acquaintances following incarceration. It is possible that following incarceration, prisoners choose to make new friendships and that prisoner groups are formed along the lines of new rather than old associations. To shed some light on this issue, all prisoners were asked for their perceptions of how other prisoners decide whom to be friendly with. Of the 360 prisoners in this study 293 (81%) responded to this question offering 370 responses. Sixty-seven prisoners (19%) claimed not to know how other prisoners choose whom to be friendly with.

The range of responses was wide. In total 68 different types of response were offered. Prisoners’ responses were then assigned to one of 10 separate categories that seemed to

reflect the substance of the response types. Since a number of prisoners offered more than 1 example of how prisoners choose friends in prison, some answers appear in more than 1 category.

#### 7.6.1 Perceived use

One hundred responses indicated that other prisoners chose friends on the basis of personal gain,

“..personal gain....drugs, cards, bacci, anything they want that the others can get.. really (74)

Of these 100, 24 referred to ‘personal gain’ specifically and 53 indicated that prisoners based friendships on the access to drugs the associations provided. One female prisoner reported the lengths some prisoners with drug habits will go to in order to secure a supply of drugs,

“The way I see it is that ....young girls come in and they’re not lesbians...they go into a culture of being lesbians because they want to be where the drugs are and most people dealing in drugs in women’s prisons...that’s all I know...you’ll get 50% lesbianism ...just for the drugs..that’s what I’ve seen and I know it’s true.” (275)

Other, less frequent, responses, included friendships based on which prisoners ‘have the most canteen or valuables’ mentioned 7 times, ‘can get stuff from visits’ cited 6 times, ‘have access to tobacco’ mentioned 3 times, ‘have the ability to fight’ and ‘have experience with the system’ were both cited twice and have ‘access to alcohol’ and ‘have social connections’ were both mentioned once. One prisoner’s comment is an example of many responses to this question,

“...in here someone who has everything will have lots of friends” (227)

### 7.6.2 Personal/shared characteristics

Eighty-four responses reported how other prisoners choose whom to be friendly with on the basis of personal or shared characteristics. Examples of these include, 'similar to the self' mentioned 26 times, people who are 'friendly' cited 11 times, 'personality type' mentioned 10 times and 'race' reported 9 times.

“\*\*\*\*\* is a very racist jail....colour goes to colour.” (13)

Other, less frequent examples of personal characteristics facilitating friendship include, 'age' (cited 8 times), 'similar background' (mentioned 4 times), 'physical appearance' (cited 5 times), others who want to 'avoid trouble' (mentioned 3 times), people who 'don't show off' (cited twice), 'funny' people (reported twice), those who are 'less hostile' (mentioned once), others who also 'feel vulnerable' (mentioned once) and others who are also 'afraid' (mentioned once). Two prisoners' remarks illustrate many of the responses to this question,

“Like goes to like...druggies go to druggies, S.O.'s<sup>1</sup> go to S.O.'s, grasses go to grasses and villains go to villains...it's all about who'll have you.” (164).

“Similar goes with similar for example weak people hang out together.....if you haven't got drugs in jail you are nobody. It's the same if you can't look after yourself.” (324)

### 7.6.3 Status of other prisoners

Thirty-five reports indicated other prisoners choose friends on the basis of status. Of these, 11 reported that image was an important factor in prison and that prisoners choose to be friends with those who have the 'right' image.

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<sup>1</sup> S.O. indicates a sex offender

“Status is important in a prison. Some get friendly to those with a reputation”

(122)

A further 10 responses indicated that strong or well-built individuals would attract a lot of friends in a prison setting, for example one prisoner remarked,

“It’s down to looks or physique sometimes. Big chaps are respected more...small chaps are just fraggles<sup>2</sup>.” (97).

Other answers indicating status as a basis for friendship included 4 claims that prisoners would want to become friends with bullies and 3 reports that prisoners would try to be friends with whoever was the ‘top dog.’

#### 7.6.4 Shared interests

Thirty-one responses gave examples of how prisoner friendships might be formed due to shared interests,

“..they get to be friends cos of common interests.....good or bad.” (65)

Of these, 20 reported ‘common interests,’ 4 indicated ‘cards’ to be a shared interest although whether they were referring to phone cards as in trading interests or playing cards as in a gambling interest was not made clear. Three responses mentioned sporting activities as a mutual interest that might bring prisoners together and 3 reported how a common interest in music would facilitate friendships

“what music you listen to...for example if someone hears American gangsta rap they will think you are one of them....a bad boy. It’s the same for other types of music.”

(126)

Finally 1 response indicated that prison-based friendships could be formed due to a shared interest in education.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Fraggles’ refers to prisoners who are learning disabled or considered by other prisoners as weak

### 7.6.5 Crimes committed before imprisonment

Twenty-three responses claimed that prisoners selected friends on the basis of crime committed before imprisonment. Eighteen claimed the type of crime committed would influence prisoners to become friends. However a further 9 prisoners reported that prisoners were also likely to be rejected due to their index offence,

“By sentence....anything out of order and you’re avoided.” (323)

“From type of sentence.....domestics or sex offenders keep to themselves.”

(56)

One response noted how ‘theft’ brought prisoners together, but it was not made clear whether this was theft within the prison or theft committed before imprisonment.

### 7.6.6 Previous associations

Eighteen responses indicated that prisoner friendships would be based on previous associations, although no elaboration of the nature of these associations were offered.

### 7.6.7 Area of origin

Seventeen responses offered examples of how friendships might be based on region of origin. Of these, 15 referred to ‘home’ and 2 referred to ‘the street.’

“Where they come from.....it’s one of the first questions asked.” (103)

### 7.6.8 Prison environment

Twelve responses offered examples of how friendships might form due to circumstances in the prison. For example, 6 claimed that associations would form between those in the same or neighbouring cells, 5 mentioned workmates within the prison would lead to the formation of friendships and 1 claimed that prisoners would seek out others who had similar lengths of sentence to serve,

“They get friendly with the people they work with....like gardening.” (46)

### 7.6.9 Previous prisons/sentences

Surprisingly, only 4 responses offered examples of how friendships might form due to previous prison associations. Previous prison sentences was mentioned twice as were people from previous prisons,

“...who they know from previous sentences...” (299)

### 7.6.10 Miscellaneous

Forty-six responses did not clearly fit into a particular response category. For example, 8 reports indicated prisoners note the behaviour of others before making friends, although no suggestion was made as to the type of behaviour prisoners might be looking for. Seven responses referred to avoiding ‘fraggles’ and consequently reflected how prisoners choose whom to avoid rather than how they select friends. Six responses were vague indications that choice of friends depends on individual opinion, five maintained that prisoners tended not to make friends and a further 5 indicated that prisoners would learn ‘who to trust’ before making friends, again no clarification was offered on how prisoners reach a state of trust. Other examples in this category include 4 claims that others just ‘make friends’ and 3 reports that the individual prisoner does not decide, rather other prisoners decide for them. Two responses maintained the process of making friends in prison is ‘the same as on the out’ and a further 2 claimed the process of induction helps prisoners decide who they will be friends with once they are moved to the main prison areas. However, how these decisions were reached was not made clear.

To see if the variables generated from this qualitative data could offer some insight into other prisoners’ involvement in gang activity a stepwise multiple regression was used to examine their relationship with ‘other involvement’ in gang-related activity. Only one model, explaining 3% of the variance,  $F(1, 358) = 12.53, p < 0.001$ , was generated and included 1

variable ‘others choose friends according to use.’ Table 7.7 shows the Beta, t and p values of the model.

Table 7.7: Coefficient predicting how other prisoners choose their friends

Variable	$\beta$	t	p
Others choose friends according to their use	.18	3.54	.000

### 7.7 Prisoners’ personal selection of friends within the prison

In addition to asking prisoners’ for their opinions of other prisoners’ friendships in prison they were also asked “When you first came in here which other prisoners did you think that you might get on with? Why?” The aim of this question was to see to what extent prisoners most involved in gang-related activity selected friends in the prison on the basis of pre-incarceration associations as suggested by Jacobs (1977). Also of interest were friendship facilitators such as shared characteristics e.g. race, region of origin and political ideology suggested by previous work (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991; Rush, Stone and Wycoff 1996), or a process of ‘Juvenilization’ reported by Stevens’ (1997) (see Chapter 4). A further aim of this question was to explore any additional basis for friendships that might not have been tapped by previous gang research. Of the 360 prisoners who participated in the study 330 (92%) offered a response to this question, although only 158 (44%) explained why they chose friends in the way they did.

#### 7.7.1 No specific selection of friends

One hundred and sixteen responses indicated that they had no specific basis for the way they chose friends. Forty of these claimed to have no preconceptions as to who they might or might not get on with, 34 claimed they would get on with anyone and 27 claimed they did not want to associate with other prisoners and so this was not an issue for them. Ten

responses claimed to look for people 'on my level' although no explanation of what 'my level' meant was offered. Three maintained that they 'looked and listened' before deciding who to be friendly with, 1 claimed to make judgements of others based on 'instinct' and 1 claimed it 'took time to get to know the place' before deciding on friends. The most frequent reason 'why' offered in this category was sociability. Sixteen responses indicated that they tried to get on with most people and so were not looking for anyone specific to be friendly with. Other reasons why prisoners did not look for specific individuals with whom to mix included, 'wanting to do sentence and get out', 'no preferences'

"I just tried to get on with all of them." (125)

"I'm easy going so I get on with most inmates." (264)

#### 7.7.2 Characteristics of other prisoners

Seventy-six responses offered examples of how they selected friends according to the personal characteristics of other prisoners. Of these, 13 indicated that they chose friends who were 'quiet', 12 mentioned choosing 'drug-free' friends and 10 claimed they chose 'older' prisoners as friends. Eight responses indicated prisoners chose people who were 'friendly,' 7 selected friends who were 'the same race', 5 chose friends who were the 'same age' and 4 picked friends according to their 'religious attitude'. Three responses admitted to choosing 'only white' friends, 3 claimed to select only 'educated people,' 2 claimed to choose 'loud ones' as friends and 2 maintained they selected friends on the basis of 'their attitude'. The most common explanation of why prisoners selected friends on the basis of personal characteristics was 'same/similar personality/attitude to me'. Other reasons 'why' included, 'common ground', 'loud ones attract trouble', 'feel comfortable with them' and 'decent conversation',

"Older prisoners.....cos they aren't into drugs...you get a decent conversation and they aren't bullies." (28)



“Fellow Nigerians...I just felt more comfortable with them.” (3)

“Whites...cos of my appearance ....like being big and skinhead...I differed from blacks from an early age.....and there’s none in my hometown.” (352)

### 7.7.3 Previous associations

Fifty-one responses indicated that they selected friends in prison due to previous associations. Of these, 48 claimed to select friends they ‘knew already’, 2 maintained they ‘stick with family members’ and 1 claimed to make friends with people who were ‘friends of friends’. Reasons offered for why friends were selected along these lines included, ‘trust’, ‘grew up together’, ‘same attitudes’ ‘common ground’, ‘code of practice’ and ‘all in same boat’,

“I’m only interested in people I know already...you stick with people you know and don’t get involved in other people’s business.” (4)

“People I knew from before I came to prison.....and those known from other prisons.....because they’re friends.” (47)

“People I knew from the out ....and other prisons.....I could trust them.” (124)

“Only the ones where I know their backgrounds.....for insurance purposes and code of practice.” (164)

### 7.7.4 Previous prisons

Forty-eight responses indicated prisoners chose friends on the basis of knowing them from previous prisons. The most frequent reason offered for choosing friends in this way was ‘trust’. Other reasons included, ‘stick together’, ‘common ground’, ‘they know the system’, ‘I know their offence’ and they are ‘nice’,

“I only mixed with prisoners I knew from previous prisons.....as I knew I could trust them....we had a laugh in previous nicks.” (17)

“I stuck with the lads from \*\*\*\*\* .....they sent 9 of us here.” (32)

### 7.7.5 Home area

Twenty-six responses indicated prisoners chose friends in prison on the basis of 'coming from the same area'. The most frequent explanation offered as to why friends were chosen in this way was 'come from same community/people'. Other reasons included 'same attitude' 'stick together' 'common ground' 'understand each other',

"I mainly stuck with people from South London.....as they have the same attitude as me." (5)

"Scousers....they're my own kind....your own people." (40)

"One in particular...we came from the same area...although we didn't know each other...we used to box in the same club." (97)

"Those from the same area as me.....Liverpool....we've got common ground."  
(231)

### 7.7.6 Common interests

Eighteen responses indicated prisoners chose friends on the basis of shared interests. Of these, 11 stated 'similar interests', 3 claimed 'the same social group' initiated their friendships, 3 maintained that they became friends with prisoners from the same 'educational class' and 1 claimed to look for friendship with 'other mothers'. The most frequent explanation offered for these choices was 'common ground'. Other reasons for choosing friends on the basis of common interests included, 'understand each other' 'shared attitudes' and 'similar personality to me',

"People in my own social grouping.....that's managerial...we have lots of common ground." (53)

"Those in education...we've got common ground...they're non-aggressive types....they're more the intelligent ones." (61)

“ones that are into fitness and ex-addicts....I’m an ex-addict and new into fitness.” (64)

“Travellers....we’ve got a similar lifestyle.....I know them.” (134)

#### 7.7.7 Crime committed before incarceration

Twenty-seven responses indicated prisoners chose friends in prison on the basis of crime committed. Of these, 10 maintained they would choose ‘lifers’ or ‘long-termers’, 7 would choose as friends prisoners who had committed the same offence as their own, 5 would choose co-defendants and 5 would choose friends on the basis that they had not committed a sex offence. Reasons offered for choosing friends using these criteria include, trust and common ground, both of which were cited an equal number of times, ‘similar interests’ ‘good attitude’, ‘stick together’, ‘more genuine’ and ‘don’t like them’,

“.....lifers....cos 95% of them want to do their time and get out....they don’t want trouble.” (6)

“Other lifers.....we’ve been through the same thing and so have an understanding of each other.”(49)

“Anyone who’s not a sex offender.....I don’t like them.” (54)

“My 6 co-defendants as we have same interests.” (105)

“People on similar offences because they would have more understanding and would not be as cold.” (84)

#### 7.7.8 Prison environment

Ten responses indicated that prisoners chose friends in prison due to circumstances in the prison environment. Of these, 5 indicated they chose ‘neighbours’ as friends, 4 chose cell mates, and 1 chose ‘workmates’ as friends. Reasons why friends were selected along these lines included, ‘around them all the time’ ‘similar attitude’, ‘know them’ ‘made me welcome’ and ‘you get to know them over time’,

“Neighbours in adjoining cells.....you’re around them all the time.” (2)

“Mainly people on the same landing...they’re the ones that made me feel welcome....like we’re all in the same boat.” (37)

“I got a job as a cleaner via induction....therefore I became friends with the other workers.” (115)

#### 7.7.9 Selection of friends as predictors of ‘own gang involvement’

To see if ‘who’ prisoners selected as friends in prison could predict ‘own gang involvement’ a stepwise multiple regression was conducted. Two models were produced, the first explained 1% of the variance  $F(1, 358) = 7.66, p < 0.01$  and the second explained 3% of the variance,  $F(2, 357) = 5.85, p < 0.01$ . Interestingly, the direction of the Beta values in both models indicate that when prisoners do not select friends using any specific criteria they are less likely to become involved in gang-related activity in the prison. Table 7.8 shows the final model generated by this analysis.

Table 7.8: Variables predicting ‘own gang involvement’ from prisoners’ selection of friends

Model	Variable	B	t	p
2	No specific selection	-.12	-2.34	.000
	People from home area	.11	2.00	.047

In addition a further stepwise regression was carried out to see if the reasons why prisoners chose friends in the way they did would predict ‘own gang involvement.’ One model was produced, but it only just reached an acceptable significance level and explained less than 1% of the variance,  $F(1, 358) = 3.97, p < 0.05$ . Table 7.9 shows the significant coefficient

Table 7.9: Significant coefficient predicting ‘own gang involvement’ from the way prisoners select friends

Model	Variable	B	t	p
1	Common interests	.11	2.00	.047

### 7.8 Prisons as ‘dangerous environments’

Prisoners were asked ‘What would you say is the most important thing a prisoner new to this prison needs to learn about the other prisoners?’ The aim of this question was to see if prisoners reported danger as something new prisoners needed to be aware of or if other aspects of prison life were considered to be more important for new prisoners to learn. If existing prisoners consider the prison environment to be dangerous then it is likely that prisoners new to the prison will also perceive the prison environment as a potential danger as previous research suggests (e.g. Duffee 1989). Duffee (see chapter 1) maintained that new prisoners would seek the company of similar others in order to ease feelings of fear. This process, Buentello et al (1991) suggest is an early part of the development of the prison gang.

Of the 360 prisoners who took part in this study 299 (83%) responded to this question giving a total of 386 responses. Responses were classified into 6 separate categories reflecting the nature of the replies.

#### 7.8.1 Acceptable behaviour

One hundred and forty seven responses indicated advice they believed new prisoners should follow when coming into the prison. Of these responses, 36 suggested keeping a low profile,

“There are 3 rules...don’t get involved....winch your neck in...and do your bird.” (62)

Twenty-two responses indicated that new prisoners should treat other prisoners with respect, 21 suggested that new prisoners should 'stand up for themselves' and not allow others to bully them,

"there are always bullies...be careful." (223)

"If one person takes the piss out of you....they all will....personal weaknesses are taken advantage of in here" (105)

Twelve responses indicated that new prisoners should 'keep their mouths shut' and 9 recommended that new prisoners should 'be careful' of other prisoners, whereas a further 9 suggested new prisoners should 'just get on with other prisoners.' Other responses included 8 suggestions that new prisoners should concentrate on getting on with the sentence and ignore other prisoners, 6 indicated that trying to talk to and join in with other prisoners was the best way forward and 5 maintained that adopting a light-hearted approach to other prisoners would help the new prisoner in terms of his/her relationship with others. Less frequent responses indicated that the new prisoner should mix in (mentioned 3 times) and be alert to the activities of other prisoners (mentioned twice). Examples of single responses include; 'be careful what you say,' be verbally assertive, adopt a subtle approach to others, get to know the traders, ignore other prisoners completely, protect belongings from other prisoners and 'watch your back.'

"Prison can be a dangerous place...but you're okay if you treat everyone how you want to be treated." (293)

### 7.8.2 Unacceptable behaviour

In addition to indicating behaviours appropriate for the prison environment, 76 responses offered suggestions of what the new prisoner should *not* do. The most frequent of these was 'don't mix with drug dealers,' mentioned 18 times. This was closely followed by 'don't get into debt,' cited 13 times.

“stay away from drug dealers...barons....tobacco and double bubble.” (11)

Prisoners also claimed that new prisoners should never give other prisoners anything (6 responses) and should ‘not get involved’ was mentioned 5 times, although the specifics of what the new prisoner should not get involved with was not made clear,

“just keep out of their business.” (308)

“There’s always someone to talk to if you want to ....like the Listener scheme.....but always be careful about who you talk to and what you talk about...it can be trouble. (14)

In addition, prisoners advised that new prisoners, ‘don’t grass’ and don’t push people around, both mentioned 4 times as were ‘don’t get attitude’ and ‘don’t take other prisoners at face value. Respondents also advised that new prisoners should not, ‘show fear’ (3 responses) or ‘lend stuff’ to other prisoners (3 responses). Other single responses included, not to ‘talk about them behind their backs,’ ‘don’t take the piss,’ ‘don’t underestimate them,’ ‘don’t brown tongue’ ‘don’t steal’ and ‘don’t smash up their belongings.’

### 7.8.3 Personal characteristics of other prisoners

Ninety-five reports indicated that new prisoners needed to be aware of other prisoners’ characteristics. For instance issues of trust seemed to have some importance as 29 responses indicated that new prisoners needed to find out whom they could trust and 18 replies advised new prisoners should not trust any other prisoners. Thirteen responses indicated that new prisoners should learn who to avoid and 9 replies suggested new prisoners should be aware that some prisoners will ‘make trouble’

“....avoid certain individuals.....those who think it’s an occupational hazard...they don’t care about staying out of trouble...” (79)

“stay out of the way of the ‘top dogs’” (292)

“keep clear of the druggies.....get mood swings.” (358)

Other replies indicated new prisoners should be aware that other prisoners, 'are all out for themselves' and 'need time and space' (both mentioned 4 times). In addition, prisoners advised that new prisoners needed to be: 'aware that some other prisoners are 'weird,' 'beware of tempers,' 'find out what upsets them' 'find out who the violent ones are' 'find out their weaknesses' and be aware that 'some are evil' (all cited twice)

"...violence...you have to know about it....there's more in here than outside."

(144)

"some prisoners are just evil.....they don't care about other prisoners." (88)

"there's a lot of funny people in here...like paedophiles and rapists...your photos go missing." (185)

Examples of single responses include; 'learn their morals,' 'they'll use you' 'they are all two faced' 'learn their attitudes' 'age is important' and 'they are all wankers'

#### 7.8.4 Prison culture

Thirty-one responses indicated that some prisoners believed new prisoners needed to be aware of certain cultural aspects of the prison. Fourteen of these suggested new prisoners should 'learn the rules'

"learn the routines....like what goes on with inmates....who sells stuff like

'bacco and whatever.'" (149)

Four replies recommended that new prisoners should 'learn about double bubble' and a further 4 suggested new prisoners needed to 'learn the hierarchy of the prison'

"find out who's who...the pecking order in here" (57)

Several responses seemed to refer to a code of conduct. For example 4 suggested that new prisoners should 'learn the norm' and be certain not to break it. Three advised new prisoners should 'observe what's accepted' and 2 indicated a 'learning of boundaries' to be important.



#### 7.8.5 Criminal background

Nineteen responses reflected prisoners' opinions that new prisoners would need to be aware of other prisoners' criminal backgrounds. Fourteen of these maintained new prisoners needed to find out the type of crime other prisoners 'are in for,'

“what they are in for...they could be dangerous or nutty.” (131)

Also, 3 replies suggested the length of a prisoner's sentence was important, although why they believed this was not made clear. Two responses claimed new prisoners should find out if other prisoners had committed an offence or had behaved in some way that made them unacceptable to the majority of the prison population,

“make sure they aren't naughty...like a grass or nonce...a kiddie fiddler or rapist.”

#### 7.8.6 Miscellaneous

Eighteen responses did not fit clearly into a specific category and were subsequently classed as 'miscellaneous'. Most of these were single responses with the exception of 'it takes time' (mentioned 3 times), 'judge them as individuals' (mentioned 3 times) and 'just be yourself' (mentioned twice). Examples of single responses included, 'do your own thing', 'just find out as you go along' everyone is treated differently,' 'some get preferential treatment from staff' and 'all in same boat.'

#### 7.8.7 New prisoners 'need to know' as predictors of other prisoners' gang involvement

A stepwise regression analysis was carried out to see if prisoners' perceptions of what new prisoners need to know about other prisoners would predict 'other prisoners' involvement in gang activity' however, no models were produced by the analysis.

#### 7.9 Prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners following entry to the prison

Prisoner responses in terms of the most important thing a prisoner new to the prison needs to know about other prisoners varied considerably and although some responses could

be taken to imply a covert danger to new prisoners if they do not abide by some accepted behaviours, the responses do not, on the whole, seem to indicate established prisoners consider prison as an explicitly dangerous environment. This information is useful for attempts at establishing how dangerous the prison environment *actually* is. However, although established prisoners may not consider the prison environment to be a particularly dangerous place, it does not necessarily follow that new prisoners will perceive the prison environment in the same way as established prisoners. For instance, it is possible that when they were new prisoners, established prisoners saw the prison as dangerous and threatening, but over time they came to see it in a different light.

In consideration of this, prisoners were also asked, “When you first came in here what was the most important thing you learned about the other prisoners.” Of the 360 prisoners in this study 310 (86%) responded to this question giving 377 responses. Fifty prisoners declined to answer. Responses were classified into 6 categories that seemed to reflect the nature of the replies.

#### 7.9.1 Characteristics of other prisoners

One hundred and eighty one replies indicated that on first entering the prison, other prisoners’ characteristics was the most important lesson learned. Of the 179 responses 44 indicated that they had learned not to trust other prisoners,

“I learned that you can’t trust anyone.....no matter how well you think you know them” (301)

Two prisoners’ comments reflected how previous associations could play an important part in terms of trust within prison,

“...they’re not your friend....you can’t trust anyone unless you know them on the out” (312)

“Don’t trust anybody unless you’ve known them for years....for example I drank with a couple on the out” (323)

Twenty-seven responses reflected the importance of knowing which prisoners take drugs, since this, for some, also related to issues of trust,

“Eighty to ninety percent smoke H....therefore you don’t know who to trust.” (348)

“Most of them are drug addicts and would lie and cheat and steal....you can’t trust any of them.” (53)

Fourteen responses suggested other prisoners appeared to be frightening/intimidating,

“I was very wary and frightened of them....at first” (232)

“I learned they are all out to make a name for themselves.....so they intimidate the weak” (111)

“They were threatening.....and smackheads.” (119)

Other responses indicated that, as new prisoners, they learned more of the generic rather than specific characteristics of the prison population. For example, 13 maintained indicated other prisoners were all ‘idiots’

“They are complete arseholes.....low life tramps.....they don’t know any better.....junkies are the worst.” (275)

A further 9 replies suggested other prisoners were ‘selfish,’ 6 claimed prisoners to be two-faced and 5 indicated other prisoners to be ‘sly’ or ‘devious’ individuals. Eight responses reflected perceptions of ‘lots of violence’ although they did not specify how they felt about the violence i.e. afraid or intimidated. Seven responses reported an impression that other prisoners tended to ‘stick in groups,’

“They tend to stick together in groups...and certain groups will intimidate you if they can get away with it.” (28)

“There were definite groupings....you had to choose where you belonged....although you could still have friends outside the group.” (249)

Five responses indicated how, as new prisoners, the ‘attitudes’ of other prisoners seemed to be important, although which attitudes were important/unimportant was not specified. A further 5 responses illustrated how prisoners considered other prisoners to be ‘liars’. Four responses indicated that, as new prisoners, respondents learned who the ‘trouble makers’ were, 3 reported identifying drug dealers as important, although why this was important was not made clear. Two responses indicated other prisoners to be ‘all the same’ and 2 responses claimed other prisoners all ‘hide their true selves,’

“A lot of them put on a front.” (228)

“It’s had to make judgements about people wearing masks.” (135)

Interestingly, 7 of the older prisoners observed how the most important thing they learned as prisoners new to the prison was how a ‘new breed’ of prisoner was emerging with younger individuals. One prisoner’s comments clearly illustrates the sentiment expressed within these responses,

“There’s a new breed of prisoners....attitude is different....manners are different....there’s more drug abusers than the old school.....more youngsters involved.” (8)

Examples of single responses in this category include, ‘you could walk all over them’ ‘some were jokers,’ ‘some were fragile,’ ‘some were image conscious,’ ‘they were all empty vessels,’ ‘all bitches,’ ‘some were artistic’ and ‘they all talked about me.’

### 7.9.2 Acceptable behaviour

As with their recommendations for new prisoners, many respondents noted that when they were new, the most important thing they learned about other prisoners was which behaviours are considered to be acceptable. Sixty-four responses described behaviour

prisoners had learned to adopt. The most common of these (33 responses) was to keep to themselves,

“I learned to let them get on with their own thing ....and keep myself to myself.” (105).

Eight answers implied how respondents had learned to treat other prisoners with respect and 7 maintained that other prisoners’ boundaries was an important lesson. Four responses reflected how they had learned to ‘just do bird and leave’ and a further 4 indicated that as new prisoners they had learned that they must ‘stick up for myself’

“They always try to bully you....you have to stick up for yourself.” (223)

Two prisoners noted how they had learned that ‘some of the other prisoners should be avoided’, although to whom they were referring was not made clear. Examples of single responses include, ‘be independent,’ ‘keep my business to myself’ and be tolerant.

### 7.9.3 Unacceptable behaviour

Thirty answers reflected behaviours they had learned to avoid following incarceration. Of these, 9 claimed to have learned ‘never to get involved in other prisoners’ business,’ 3 learned never to ‘grass’ and 3 learned not to accept things at ‘face value.’ Two responses showed how as new prisoners, respondents had learned not to ‘take the piss,’ 2 reported learning ‘not to ask questions’ and 2 claimed to have learned ‘not to lose my temper and fight.’ Single answers in this category included, ‘not to cause trouble,’ ‘not to be a victim,’ ‘not to be too friendly,’ ‘not to cuss other prisoners’ family,’ ‘not to borrow,’ ‘not to confront others,’ ‘not to push people around’ and ‘not to lend stuff.’

### 7.9.4 Criminal background of other prisoners

Seventeen respondents referred to other prisoners’ criminal background as the most important thing they learned following entry into the prison. Of these, 8 indicated the ‘crime committed’ to be important, although quite why this was the case was not made clear and 6

reported finding out if other prisoners were ‘nonces, bacons or grasses’ was important. Single responses included, ‘lifers are on a shorter ticket than other prisoners,’ ‘different crimes get different sentences’ and ‘some only made 1 mistake.’

#### 7.9.5 Prison culture

Twelve responses indicated aspects of prison culture to be the most important lesson they learned following incarceration. Of these, 4 indicated knowing ‘who the grasses were’ to be necessary and 4 indicated ‘knowing the hierarchy’ to be important, “Who’s who...the pecking order.” (57)

Two claimed it was necessary to know ‘who does what’ in the prison, 1 claimed learning about double bubble was the most significant lesson learned and 1 claimed learning ‘the rules’ to be important,

“Most won’t take any shit.....if you step out of line....you get problems.” (97)

#### 7.9.6 Miscellaneous

Seventy-three responses did not fit into a clear category. Sixteen of these referred to just trying to get on with other prisoners, 9 alluded to the type of prison they were in, for instance claiming the prison to be ‘easy going’ in comparison to other prisons they had been in, 8 maintained that some of the other prisoners were ‘okay,’ 6 claimed they ‘just watched’ other prisoners on first entering the prison, but did not expand the point and 4 observed that other prisoners would ‘try to take stuff off you,’ but again did not clarify the ‘stuff’ they referred to. Three responses claimed not to have learned anything about other prisoners as they ‘stuck with people I already knew,’ 2 maintained that all prisoners are individuals and so they did not learn anything specific and 2 claimed not to have been interested in other prisoners and consequently learned nothing about them, preferring to ‘ask staff about stuff.’ Single responses in this category included for example, ‘just find out about them,’ ‘they were no problem,’ ‘don’t stereotype’ and ‘they all come from different areas.’

### 7.9.7 The most important lessons learned as predictors of 'own gang involvement'

To see if prisoners' perceptions of what they learned on first entering the prison could predict 'own gang involvement' a stepwise regression analysis was conducted. The analysis produced 1 model (see Table 7.10) which explained 2% of the variance,  $F(1,358) = 6.94$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Table 7.10 shows the significant Beta coefficient for the analysis.

Table 7.10: Significant coefficient predicting 'own gang involvement' from the most important thing prisoners learned about other prisoners on entering the prison

Model	Variable	B	t	p
1	I learned about prison culture	.14	2.63	.009

Adj.  $R^2 = 0.016$

### 7.10 Prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' involvement in illegal activities with people outside prison

Since prison gangs in America are thought to have power bases extending into the community, (e.g. Buentello et al 1991) the current study also looked at the involvement of prisoner groups in illicit activities with people outside prison. This should offer some insight into the extent to which such groups have become organised. Consequently, prisoners were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that 'some groups of prisoners are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison' (external involvement). If they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement they were then asked 'What sort of illegal activities?' The aim of this question was to discover if those perceived by other prisoners as involved in gang related activities within the prison were also perceived to be involved in illegal activities with others outside the prison. Another aim was to learn something of the kinds of criminal activities outside prison prisoners were involved in. Of the 360 prisoners interviewed 220 (61%) offered 421 responses to this question. Responses were classified into 1 of 8 categories that seemed to reflect the nature of the replies.

### 7.10.1 Drug trafficking

Two hundred and forty responses indicated prisoner group involvement with non-prisoners in terms of drug trafficking. Of these, 172 merely stated ‘drugs’ with no mention of specific substances. Twenty-eight reported external involvement in the trade of ‘smack’ or ‘heroin’ and 20 indicated external involvement in trading cannabis. Six responses mentioned cocaine, 3 mentioned ‘class A,’ 2 mentioned ‘crack’ and 2 cited ‘class B drugs.’ Single responses included, ‘L.S.D.’ ‘speed’ (amphetamines), ‘E’ (ecstasy), ‘opiates’ and ‘drug couriating’ although where the couriating took place i.e. within the U.K., into the prison or to/from abroad, was not made clear. However, prisoners’ comments made it clear that there was plenty of motivation to become involved in drug trafficking within prison even if those involved did not actually take drugs themselves,

“Mainly drugs. Heroin in prison costs about £8,000 for an ounce.....in London it’s about £600.....therefore people outside are interested.” (10),

“Drug baroning. They send cash out for H for example.....then it’s brought in....often through the farm workers....the cat D prisoners....or even the screws.....people are making thousands in here.” (356)

“Drugs...supplying and bringing in.....D cats here work outside...they’re the donkeys.” (326)

### 7.10.2 Non-Violent Crime

Seventy-six replies gave examples of non-violent crime that prisoners were involved in with individuals outside prison. Of these, 15 indicated prisoners’ involvement in fraud,

“....prison only interferes with physical crimes like burglary....not fraud or deception.....forgery or stuff like that.” (72)

Twelve answers suggested others’ involvement in car theft/crime and 11 reported other prisoners’ involvement in burglary. This is somewhat puzzling given the comment



above. However, another prisoner's remark demonstrated one way in which prisoners may still be able to be involved in burglary, albeit not directly,

“....information goes outside.....for example find out where people live....then target their houses.” (59)

Nine replies suggested prisoners' involvement in 'crime' but no explicit crime was mentioned. Although the term 'crime' could imply violent and/or non-violent crime, it was categorised under non-violent crime for the sake of caution. Three prisoners mentioned other prisoners' involvement with individuals outside the prison in 'escapes,' another 3 indicated prisoners' involvement in shop lifting, 2 reported others' involvement in bank robberies, 2 indicated prisoners' participation in 'benefit fraud' and a further 2 reported involvement in 'deception.' Examples of single-item replies included, passport forgery, forgery, white collar crime, 'fencing' of stolen goods, tax evasion running of brothels, money laundering, smuggling and pick-pocketing.

### 7.10.3 Violent crime

Forty-six replies referred to other prisoners' involvement in violent crimes committed outside the prison. Of these, 18 suggested other prisoners' involvement in 'robbery' and 12 referred to prisoners' involvement in physical assaults on individuals outside the prison,

“....ordering contracts on people .....that's severe beatings.” (340)

“ They'll get someone on the out or at another jail beaten up.” (327)

Four responses suggested other prisoners to be involved in 'firearms,' 3 indicated prisoners' association with 'murder,' 2 responses claimed prisoners were implicated in 'arson,' 2 reported other prisoners' were involved in 'protection rackets' and 2 indicated prisoners' connection with 'witness intimidation.' Examples of single responses include, 'shooting people,' 'threatening behaviour,' 'paedophilia' and 'organised racism.'

Although prisoners' responses were predominantly a listing of the criminal activity they believed others to be involved in, some comments revealed how the involvement occurred,

"Mostly drug dealing.....criminals have friends outside still working it." (37)

"Drug business....anything that can be organised by phone or letters." (67)

"Trading still happens.....there's phone calls to organise stuff...like drugs....merchandise or violence." (145)

#### 7.10.4 Trades

Prisoners mentioned a number of 'trades' that other prisoners are involved in with individuals outside the prison. In light of prisoners not always clarifying whether they were referring to trades that took place specifically inside or outside the prison, no assumptions have been made regarding the site of these trades. Thirty-seven examples of other prisoners' trades were offered by participants. Of these, 17 reported a trade in 'money,' 5 referred to 'alcohol,' 4 reported 'mobiles,' 3 indicated tobacco and 3 specified items to wear such as 'watches,' 'jewellery' or 'clothing,'

"They'll do counterfeit clothing and money...." (22)

"....they smuggle money in through prisoners and officers...." (55)

Surprisingly, a trade in phone cards involving individuals outside the prison was mentioned only once, although 1 other prisoner reported international phone card trades as involving 'outsiders' to the prison. Other single-item responses included, 'pornography,' 'merchandise' and pagers.

#### 7.10.5 Medication

Somewhat surprisingly, only 3 responses mentioned some form of medication as a trade in which prisoners were involved with individuals outside the prison. Two of the 3 mentioned steroids and 1 talked about 'pills'. Although pills could be taken to indicate an

illegal or a legal substance, without clarification it seemed sensible for the sake of caution to categorise it as ‘medication.’

#### 7.10.6 Miscellaneous

Eighteen responses did not fit clearly into any particular category and so were classified as ‘miscellaneous.’ For example, 9 implied that prisoners continued to ‘run businesses’ with individuals outside the prison. These responses could suggest some form of illegal business, but equally they could mean legitimate businesses. Again, for the sake of caution, no assumptions were made about the legality of these enterprises. Eight responses mentioned other prisoners were involved in ‘anything’ with ‘outsiders’ and 1 prisoner reported that other prisoners were sometimes involved in illicit relationships with prison staff or other workers,

“.....they have illegal relationships with staff and civvies.” (204)

#### 7.10.7 Other prisoners’ involvement in criminal activity with individuals outside the prison as predictors of ‘other gang involvement’

To see if any of the variables generated from this qualitative data would offer further insight into other prisoners’ involvement in gang activity a stepwise multiple regression was generated. All categories were used as potential predictors and the Dependent variable was ‘other gang involvement.’ The analysis produced 2 models explaining 22% and 23% of the variance. Table 7.11 shows the coefficients for the second model.

Table 7.11: Coefficients predicting other prisoners' criminal involvement with individuals outside prison

Model	Variable	$\beta$	t	p
1	Drugs	.478	10.31	.000
2	Drugs	.460	9.78	.000.
	Non-violent crime	.095	2.03	.043
Model 1: Adj. $R^2 = .227$ df 1, 359    F = 106.26    p<0.001				
Model 2: Adj. $R^2 = .233$ df 2, 359    F = 55.65    p<0.001				

### 7.11 Prisoners' personal involvement in criminal activities with people outside the prison

Prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' involvement in criminal activity with people outside the prison may offer some insight into the activities prisoners believe others to be involved in. However, in order to get a more comprehensive picture of prisoner activities and gang involvement, it is necessary to also ask prisoners about their own behaviour in prison. Consequently, prisoners were asked to agree/disagree with the statement, 'My friends and I have at some time been involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison.' If prisoners 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement they were then asked, 'What sort of illegal activities?' Of the 360 participants in this study, 90 (25%) responded to this question and offered 155 examples of criminal activity they have been involved in with 'outsiders.' Each response was classified into 1 of 6 categories reflecting the types of replies. Consequently, where prisoners indicated involvement in several different kinds of crime, their responses appear in more than 1 category.

#### 7.11.1 Drug trafficking

Eighty-four responses indicated personal involvement in drug-related crime with 'outsiders'. Of these, 50 cited 'drugs,' 15 mentioned 'heroin' and 13 claimed involvement in

trafficking cannabis. Single responses included, 'class A,' 'class B', 'class C', 'crack', 'E' (ecstasy) and 'rock' (cocaine).

“Mainly drugs into the prison.....get it chucked over the fence....or get officers to bring it in.....” (72)

“Drugs...selling H....I've got a little stake in a business so when I get out I'm okay.” (303)

“I send money to someone outside and they organise the bringing in of stuff....cards...bacco..H on visits and home leave.....they swallow it...” (353)

#### 7.11.2 Non-violent crime

Twenty-eight replies gave examples of personal involvement in non-violent crimes committed outside the prison. Six admitted involvement in car crime, 6 admitted involvement in burglaries, 4 mentioned being involved in 'fencing of stolen goods', 2 stated they were part of 'lining up jobs' and 2 admitted to 'benefit fraud'. Single responses included for example, 'dealing in stolen motorbikes', passport forgery, 'providing false identities', 'money laundering', fraud and 'mobile phones'

“Arranging burglaries with people outside.....I provide information.” (301)

“when someone is getting out I'll put them on to an earner....like burglary or...soft drug dealing.” (157)

#### 7.11.3 Violent crime

Twenty-seven responses revealed personal involvement in violent crimes with people outside the prison. Of these, 11 claimed they 'get people beaten up', 8 admitted involvement in robbery and 3 admitted 'intimidating witnesses',

“sorting people out....directing people to other people to sort out with violence.” (124)

“Phoning up and getting people sorted out.....a good kicking” (184)

“....having people beaten up.....witness intimidation.....and sort out people who wrong my friends and family.” (128)

Single response items in this category included, ‘beating up students for money’, ‘kidnapping’, ‘threatening behaviour’, ‘running my protection racket’ and ‘firearms’,

“I sort firearms out....you know....the buying and selling.” (292)

#### 7.11.4 Illicit supplies

Thirteen participants reported personal involvement in some form of supply network with ‘outsiders’. Of these, 8 indicated involvement in the movement of money into and out of the prison,

“Getting money sent to certain people.....I don’t want to add anymore to this.” (19)

“Smuggling....drugs and money.....” (55)

“Drugs .....and money coming into the prison.” (149)

Two respondents claimed to be a part of a trade in phone cards, 2 reported trading in tobacco and 1 respondent declared being involved in a trade in yeast.

#### 7.11.5 Miscellaneous

Three responses did not clearly belong in any specific category and were classified as ‘miscellaneous’. These included, 1 claim of ‘repaying old debts’ 1 of bringing ‘pin numbers’ into the prison and 1 of ‘making phone calls for other people’.

#### 7.11.6 Prisoners’ involvement with outsiders as predictors of ‘own gang involvement’

To examine any link between prisoners’ personal involvement in gang activity and involvement in illegal activities with people outside prison, a stepwise multiple regression was conducted to see if any categories of response would predict ‘own gang involvement.’ One variable ‘finance’ (a trade in finance) was omitted from the analysis as its correlation of

.94 with 'illicit substances' indicated a multicollinearity problem. The analysis was subsequently repeated and yielded 3 models accounting for 29%, 32% and 33% of the variance in 'own gang involvement.' Table 7.12 shows the significant coefficients for the final model.

Table 7.12: Coefficients for the final model of 'own involvement with outsiders' predicting 'own gang involvement'

Model	Variable	B	t	p
3	Drugs	.50	11.20	.000
	Violent crime	.15	3.29	.000
	Non-violent crime	.12	2.71	.001
<hr/>				
Model 1:	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .29	df 1, 358	F = 150.36	p<0.001
Model 2:	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .32	df 2, 357	F = 83.75	p<0.001
Model 3:	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .33	df 3,356	F = 59.28	p<0.001

7.12 Overall predictors of other prisoners' involvement in gang activity in prison

To gain a better picture of how all the preceding aspects of gang activity within the prison fit together, an overall regression model of other prisoners' involvement was generated. This model was devised by taking the variables identified as important predictors from each of the earlier regression analyses. However, since so many variables were identified as predictors, only coefficients that reached significance levels of 0.001 or less were included in the integrated analysis. Once again, a stepwise analysis was used in order to identify which model best explained other prisoners' gang involvement. Variables entered included: trading in drugs in prison, trading in clothing/jewellery in prison, previous associations with other prisoners through crime, choosing friends in prison due to their potential usefulness and involvement with individuals outside prison in drug trafficking. The

analysis produced 3 regression models explaining 23%, 28% and 31% of the variance respectively. Table 7.13 shows the coefficients for the final model.

Table 7.13: Stepwise regression models of other prisoners' involvement in gang activity using variables with significance levels of 0.01 from previous regression analyses.

Model	Variable	B	t	p
3	Involvement with outsiders in drug trafficking	.38	8.31	.000
	Trading in drugs in prison	.25	5.33	.000
	Trading in clothes/jewelry in prison	.17	3.72	.000
<hr/>				
Model 1:	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .23	df 1, 358	F = 106.26	p<0.001
Model 2:	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .28	df 2, 357	F = 72.02	p<0.001
Model 3:	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .31	df 3,356	F = 54.35	p<0.001

7.13 Overall predictors of 'own gang involvement' in prison.

In addition, a clearer idea of prisoners' own involvement in gang-related activity was needed. As with the previous analysis, predictors of 'own gang involvement' whose Beta coefficients reached significance levels of 0.01 or more in previous analyses were all entered into a stepwise regression to get a concise set of overall predictors of prisoners' 'own gang involvement.' Variables entered included: trading in drugs in prison, trading in tobacco in prison, trading in miscellaneous items in prison, trading in alcohol in prison, knowing other prisoners from home, knowing other prisoners from criminal activity, knowing other prisoners from the prison system, choosing people from home area as friends in prison, having no specific method for choosing friends in prison, the most important lesson learned on entry to the prison was the culture, being involved with individuals outside prison in drug trafficking, violent crime and non violent crime. The analysis revealed 8 possible models



explaining 'own gang involvement'. Table 7.14 shows the significant Beta coefficients for the final model, which explained 54% of the variance.

Table 7.14: Variables with significant Beta values explaining 'own gang involvement'

Model	Variable	B	t	p
8	Involvement with outsiders in drug trafficking	.28	6.49	.000
	Trading in drugs in prison			
	Trading in tobacco in prison	.28	6.60	.000
	Involvement in violent crime with others external to the prison	.25	6.39	.000
	Knowing other prisoners from home	.14	3.68	.000
	Knowing other prisoners from prison	.15	4.10	.000
	Trading in alcohol in prison	.12	3.47	.001
	Learning about prison culture on first coming into prison	.09	2.48	.014
		.09	2.37	.018

Model 8: Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = .54      df 8, 351      F = 52.60      p<0.001

As the model in Table 14 shows, the direction of each of the Beta coefficients suggests that as the variable increases, so too does involvement in gang-related activity. This indicates that the more involved prisoners were in each of these behaviours, the more likelihood there was that they would be involved in gang-related activity.

7.14 Integrating qualitative and quantitative variables predicting 'own gang involvement'

Clearly the above analyses do not fully account for prisoners' 'own gang involvement.' In the last chapter the quantitative analyses indicated Age, Gender, Number of prison sentences and prisonization to be consistent predictors of 'own gang involvement.' As a result, it seemed sensible to examine the key quantitative and qualitative predictors together to see if the variables maintain their importance when examined together. Since demographic

variables have been identified as characterising gang members (e.g. Sheldon 1991; Ralph et al 1996), the demographic/institutional variables identified as important predictors in the current study, namely age, gender and number of prison sentences, were entered into the first step of a hierarchical regression. The psychological variables found to be important predictors of 'own gang involvement' in the last chapter namely, prisonization, social support offered to significant others in prison and social support offered to significant others outside the prison along with the behavioural variables found to be important predictors in the current chapter, were entered into second step of the analysis. Results showed that each step of the model significantly predicted the dependant variable 'own gang involvement' and the significant  $R^2$  change,  $p < 0.001$  indicated that the psychological/behavioural variables added explanatory value to the analysis. Table 7.15 shows the Beta coefficients for the final model produced by the analysis. The significance levels of the Beta coefficients in the first step indicate that Age, Gender and number of prison sentences served are all important predictors of 'own gang involvement.'

The direction of the Beta values suggests that younger, male prisoners who have served more than 1 prison sentence were more likely to be involved in gang activity in the prison. In the second step, important predictors were Gender, Number of prison sentences served, Prisonization, involvement in violent crime with individuals outside prison, involvement in drug trafficking with individuals outside prison, knowing other prisoners from home area, trading tobacco in prison and trading drugs in prison. Directions of the Beta values suggest that, with the exception of Gender, as each of these variables increase, so too does 'own gang involvement.' Gender's negative Beta coefficient indicates that male prisoners were more likely than female prisoners to be involved in gang activity in the prison. The social support variables, knowing other prisoners from the prison system, learning about prison culture and trading in alcohol were not important predictors of the DV, although

learning about prison culture and trading in alcohol almost reached significance levels at .057 and .058 respectively. It was interesting to see that Age did not maintain the importance it had in the first step and indeed all the previous analyses. Its Beta value of .33 suggests that when the psychological and behavioural variables are taken into account, Age loses its predictive value for 'own gang involvement'.

Table 7.15: Qualitative and Quantitative predictors of 'own gang involvement'

Step	Variable	B	t	p
1	Age	-.25	-4.40	.000
	Gender	-.21	-3.60	.000
	Number of prison sentences served	.39	6.54	.000
2	Gender	-.15	-3.23	.001
	Number of prison sentences served	.15	2.97	.003
	Prisonization	.16	3.60	.000
	Involvement in violent crime with outsiders	.10	2.18	.030
	Involvement with outsiders in drug trafficking	.25	4.91	.000
	Trading in drugs in prison	.25	4.82	.000
	Knowing other prisoners from home	.12	2.53	.012
	Trading in tobacco in prison	.12	2.45	.015
	Model 1: Adj. $R^2 = .29$ df 3, 229		F = 32.64	p < 0.001
Model 2: Adj. $R^2 = .60$ df 14, 218 $R^2$ change = .33,		F = 25.97	p < 0.001	

## 7.15 Summary

### 7.15.1 Group violence in prison

The main aim of this chapter was to explore the qualitative data in terms of gang-related activity since so little seems to be known about the specific nature of prison gang formation and activity. In terms of group violence, the results demonstrate how violent episodes may occur both on the spur of the moment and as a result of pre-planning. Similarly violent episodes may erupt for a multitude of reasons and may occur in almost any area of the prison. Since previous research suggests that prison gangs are organised entities (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985), it might be expected that violence meted out by such groups would tend to be organised or pre-planned and occur in concealed areas within the prison. Similarly it might be expected that group violence would erupt primarily over issues associated with the groups' aims to gain financial power (e.g. Stevens 1997). Certainly many responses reported in this chapter suggested the role of debt in violent episodes and in turn, they were often pre-planned and executed in covert areas within the prison. However, the data is not totally consistent with previous findings relating to prison gang violence. Nevertheless, it is interesting that many prisoners reported the groups paid scant attention to the presence of staff when engaging in violent behaviour. Prisoners' reports suggest this may be due in part to prison staff reluctance/inability to interfere. Consequently, it could imply that certain groups were sufficiently confident that their activities would not be forestalled, or it may be that prisoners simply disregarded the presence of staff and/or subsequent legitimate reprisals for their actions.

### 7.15.2 Trades in prison

Ninety percent of the sample reported that prisoner groups were involved in trading drugs within the prison. This is consistent with King and McDermott's (1995) study, which noted how prisoner groups were involved in the drug trade in the English and Welsh prison

estate. When reporting the trades of other prisoners, respondents cited heroin as the most commonly traded drug. However, when discussing personal involvement in drug trafficking, prisoners claimed to trade in cannabis more frequently than heroin. One explanation for this difference in perceptions of self and other drug trading habits could be participant reluctance to admit to trading in a class A drugs in prison.

A result not documented by previous research was a trade in medication. This occurred in both male and female prisons, but more frequently in female establishments. However, this effect was evident only for reports of *other* prisoners' trades, since female prisoners did not admit to *personal* involvement in trading medication more frequently than male prisoners.

In order to establish which materials are most commonly associated with gang activity, regression analyses were conducted to examine prisoners' perceptions of other prisoners' trades and gang involvement and prisoners own trades and gang involvement. In terms of predicting other prisoners' gang involvement, drugs, food, clothes and sexual material were key variables. Key predictors of 'own gang' involvement included, drugs, food, tobacco, miscellaneous goods, alcohol and finance. It appears from this that although prisoner groups, were not surprisingly, involved in trades of a diverse range of material goods, drugs were undoubtedly the most common goods traded by groups within a prison setting.

#### 7.15.3 Previous associations with other prisoners and involvement in gang-related activity

To assess the foundations of prisoner groups it is useful to know how prisoners choose their friends. As American researchers have pointed out, prison gangs are formed on the basis of commonalities such as race or shared interests such as religion (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Buentello et al 1991; Rush et al 1996). Consequently, an aim of this study was to discover if prisoners knew other prisoners before incarceration and if so, were these the people they chose to mix with in prison. In terms of prisoners' perceptions of 'other gang involvement' 3

variables relating to how prisoners knew other prisoners before incarceration were found to predict 'other' involvement. These were: knowing them through crime, knowing them from home and knowing them socially. Important predictors of 'own gang involvement' included: knowing them from home, knowing them from crime, previous prison sentences or socially.

#### 7.15.4 Selection of friends in the prison

When asked about who other prisoners chose to associate with in prison, regression analyses revealed that prisoners perceived those most involved in gang-related activity selected associates on the basis of 'usefulness,' whereas those personally involved in gang-related activity chose to mix with prisoners from their home area. Interestingly, results showed that if prisoners mixed with other prisoners without a specific reason for doing so, they were *less* likely to be involved in gang-related activity. These results verify gang researchers' assertions that gang members choose to associate with prisoners with whom they have something in common such as regional origin (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Buentello et al 1991). However, what has not been noted in the literature is the formation of associations on the basis of previous criminal associations. It is surprising that researchers have not considered this possibility, since involvement in criminal activity following incarceration is a major trait of the prison gang. This also lends substance to the possibility that gang activity in prison results from the incarceration of street gang members. Although these prisoners may not have been street gang members as such, it certainly seems that criminal networking continues from the community into the prison.

#### 7.15.5 Prisons as dangerous environments

When asked what they believed to be important lessons for new prisoners to learn about the prison, prisoners gave a number of responses none of which predicted their perception of other prisoners' gang involvement. When asked what was the most important lesson they learned as new prisoners, prison culture was the only response that predicted 'own

gang involvement.’ However, this finding supports Buentello et al’s (1991) assertions that assimilation into the norms of prison culture i.e. prisonization relates to a prisoner’s membership of a prison gang.

#### 7.15.6 Involvement in criminal activity with individuals outside the prison

Prison gang research has indicated that in the U.S.A. prison gangs are extending their power bases into the community (e.g. Crouch & Marquart 1989; Fong & Buentello 1991; Sullivan 1991). If this is the case, then it might be expected that prisoners most involved in gang activity within the prison would also be involved in criminal activity with people outside the prison. Prisoners were asked for their perceptions of other prisoners’ involvement with illegal activities outside the prison during incarceration. Of the various activities cited by prisoners, 2 predicted ‘other gang involvement’, these were, drugs and non-violent crime. In the case of ‘own gang involvement’ drugs, violent crime and non-violent crime were all important predictors of the dependent variable. These results demonstrate how prisoners involved in gang-related activity may be involved in a diverse number of criminal activities both in and out of prison. However, given the drug trading activities of prisoners involved in gang-related activity, it could be argued that it would be impossible to trade drugs in a prison without help from outside. Nevertheless, the range of crimes these prisoners seem to be involved in with outsiders does seem to suggest they have a hand in numerous criminal events occurring outside prison. Consequently, the results seem to suggest that some prisoners are intent on continuing with their criminal activities regardless of being in prison.

#### 7.15.7 Integration of qualitative and quantitative data

Of course to be able to get an overall picture of prisoners’ involvement in gang-related activity, the findings reported in Chapter 6 cannot be ignored. Consequently, the demographic and psychological variables identified as important predictors from the quantitative data were examined together with the variables identified as important predictors of gang involvement

in the current chapter. This produced a model explaining a very healthy 60% of the variance in 'own gang involvement'. Consistent with previous work, the analysis indicated gang-involved prisoners are more likely to be male (e.g. Knox 1994), be involved in drug trafficking (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985), know other prisoners from region of origin and be involved in criminal activity with others external to prison (e.g. Fong et al 1991). Another variable that seemed to play an important role in gang-related involvement was the number of prison sentences prisoners had served. This offers what looks like a more criminalised profile of gang-involved prisoners, a concept supported by the finding that prisoners involved in gang-related activity are more likely to hold attitudes consistent with the prisoner code of conduct (prisonization). However, contrary to previous research (e.g. Ralph et al 1996) and some of the analyses reported in chapter 6 of this thesis, Age was no longer an important predictor when the qualitative and quantitative variables were examined together. This is interesting, since it may indicate that older and possibly more experienced prisoners are as involved in gang-related activity as younger prisoners. This makes sense since older prisoners may be more involved in covert and overt gang-related activity and as such, are involved in a wider range of gang-related activities than are younger prisoners. Similarly, as some of the gang-related activities identified in the current study, for example drug importation and distribution, may require a level of expertise and involvement in criminal networks that tend to develop over time.

In the next chapter the issues raised and discussed in this and the preceding chapters will be considered in more depth. The findings will be evaluated and in light of previous work and implications for theoretical development. They will also be considered in terms of existing and potential prison policies.



## Chapter Eight:

### Discussion and Implications of the findings

The primary aim of this thesis was to examine some of the features of prisoner groups in the English and Welsh prison estate to see how much these groups resembled the prison gangs that American researchers claim cause problems in prisons in the U.S.A (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991). The research reported in this thesis set out to examine the levels of gang-related activity in England and Wales and to assess the impact this activity had on order and control in prisons. It also explored the issue of how prisoner groups form. This was to see if they did, as American research claims, develop along the lines of commonalities and if so, how these related to involvement in gang-related activity. Finally the research examined the demographic, institutional and psychological characteristics of prisoners most involved in gang-related activity. The current chapter considers the findings of the research in terms of theoretical, methodological and policy implications. It concludes by drawing some preliminary inferences relating to prison gang activity in England and Wales.

#### 8.1 Theoretical and research implications

##### 8.1.1 Levels of gang-related activity: existence of gang-like groups

American research indicates that it is the *frequency* rather than just the occurrence of gang-related events that indicates prison gang presence (Fong & Buentello 1991). In addition, previous work suggests that the impact of gang-related events on the prison leads to a reduction of legitimate order and control. As a result, this study examined how levels of gang-related events differed across categories of prison in the English and Welsh prison estate and how the events related to order and control.

As might be expected, some gang-related events were considered by prisoners to be more frequent than others. The most common event, reported by over 70% of the sample, was drug possession. Other frequently occurring events included possession of illicit quantities of

phone cards and tobacco. Since the acquisition of illicit goods is likely to involve some form of financial transaction it is also likely to involve financial profit; a key aim of the prison gang (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Stevens 1997).

Other events reported as occurring frequently offer insight into some of the factors that might facilitate the formation of prisoner groups. For instance, nearly half the sample reported group formation was based on regional or racial origin. Similarly, the formation of close-knit groups and groups verbally dominating other prisoners were reported by more than a third of the sample. This indicates that associations based on commonalities and intimidation of other prisoners, noted as activities associated with prison gangs (e.g. Camp and Camp 1985) frequently occur in the English and Welsh prison estate.

Adding to this, the analyses revealed that overall, the occurrence of gang-related events is more common in male institutions than in female establishments. Male categories B, C and Young offender institutions all reported higher levels of gang-related events than did female prisons. This finding echoes American observations that female prisoners are not as involved in prison gang activity as their male counterparts (e.g. Knox 1994). Despite this, the data revealed that female prisoners only reported fewer events characterised by trade or cohesion. In terms of drug possession, confrontational events and less frequent events, female prisoners did not differ from their male counterparts.

However, female prisoners' reports of event levels seem to differ from staff accounts (see chapter 3), which suggested female establishments differed only from category C prisons. It is possible that this difference could be attributed to some female prisons being designed on the basis of 'houses' aimed to establish a pattern of 'home' and 'the neighbours' (Kelley 1970). Consequently, it is possible that in such a penal structure, gang-related activities will occur in isolated pockets throughout the prison, resulting in some prisoners being unaware of their occurrence. However, a similar level of ignorance is unlikely to be experienced by staff,

whose diverse duties provide them with an overall insight into the prison and its events. Similarly, since the structure of the prison seems to replicate a 'family' environment, it is possible that female prisoners will not notice cohesive group development simply because their environment dictates a cohesive group format. Nevertheless, it should be noted that of the two female prisons that took part in this study, only one was organised according to 'houses.' Even so, it is feasible that the influence of this one establishment was sufficient to shape the results as described above.

In terms of the impact of gang-related events on legitimate order and control, the results show that the frequency of gang-related events predicted prisoners' perceptions that staff may lose order in the prison (staff order) and that prisoner groups have more control over events in the prison than do staff (prisoner control). This demonstrates that the association observed between gang-related events and reduced order and control in American prisons (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Beird 1986; Buentello et al, 1991; Stevens 1997) is reflected in the English and Welsh prison estate.

Not surprisingly, physical assaults on staff and verbal threats to staff were revealed as important predictors of 'staff order' Clearly, in an atmosphere where prisoners feel able to verbally threaten and particularly if they feel able to physically assault staff, it could be argued that staff order is already ebbing away. The importance of more covert variables such as threats to prisoners' families and prisoners belonging to outside organisations such as the British National Party (B.N.P.) is also interesting since these are some of the less frequent activities cited by prisoners. However, their importance as predictors of 'staff order,' may indicate a subtle effect of gang behaviour on order in the prison. If groups of prisoners are threatening prisoners' families, then this is most likely to occur during visiting time. If this is the case, then the inference is that staff do not have full control over some prisoners' activities during visits and are therefore not maintaining full order within the prison. As for the

relationship between prisoner membership of outside organisations such as the B.N.P. and order in the prison, this was assessed by two questions. One asked about the existence of such organisation-affiliated prisoners and the other asked if these particular prisoners attempted to take control of prisoner groups in the prison. It is possible that other useful information relating to prisoner membership of this kind was not tapped in the current study. For instance, nearly a quarter of the respondents were non-white. Consequently, the presence of prisoners who subscribe to white supremacist dogma, may lead to tensions between prisoners that are either not detected or not adequately dealt with by staff. As a result, prisoners may perceive this as contributing to a lack of order within the prison. This is purely speculative, but it is clearly testable in terms of future work.

As for prisoners having more control over events in the prison than do staff, the important predictors included a combination of overt and covert gang-related activities. Overt events consisted of verbal threats to staff and groups of prisoners verbally dominating other prisoners. Each indicates intimidation of other individuals, which is a characteristic behaviour of the prison gang (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985). Not surprisingly, in an atmosphere where intimidation is widespread, there are frequent requests for protective custody, which is another important predictor of prisoner control. This finding supports Stevens' (1997) argument that prisoners often request protective custody when prison gangs are present, due to the threats, assaults and intimidation they experience at the hands of gang members.

The possession of alcohol as an important predictor of 'prisoner control' is not especially surprising. Unlike many contraband materials, such as drugs, alcohol is a relatively bulky commodity and not easy to conceal about the person. Subsequently, possession of alcohol in a prison will require a certain level of either expertise or freedom in terms of producing it in or importing it into, the prison. Equally, once the alcohol is in the prison, there is the problem of concealing it, again requiring a certain level of enterprise and/or freedom.

Undoubtedly, if prisoners have high levels of control over events in the prison, then the procurement and concealment of alcohol is likely to be easier. Of course there is always the alternative explanation that in an environment where prison staff sense they do not have total control, that some may be tempted to overlook the odd bottle of 'hooch.' In such instances, it would be very surprising if prisoners did not report a belief that prisoners have more control over events in the prison than do staff.

Quite why prisoners forming groups according to race should be a key indicator of prisoner control within the prison is not clear, especially as racial targeting or racial tension is not evident in any other results in this study. Nevertheless it does support previous research findings that prison gangs form on the basis of commonalities such as race, religion or shared interests (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong & Buentello 1991). The formation of groups according to race could relate to prisoner control in at least two different ways. For instance, racial grouping could be a response to high levels of prisoner control, inasmuch as when prisoner groups increase their levels of control in the prison, so other prisoners are more inclined to band together and race may be one basis for that cohesion. Formation of groups in order to provide/receive protection from other groups is consistent with previous researchers' claims that gangs develop as a response to a perceived threat (e.g. Knox 1994; Klein 1995). Eventually these groups, consistent with Buentello et al's (1991) theory, may begin to recognise and capitalise on the power they acquire as a group within the prison. In such an atmosphere it would not be surprising that prisoners should conceive prisoner control to be high.

#### 8.1.2 Perceptions of other prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity

Research indicates that forensic populations are prone to 'faking good' when interviewed in order to create a favourable impression (Gudjonsson 1992). Consequently, prisoners were asked for their perceptions of other prisoners' activities as this might provide a

more accurate picture of events than asking prisoners only about their own behaviour. As might be expected from Gudjonsson's (1992) observations, prisoners consistently reported others as more involved in gang-related activity than they admitted to themselves.

Of the 12 items assessing other prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity, more than half the sample agreed or strongly agreed with 10. These ten items help to provide something of a profile of prisoners' perceptions of prisoner group formation and activity in England and Wales. For instance, nearly all the respondents agreed that some prisoners knew other prisoners before coming into the prison. Similarly more than three quarters of the sample reported group members provide protection from other prisoners and are involved in trades in the prison. In addition, nearly three quarters of respondents claimed prisoner groups often devise their own rules. However, few participants maintained that prisoner groups have a leader. It appears that prisoners often stick together and that friendships are frequently based on a shared penal history whether the prisoners knew each other at that time or not. Violence was also considered to be a common activity of prisoners groups, although since new prisoners were not considered to be in particular danger, it seemed unlikely that they were the targets of this violence. This might imply that group administered violence is more directed, that it occurs for specific reasons and new prisoners, as yet uninvolved in the interactions within the prison, are largely ignored. Similarly, prisoners' reports suggest that drug user prisoners will affiliate to groups in order to access narcotics. If this is considered in light of prisoners' perceptions that groups are often involved in illegal activities with individuals outside the prison, then it seems fair to consider that prisoner groups are often involved in drug trafficking into the prison.

Despite prisoners reporting other prisoners as more involved in gang-related activities many did admit to being personally involved in these events. For instance, more than half the sample agreed that they usually mix with the same prisoners and that they knew some of the

other prisoners before coming into the prison. They also admitted that their group protect one another from other prisoners and devise their own rules. Similarly, many admitted to trading in illegal materials or extra supplies and agreed that staff and other prisoners considered they and their friends to be a group. This fulfils, at least in part, Brown's (2000) principle that a group may be considered to be as such when it is recognised by at least two other people.

Furthermore, over a third of prisoners admitted taking drugs and more than a quarter agreed that their group was involved in illegal activities with individuals outside the prison. However, fewer prisoners admitted to being involved in violent behaviour, wearing tattoos or clothes designating group membership and to their group having some form of leadership.

Looking at both the self and other reports, it would seem, according to the current study's definition of a gang being a 'group of three or more prisoners whose negative behaviour has an adverse impact on the prison that holds it,' that some groups in this study could be considered to be gangs. Also, since many prisoners reported the groups were recognised by others, protect members and were involved in criminal activity, they may be considered as synonymous with at least stage 3, if not stage 4 of Buentello et al's (1991) model of prison gang development. This suggests that in terms of American definitions (Buentello et al 1991), they are still in the developmental prison gang stage, i.e. they have no clear structure or leadership. Similarly, although this is not part of the definition of a prison gang, groups in the current study seemed to differ distinctly from the American example since mostly they tended not to organise along racial lines. However, these findings echo the observations of street gangs in England reported by Mares (2001, see chapter 1), which raises the possibility that, like their American counterparts, gangs in English prisons mirror the structure of gangs on the streets. If this is so, then the groups identified in this study may indeed be classified as gangs rather than groups. As chapter 1 notes, it is useful to look to the typical American prison gang as a starting point for developing theory and research in the

U.K. However, American prison gangs cannot and should not be used as a paradigm for classifying prisoner groups in this country, since we cannot be certain that cross cultural differences will not be reflected in the developmental and structural features of a gang.

Adding to this, American gang researchers acknowledge that gangs may have differential structures and even habits, but invariably they will have some negative impact on the environment in which they are found (Klein 1971; Huff 1996). Although structurally, the groups in the current study are not absolutely analogous with American prison gangs, their activities are associated with effects noted as resulting from prison gangs in America (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Buentello et al 1991). As stated in chapter one, the current author supports Klein's (1971) position and considers that it is the *effect* of the group's activities and not the adherence to a specific structure that, above all, defines it as a gang. Although no causal inferences can be drawn from the results of the current study, there is nonetheless evidence that gang-related activity in the English and Welsh prison estate is strongly associated with a reduction in legitimate order and control. Consequently, it would be erroneous to dismiss notions of prison gangs in U.K. prisons simply because they fail to match up to the American example. However, in terms of developing theory, it is not enough to know that these groups exist. What is needed is a comprehensive explanation of the formation of such groups in our prisons.

### 8.1.3 The formation of prisoner groups

Prisoners were asked what was the most important lesson they learned on coming in to the prison. This was due to the first stage of the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991), indicating that on entry into the prison, prisoners need to learn about prison culture and subsequently assimilate into it through a process of prisonization (Clemmer 1940). In terms of predicting 'own gang' involvement, the only important variable relating to what prisoners learned on entering the prison was, indeed, prison culture. This supports early



Chicago school notions indicating cultural transmission in disorganised environments (e.g. Shaw & McKay 1931; 1942). It may appear somewhat unsound to consider a prison environment as disorganised, however, in terms of prison subculture, involving transient populations living in an environment of deprivation, this is actually likely to be the case. It is probable that all prisoners, gang involved or not, will be mindful of not upsetting the subcultural status quo and therefore learn about the cultural norms as a way of avoiding conflict with other prisoner. However, the results of this study suggest that for prisoners involved in gang-related activity, learning the cultural norms has an importance that it does not have for prisoners not involved in gang-related activity. Perhaps this suggests that prisoners most involved in gang-related activity become more deeply assimilated into the prison culture than other prisoners and that this process is facilitated by prisoners' choice of associates in the prison.

Ninety five percent of the sample agreed that some prisoners were friends before coming in to the prison. The qualitative follow up revealed knowing other prisoners from home, through crime or socially were predictors of prisoners' perceptions of 'other' involvement in gang-related activity. This is interesting because it indicates that, unlike some American claims (e.g. Stevens 1997), prisoner relationships forged via the prison system do not play an important role in prison gang development.

Nevertheless, when referring to other prisoners' previous associations based on crime, it was not clear how the prisoners came to know each other in order to commit crimes together. Obviously these prisoners must have known each other before embarking on joint criminal ventures and so it remains that they could have met during a previous prison sentence and continued their association post-release. If this were the case, it is quite feasible that respondent prisoners would be unaware of how these partners in crime came to know each other in the first instance. Of course, the possibility that criminal partnerships may be

forged in prison becomes infinitely more likely if prisoners are held in establishments near to their home as recommended by Woolf (1991).

Prisoners were also asked on what basis other prisoners choose friends from within the prison, since knowing other prisoners does not necessarily indicate associating with them in the prison. Responses to this question demonstrated that if prisoners were perceived as choosing friends who might be 'useful' to the prisoner they were also more likely to be perceived as involved in gang-related activity. This seems to suggest that prisoners perceive those who are most involved in gang-related activity as having some kind of motive for their selection of friends in prison. Respondents indicated that this 'usefulness' would often relate to access to material goods such as tobacco or drugs. It seems that the deprived environment of a prison (e.g. Sykes 1958), prisoners may seek the company of those whom they believe can alleviate at least some of their deprivation. In doing so, it appears that they become involved in gang-related activity.

In terms of personal involvement in gang-related activity, prisoners who agreed that they knew other prisoners before coming into the prison were asked how they knew them. Four responses predicted 'own gang' involvement, these were: knowing other prisoners from home area, knowing other prisoners from involvement in crime, knowing other prisoners from previous prison sentences or knowing other prisoners socially. It is interesting to note that, unlike their perceptions of other prisoners' gang involvement, when referring to personal associations, previous prison sentences do come into play as a predictor of 'own gang' involvement. This difference between 'self' and 'other' perceptions may be, as noted above, because prisoners are not fully aware of how other prisoners met one another. Of course there would be no such lack of knowledge when reporting personal associations and so the role of the prison system in the formation of prisoner associations would be clearer. In consideration of this, it seems highly likely that if 'own gang' associations stem from the prison system, that

other prisoners' associations would probably also emerge from similar origins and that the prisoners' perception of others' associations reflected ignorance rather than a difference.

Nevertheless, in contrast to 'other' gang perceptions, 'own gang' reports indicate that there may indeed be a process of Juvenilisation as Stevens (1997) proposes. However, it exists only as one of several possible association pathways that might explain gang formation in prison. As for previous associations based on shared criminal history, regional origin and social connections, these hold as true for 'own gang' involvement as they do for 'other gang' involvement. This lends support to the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991) and previous gang research (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985) claiming gang member prisoners associate with others with whom they share commonalities.

However, although Buentello et al (1991) included regional origin as a commonality and, on the whole, researchers have noted that prisoner commonalities would be along the lines of shared beliefs or racial origins (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Rush, Stone & Wycoff 1996). None, with the possible exception of Jacobs (1977) who argued that street gang membership would facilitate prison gang formation, explicitly noted a shared or similar criminal history as a common ground for group formation in the prison. As chapter 7 notes, this is a surprising oversight. Since prison gangs are so tied up in criminal activity in the prison it seems perfectly reasonable to consider that membership would form along the lines of previous criminal associations. This may be especially true since prisoners will already be aware of the strengths, weaknesses and skills of potential gang-mates.

In addition to describing previous associations with other prisoners, respondents were asked how they selected friends in the prison and why they chose friends in this way. This was because although they may have known other prisoners before coming into the prison, it does not necessarily follow that they will mix with these same people in the prison. Results suggest that those involved in gang-related activity were likely to select friends who came

from their home area. The most frequent explanation offered for mixing with these individuals was 'common interests'. This finding provides support for previous work suggesting commonalities facilitate prison gang membership (Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Fong & Buentello 1991; Rush, Stone & Wycoff 1996). However, another finding sheds some light on how prisoners *not* involved in gang-related select friends in the prison. If prisoners have no specific criteria for selecting friends, i.e. they simply mix with anyone, then there is less chance that they will be gang involved. Interestingly, this suggests that prisoners involved in gang-related activity are more selective in their choice of friends, whereas prisoners not involved do not discriminate when choosing friends. What is not clear is a causal relationship between involvement in gang-related activity and selecting friends. For instance, it is possible that prisoners intent on continuing criminal activity whilst in prison seek the company of those whom they know share a similar intention. Equally it is possible that by choosing to associate with similar others leads to the development of a cohesive group and a gradual resumption/continuation of criminal activity.

#### 8.1.4 Function of prisoners groups

More than three quarters of the sample agreed that some prisoner groups traded in illegal materials and/or extra supplies of legitimate materials. Qualitative elaborations revealed the trade items most closely associated with 'other' gang involvement were drugs, clothes, sexual material and food. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the current study was largely exploratory and the selection of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and phone cards as probable contraband trades was purely intuitive. In view of that, the follow-up questions were designed to capture information on goods considered valuable in a prison setting. Results revealed a wide variety of merchandise to be trade worthy and that prisoner groups are versatile in terms of what they trade. This is not really surprising since, as noted throughout this thesis, prisons are environments of deprivation (Sykes 1958) and in an atmosphere of deprivation even the

smallest trinket may take on some value (Goffman 1961). If prisoner groups are intent on maximising financial profit as American researchers maintain (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Fong and Buentello 1991; Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991; Stevens 1997) then it makes sense that they will take advantage of any trading opportunities as and when they arise. However, the goods found to predict 'other' involvement may reveal something about how prisoner groups involved in gang-related events operate.

For instance, the trade in food perhaps indicates access to food supplies inside the prison, as it is unlikely that prisoner groups rely solely on 'canteen' or visits to acquire sufficient quantities of food to trade. In contrast, a trade in clothes probably indicates some level of involvement with individuals outside the prison who supply clothes suitable for trading inside. The motivation for such a trade may come from the existence of regimes such as the Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme, which allows some prisoners to wear personal clothes. However, as one prisoner pointed out (see chapter 7), violence can erupt over drug debts or even a spoonful of sugar. Consequently, it must be considered that although 'trade' may commonly be associated with vast quantities of merchandise, this is not necessarily the case. Prisoners may trade in small quantities of small cheap items whose value in a prison setting is magnified *because* it is traded in a deprived environment. As a result, just as Goffman (1961) maintained, the smallest trinket does become valuable and possibly worth fighting over. In light of this, it is not possible to make any real assumptions regarding the origins of substances such as food and clothes traded in prison.

Nevertheless, the finding that the most common trade prisoner groups were involved in was drugs, in particular heroin, gives cause for concern that, as groups of prisoners become involved in this lucrative trade, prison gangs will flourish in England and Wales. King and McDermott (1995) mentioned the possibility that gangs exist in English prisons and some prisons in their study reported that intimidation and violence resulted from groups trading in

narcotics. The results of the current study indicate that, in terms of a trade in drugs, this situation has not improved. Indeed, if heroin, a highly addictive substance, is commonly traded in prison, then any group involved is likely to have a highly lucrative and consistent business interest as prisoners become addicted to the substance. Certainly, one female prisoner mentioned that prisoners have been known to force others into taking the drug in order to secure future custom by creating more addicts.

Although such an instance may be relatively unusual and extreme, previous work has revealed that in England and Wales, nearly half the prisoners who claimed not to have used drugs before going into prison began to do so during incarceration (Swann & James 1998). These authors also revealed that prisoners claimed the pressure to take drugs in prison was greater than the pressure to do so in the community. Subsequently it would appear that drug use in prison is not limited to individuals who used drugs in the community. This possibility can only work to the advantage of those trafficking drugs, especially if prisoners become addicts. Ironically, it seems that prisoners' choice of drug may be influenced by the mandatory drug testing system (MDT) designed to deter prisoners' drug taking habits. Since cannabis remains in the blood for longer than opiates such as heroin, it is more likely to be detected during MDT. Consequently some prisoners choose to use heroin instead (Gore, Bird & Ross 1996).

However, such claims are contentious, since other authors maintain a switch from cannabis to heroin is not as widespread as might be expected (Edgar & O'Donnell 1998). Edgar and O'Donnell (1998) also found that nearly a third of their sample managed to successfully avoid their drug consumption being detected during testing and just under half the sample claimed not to have altered their drug habits in response to MDT. Consequently, it seems that prisoners, undeterred by policies such as MDT, will continue to use drugs and for as long as this habit continues there will be dealers who capitalise on the profits to be made

from the drug trade. It also seems that dealers may experience a greater sense of impunity than the users who are scrutinised by MDT. As Lee (1996) rather sensibly points out, mandatory drug testing only detects users; it does not detect dealers.

Similar to their perceptions of other prisoners' involvement in trades, prisoners admitted to personal involvement in a diverse range of trades in prison. Just under half the sample agreed they were involved in some form of trade and key predictors of 'own gang' involvement included drugs, food, tobacco, miscellaneous goods, alcohol and finance. These predictors, just as they did with 'other' trades, appear to indicate the versatility of prisoner groups in terms of tradable goods and may offer some insight into the functioning of prisoner groups involved in gang-related activity.

For example, the presence of alcohol as a predictor of 'own gang' involvement lends strength to the argument presented earlier that prisoners involved in this trade need a certain level of power/control or freedom within the prison in order to conceal and/or produce a potentially cumbersome article of trade. That prisoners most involved in gang-related activity are involved in a trade in alcohol, could be considered as supporting Sheldon's (1991) research indicating gang members as more likely to have alcohol problems than non-gang members. However, trading in alcohol is not necessarily synonymous with drinking alcohol. In fact gang members who have alcohol-related problems may be less inclined to trade the substance, since they may want to keep it for personal consumption. This could suggest that gang-related prisoners are either acquiring enough alcohol to satisfy their own needs and to trade, or they do not have the problems Sheldon (1991) suggests they have.

Similarly, the predictive value of finance could intimate that groups involved in a trade of this kind are sufficiently financially stable to involve themselves in money lending. Given the 'double bubble' (100% tax) that prisoners often impose on prisoners who borrow, it is unlikely that repayment of debts in a prison setting will be easy. Therefore an important

point relating to a trade in finance is that anyone lending money will need to be confident that they can ensure the debt is repaid. It could be that confidence in getting money back may be inspired by the threat of violence. Of course, such threats cannot afford to be idle and prisoner reports in this study indicating that violence is often associated with non-payment of debts would suggest they are not. This indicates, in terms of the prison gangs' aims outlined by previous research (e.g. Stevens 1997), that prisoner groups in England and Wales are, at the very least, beginning to fulfil a primary goal of financial profit. Similarly, they could, in light of the threats associated with such a trade, be considered to have a certain amount of power over other prisoners.

Similar to the findings for other prisoners' trades, a trade in drugs predicted prisoners' 'own involvement' in gang-related activity. However, unlike their reports of other prisoners' behaviour, which indicated heroin to be the most commonly traded drug, prisoners indicated that they themselves were more involved in a trade in cannabis. Nonetheless, a trade in heroin was the second most common drug prisoners admitted to trading and it is possible that the difference between self and other reports result from some prisoners' reluctance to admit to trading in a Class A drug in prison. On the other hand, it is possible that prisoners actually believe other prisoners to be more involved in trading in particularly harmful substances such as heroin. Nevertheless, regardless of the nature of the substances traded, what is clear is that there is a relationship between a trade in drugs and gang-related behaviour and this relationship holds for both 'self' and 'other' reports.

Of course if there is financial profit to be made in the prison, then it is also likely that there will be some form of conflict as prisoners protect their profits and capitalise on the power that controlling trades offers. Certainly, American evidence suggests that prison gangs function on power as well as profit and that the tools such groups employ to obtain and maintain power and profit are intimidation of and violence to, fellow prisoners and even staff



(e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990; Fong and Buentello 1991; Buentello, Fong & Vogel 1991; Stevens 1997). Stevens (1997) also revealed that the most common trade associated with prison gangs and their tactics of violence and intimidation, was drugs.

Indeed, the current study supports notions of the use of violent tactics as part of gang-related activity. Results reveal that more than two thirds of the sample agreed that some groups of prisoners were violent to other prisoners and the follow-up questions revealed that violence is ubiquitous in prison. Its onset, nature or context is not absolutely clear. Prisoners indicated that it could be planned or spontaneous and was likely to occur almost anywhere in the prison. As noted in Chapter 7, the presence or absence of prison staff seemed almost irrelevant to violent behaviour. This is surprising, since it might be expected that prisoners involved in violent behaviour would face some kind of sanction as a result. However, it is consistent with gang research in America indicating that gang members had more disciplinary offences, particularly drug and fighting offences, than non-gang prisoners (Sheldon 1991). It appears that even if reprisals do follow violent behaviour, gang-involved prisoners might not consider reprisals to be especially important. This indicates that prisoners involved in gang-related behaviour may be more reckless in terms of monitoring their behaviour according to the presence of staff, or alternatively, they simply mete out violence as soon as the opportunity to do so arises.

On the other hand, American research (e.g. Stevens 1997) reports how gang involved prisoners exploit any weakness they perceive in staff. Therefore it is conceivable that if prisoners believe staff, for whatever reason, will not intervene in violent events, the presence of staff will be considered inconsequential. It is equally possible that prisoners involved in gang-related events feel they need to act swiftly in response to any affront from other prisoners in order to maintain other prisoners' fear and respect. It is certainly unlikely that a group's power in a prison could be maintained or remain unchallenged if the group members

appeared to be afraid or reluctant to act due to staff presence. In this sense, the dispensation of violence and the immediacy of its occurrence, regardless of staff presence, may result in the aggressors gaining other prisoners' and possibly even staff respect and/or fear. Of course, if the group has a certain amount of control in the prison and staff order is reduced, it seems feasible that prisoners may not face official reprimands because staff may feel intimidated and unable to control the situation. Certainly at least some of the qualitative responses this study implied that staff presence was not considered to be an impediment in terms of violent events.

Nevertheless, despite the inferences outlined above, a word of caution is necessary. Since violent behaviour is often observable, particularly if it happens in the presence of staff, it might be tempting to consider prisoners involved as gang members. Such judgements, although in some ways understandably tempting, are likely to be flawed, since prisoners not involved in gang-related activity may behave just as violently and recklessly as gang involved prisoners. As Kassel (1998) points out, the identification of gang-member prisoners in the U.S.A. is based on simplistic concepts and the results are expensive in both monetary and human terms.

Research in the U.S.A. also indicates that the influence and activities of prison gangs stretches into the community, thus extending the power and influence of these groups (e.g. Knox 1994). Consequently, the current study also examined prisoner groups' involvement in criminal activity with individuals outside the prison in order to understand something of the extent and function of that involvement.

In terms of 'other' involvement, nearly two thirds of the sample agreed that some groups of prisoners were involved in illegal activities with outsiders. Results also showed that drugs and non-violent crime were important predictors of 'other' gang involvement. The involvement with outsiders in drug-related crime is not a surprise, since any drug trade in the prison would necessitate the help of outsiders to import narcotics into the prison. In addition,

as noted in chapter 7, drug trafficking is a most lucrative trade in prison and would probably generate sufficient financial reward to attract the involvement and offset the risks, taken by individuals outside the prison.

As for non-violent crime, prisoners indicated a number of different crimes with which prisoners were involved. Fraud, car theft and even burglary were all mentioned as crimes prisoners were involved in during incarceration. One explanation as to why involvement in non-violent crime should be associated with 'other' gang involvement is possibly that it demonstrates a certain level of commitment to a criminal lifestyle, something that might be expected from prison gang members. Camp and Camp (1985), when referring to prison gang activity, observed that generally prison gangs can be delineated by the (almost) total absence of any chosen activity that is not criminal. Given this, there is little reason to suspect that presented with the opportunity, prison gang members would not also become involved in crime in the community. Quite why this might be so is not clear, since respondents were not asked to report why prisoners seemed to be intent on continuing criminal activity from inside the prison. However, it is possible that there are some prisoners who have criminal enterprises in the community they want to protect/continue and so they do not even entertain the notion of rehabilitation.

Interestingly, involvement with outsiders in violent crime was not identified as a key predictor of 'other' gang involvement. This is rather puzzling as it might be expected that gang-involved prisoners would be implicated in violent crime with outsiders. However, it is possible that since prisoners cannot directly participate in acts of violence, other prisoners are unaware of the role a prisoner might play in acts of violence committed by his/her associates. Similarly, acts of violence that the prisoner may contribute to in terms of planning might simply be too few or too unknown by other prisoners to influence the results in this study.

Prisoners also admitted to personal involvement in criminal activity with individuals outside the prison. The key indicators of 'own' gang-related activity in terms of involvement with outsiders were drug trafficking, violent crime and non-violent crime. The predictive value of both violent and non-violent crime seems to indicate that prisoners involved in gang-related activity in prison do not limit their criminal involvement to the prison estate alone. It was already apparent that to trade in drugs in prison necessitated the involvement of outsiders, but it was not clear if prisoners kept a criminal 'hand' in the community during a period of incarceration. It would appear from the results of this study, that this is indeed the case. This may be evidence of prisoner groups extending their power bases on to the street as research suggests they do in U.S.A. (e.g. Crouch & Marquart 1989; Fong and Buentello 1991; Sullivan 1991), or it could be that prisoners simply do not relinquish their criminal influence within the community following imprisonment. As mentioned earlier, it seems quite likely that prisoners will take steps to protect their criminal enterprises in the community, even from a prison cell. Undoubtedly prisoners' criminal activity in the community must occur by proxy, but if prisoners are involved in criminal networks outside the prison then crime by proxy becomes a very real possibility. In addition, this situation is to some extent, ideal for prisoners since their role in community crime is unlikely to be detected since they have an ideal alibi.

#### 8.1.5 Characteristics of prisoners involved in gang-related activity

A further objective of the current study was to identify some of the demographic/institutional and psychological characteristics of prisoners most involved in gang-related activity. In terms of the sample as a whole, results revealed that younger, male prisoners serving a subsequent prison sentence, who held attitudes consistent with prisonization and were more satisfied with the social support they offered to individuals *in* prison were most likely to be involved in gang-related activity. These results support previous research suggesting gang members to be generally younger and more frequently convicted

than non-gang prisoners (Sheldon 1991). Similarly, the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991) posits prisonization as playing a fundamental role in prison gang evolution.

When involvement in gang-related activity was examined in the context of number of prison sentences served, some interesting patterns emerged. For instance, 'naïve' (serving first prison sentence) prisoners' gang-related activity was predicted by gender, age, prisonization and satisfaction with the level of social support offered to significant others *outside* the prison (family). These variables predicted 'own gang' involvement independent of the gender effect. Similarly recidivist gang members were also younger, held attitudes consistent with prisonization and had served more prison sentences than non-gang prisoners. However, unlike naïve prisoners, recidivists involved in gang-related activity were not more likely to be male. In addition, although recidivists also expressed satisfaction with the social support they gave to significant others, this, as with the sample as a whole, related to individuals *inside* the prison rather than individuals outside the prison.

The theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991) indicates that prisoners involved in gang-related activity, unable to access their normal sources of social support, seek support from within the prison. However, the results from the current study indicate that it is the *giving* and not the *receiving* of social support that relates to prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity. In particular, the finding that naïve prisoners involved in gang-related activity are more satisfied with the support they offer to the family, contrasts with one of the key arguments in this thesis. It was asserted (see chapter 2) that prisoners with strong family ties would not be involved in gang-related activity in the prison, since this might result in time being added to their sentence and an even longer separation from those others.

However, as also noted in chapter 2, the commitment of a member to the group, occurs as the individual assesses past, present and (anticipated) future rewards of group

membership and alternative relationships (Moreland and Levine 1982). It is still conceivable that prisoners who value significant relationships outside the prison may be less inclined to risk additional time in prison. However, this is only likely to be the case if the prisoner considers it probable that prison staff will detect his/her involvement in gang-related activity. As this study has already revealed, acts of violence may occur regardless of staff presence. This could imply that prisoners have scant regard for the consequences of their violent behaviour, or the consequence are not severe enough to constrain their behaviour. Alternatively, since an increase in gang-related activity predicts a reduction in legitimate order and control, prisoners may not consider the probability of punitive sanctions as very high. Consequently, if prisoners weigh the material benefits and protection the group offers against the probability of being caught and punished for involvement in illicit activity, they may elect to take risks they consider to be minimal. Similarly, it may be that prisoners consider the rewards of group membership to be worth the risk of added time. Equally, it may simply be the case that prisoners do not give the potential punitive consequences of involvement in gang-related activity any thought whatsoever.

The merits of group membership and involvement in gang-related activity may seem even more attractive if the prisoner is able to use material benefits from gang-related activity to offer support to family members. Psychological research indicates that giving as well as receiving social support is conducive to psychological well being (Coles 1993; Thoits 1995). Consequently, the prisoner reaping the material benefits of gang-related activity who is also able to offer support to the family stands to profit psychologically and materialistically.

Quite how the relationship between involvement in gang-related activity and offering social support to the family functions is not clear. Perhaps these prisoners ask less of the family in terms of instrumental support, since their needs are catered for by their gang-related activity. By asking less of the family, gang involved prisoners may offset some of the

hardship the family might encounter as a result of the prisoner's incarceration. For example, financial difficulties may result in infrequent visits to the prisoner. However, if the prisoner is able to offer support to the family, particularly instrumental support, then it seems less likely that visits will be affected by financial adversity. In turn, this would enable the prisoner and his/her family to maintain an optimal amount of contact for the duration of the prison sentence. Similarly, since prison visits are not especially frequent, the prisoner who manages to acquire more phone cards than allowed, is likely to be able to make more frequent phone calls to his/her family. In this way, he/she will be able to maintain more contact with the family and also offer more emotional support than visits alone allow. Though, if the relationship between involvement in gang-related activity and social support offered to the family does function in the ways outlined above, then it seems rather paradoxical that maintaining family contact is thought to play a critical role in rehabilitating prisoners (Wright & Wright 1992).

Similar to naïve prisoners, recidivists involved in gang-related activity also reported higher levels of satisfaction with social support offered to significant others. However, unlike naïve prisoners, recidivists reported increased satisfaction with the social support they offered to individuals *in* the prison. Since recidivists were more involved in gang-related activity than naïve prisoners it would appear that repeated incarceration does little to reduce offending behaviour, at least within the prison. Moreover, because prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity increases across subsequent sentences, it seems that repeated imprisonment, may play a part in the criminogenic development of some prisoners. Interestingly, since the difference between naïve and recidivist prisoners is apparent as early as the second prison sentence, it appears that there could be some developmental process in terms of criminal involvement between the first and the second prison sentence. Alternatively, it could be that naïve prisoners involved in gang-related activity are more likely to end up back in prison than

naïve prisoners not involved in gang-related activity. In this way, the more criminally inclined individuals would be more likely to appear in recidivist populations.

Nevertheless, recidivists' reports seem to suggest that multi-sentence prisoners have a different focus of attention in terms of group membership, than do naïve prisoners. This focus of attention might offer a clue as to how the criminogenic process functions. For instance, recidivist reports of offering social support to individuals in prison, could imply that recidivist prisoners consider their prisoner group as their principal group. In turn this could mean the weak ties that may be expected within prisoner groups (see chapter 2) become strong ties, which may be expected within the family. Research suggests that following a marital break-up, some offenders resort to previous offending patterns (Farrington & West 1990), which may mean they re-offend and are subsequently re-incarcerated. Such a notion is not inconceivable, since research indicates 48% of remand prisoners and 43% of sentenced prisoners lose contact with their family following entry to prison (NACRO 2000). Similarly, 22% of prisoners who were married on entry to the prison end up divorced (Dodd & Hunter 1992). For the prisoner who no longer has strong family ties in the community, the prisoner group may take on an increased importance. In this way, the prisoner group may become a surrogate 'family,' just as street gangs do for their members (e.g. Vigil and Yun 1996). This elevated importance of the peer group occurs due to a need for a sense of companionship not received elsewhere (Klein 1995). Moreover, if prisoners have few or no family ties, the process of assessment of past, present and (anticipated) future rewards of their group and alternative relationships (Moreland and Levine 1982) would be simplified due to few, or no, competing elements. In turn this could lead to recidivists becoming more committed to their prisoner group than naïve prisoners do.

However, a central tenet of Moreland and Levine's (1982) theory is the potential for rewards and costs that group membership offers the individual. The current thesis focused



primarily on the potential costs that group membership might lead to for the prisoner with family ties. As noted earlier, based on Moreland and Levine's (1982) theory, it was anticipated that prisoners with family ties would resist membership of a group involved in gang-related activity since involvement in such behaviour might lead to official reprisals and days added to the sentence. The results do not support this notion since naïve prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity is in part delineated by the social support they can offer the family. In this way, it appears that the rewards membership of the group seem to offer outweigh the potential costs the current study considered to play a central role in the prisoner's decision to join a group involved in criminal activity in prison.

Moreland and Levine (1982) go on to claim that the member will assess the merits of group membership in terms of past rewards and costs. When this is considered in light of the finding that prisoners formed groups on the basis of past associations such as shared criminal activity it seems rather surprising that being imprisoned for criminal activity does not seem to be a cost that discourages prisoners from involvement in gang-related activity following imprisonment. It seems that the potential rewards of criminal involvement for some prisoners outweighs the potential costs of crime, even when that crime is to be committed within a prison setting. Certainly the access to material benefits that may occur through group membership and could be used to support the family seem to have some importance that the threat of legal sanctions does not. However, as Moreland and Levine (1982) acknowledge, the potential for rewards and costs are probably weighted by the member in terms of the likelihood of their occurrence. In the prisoner group involved in gang-related activity the rewards, such as material goods may seem more of a certainty than the costs such as being caught and punished for criminal acts within the prison.

In terms of recidivist prisoners the potential benefits of group membership may outweigh the potential costs of group membership even more than they do for naïve prisoners.

Since in the current study recidivists' involvement in prisoner groups was predicted by the social support they offered to others in the prison and if, as argued earlier the focus of recidivist attention is the prisoner group, then it appears that the benefits of group membership for recidivist prisoners may be even more pronounced than they are for naïve prisoners. As noted earlier, Moreland and Levine (1982) argue that the group member may not only assess the group in terms of rewards and costs, alternative relationships may also be assessed. If recidivist prisoners have few or no family ties then the potential rewards of group membership such as access to material goods and protection are likely to far outweigh the costs of a prolonged separation from individuals in the community.

Here, there are contextual and temporal implications for Moreland and Levine's (1982) assertions, since any assessment of rewards and benefits may be moderated by the situation. It is possible that under certain circumstances, the costs/rewards exercise may clearly favour the costs, but the situational influences result in the individual disregarding potential risks. This may be especially true for drug-addicted prisoners who might consider the short-term benefits rather than the potential long-term costs of involvement in gang-related activity. Consequently, it would seem that the temporal aspects of the costs/benefits rewards, ignored in Moreland and Levine's (1982) theory, need to be taken into account. When considering motivations for group membership it seems possible that individuals may consider the immediacy of short term benefits to outweigh the potential long-term costs

. Clearly, the results of the current study indicate a need for further investigation into prisoners' perceptions of the rewards and costs of group membership in a prison, especially in terms of how likely and they consider their chances are of being caught and punished for illicit activity in the prison. In addition, future work should examine the importance prisoners attach to the possibility of further sanctions when compared to any benefits they perceive group membership seems to offer.

It is necessary, however, to be somewhat cautious when interpreting the differences between naïve and recidivist prisoners, as it is possible to get a picture of prisoners associating exclusively with group members. This was not the case in the current study. Recidivists involved in gang-related activity, reported offering support to staff as well as prisoners. Only those who supported no one in the prison were less involved in gang-related activity. Perhaps this indicates that overall, recidivist prisoners were more involved in prison life as a whole; legitimate and illegitimate aspects included. On the other hand, it could be that prisoners associate with staff in an effort to assuage staff suspicion in terms of the group's activities.

Clearly there is a gap in the literature since, as observed in chapter 2, most gang research, when it does consider the issue of support, dwells on the support the gang provides for its members. What has been consistently overlooked is the function of supporting others in terms of gang membership. Nevertheless the exact nature of the support prisoners convey to one another is not clear from the results in this study. It is possible that prisoners considered the protection they provide for others as a form of support. Similarly, although it might be more customary to consider social support of drug addicted prisoners in terms of encouragement to break the habit, it is feasible that prisoners providing drug addicted others with narcotics, considered this as a form of support too.

On the other hand, since the form of social support prisoners offered to others was not specifically instrumental, it appears that prisoners also provided emotional support to significant others. This might be expected in terms of support for the family, but it also sheds some light on prisoner groups indicating that they are more than just materially oriented entities. By providing emotional support to others, it is clear that the prisoner group may, as argued earlier, take on some of the family-like qualities reported by street gang researchers (e.g. Vigil and Yun 1996).

Another feature of both naïve and recidivist prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity was age. Since American street gang research indicates that gang members are usually adolescent (e.g. Vigil and Yun 1996) it might be expected that this pattern would translate into the prison setting. However, American prison gang research indicates that gang members, although younger than non-gang prisoners, are, on average, in their mid-twenties (Sheldon 1991) and the results in the current study seem to echo this. Similarly, research in the U.K. (Thompson 1995) indicates that street gang members, albeit frequently adolescent, may also be in their early twenties.

An equally plausible explanation for this age-related finding could be that young offenders, less experienced in the prison system, were more guarded when reporting personal activities to individuals they may consider to be authority figures. As a result young offenders may have under-reported 'own gang' involvement. Even so this seems unlikely since the levels of gang-related events reported by young offenders in this study and Y.O.I. staff in the earlier study (see chapter 3) indicate young offenders are not more involved in gang-related events than adult males. It is perhaps more plausible that if, as discussed in chapter 3, prison gang members stem from street gang adolescents, then they are probably over the age of 21 by the time they come to be incarcerated or, that they are over 21 before they become entrenched in gang-related activity in prison. Either way, it appears that gang involvement is not the prerogative of the adolescent youth.

Also, since neither length of sentence or time served in the prison related to involvement in gang-related activity, it appears that the length of time spent in prison is irrelevant to the difference between recidivists and naïve prisoners. Yet, it must be considered that a prisoner serving a subsequent sentence has already spent time in prison and so the *total* length of time spent in prison is likely to be more than the current study's measures reflect. In this way, time spent in the prison system may not be as immaterial as this study suggests.

As might be expected, given the arguments outlined in chapter 2, prisonization was a strong predictor of both naïve and recidivist prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity. This supports Clemmer's (1940) claims that prisoners who hold attitudes consistent with prisonization will be more willing to integrate into prisoner groups and accept the prisoner codes of behaviour. Certainly an assimilation of the prison's subcultural rules related strongly to prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity, since learning about the prison's culture predicted 'own gang' involvement. This is also consistent with the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991), which suggests the key positioning of culture and prisonization in prison gang membership. It would also appear, that prisonization continues to increase across sentences since recidivist prisoners held more prisonized attitudes than did naïve prisoners. This links to the arguments outlined above relating to notions of support and prisoners' family relationships, since Clemmer (1940) also points out how prisonization is associated with an absence of positive relationships in the community.

However, naïve prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity is also predicted by prisonization and yet naïve prisoners offer support to the family. For this reason, it seems reasonable to consider that prisonization may be a developmental process that increases as the individual is incarcerated repeatedly and that both recurrent incarceration and prisonization relate to adverse or non-existent family relationships.

Nevertheless, according to Clemmer (1940) prisonized prisoners would be reluctant to associate with prison staff, a claim the current study does not fully support. However, if prisonization is a developmental process then it might be expected that as the prisoner becomes more assimilated into the prison culture and thus more prisonized, he or she will begin to associate less with prison staff. On the other hand, American research indicates that prisoners involved in gang-related activity use the prison regime as a cover for criminal activities such as drug trafficking (Camp & Camp 1985). If this is considered in light of the

staff/prisoner ratio in the English and Welsh prison system, it seems reasonable to assume that prisoners may find it difficult and in terms of furthering trade opportunities, not useful to avoid contact with staff. In short, in a prison system where the prisoner staff ratio is relatively high, it is likely to be in the best interests of gang involved prisoners to associate with staff on friendly rather than hostile terms.

Equally, the findings that 'own gang' involvement is related to gender, is consistent with previous research suggesting gang membership is a predominantly male prerogative (e.g. Knox 1994). It is not surprising that naïve prisoners involved in gang-related activity are more likely to be male than female, since the current study also reveals male prisons have higher levels of gang-related events and male prisoners report higher levels of 'other' gang involvement than do female prisons. It is feasible that female prisoners, two thirds of whom have dependent children (Hamlyn & Lewis 2000), are deterred from involvement in gang-related activity due to the chance that an additional sentence or days added could result in an even longer separation from children who may even have been taken into care.

In spite of this, the finding that female recidivists do not differ from male recidivists in terms of gang-related activity undermines any assumptions that females are not as involved in prison gang activity as are males. The current findings therefore question the wisdom of the neglect of females by previous prison gang research. As chapter 1 points out and prisoners' qualitative responses seem to confirm (see chapter 7), the 'neighbourhood' structure of some female prisons seems to assist the advent of gang-related activity.

It also seems likely that, like their male counterparts, female recidivists may become more involved in prisoner groups due to a deficiency in actuality or quality of relationships outside the prison. What is especially worrying about the female prisoner involvement in gang-related activity is that naïve females are less likely to be involved than are naïve males, yet recidivist females seem to have caught up with and equalled male involvement. This

suggests that female prisoners may undergo an even greater change across sentences than do male prisoners in terms of a criminogenic process. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that number of female recidivists (18) who participated in the current study may not be truly representative of female recidivists and so interpretation of the results regarding this sub-sample must be tentative.

Finally, the results produced from an integration of qualitative and the quantitative predictors of 'own gang' involvement offered the most comprehensive examination of the characteristics and behaviours of prisoners involved in gang-related behaviour. It confirmed previous analyses suggesting 'own gang' involvement was indicated by gender, number of prison sentences, prisonization, involvement in violent crime with others outside prison, involvement with outsiders in drug trafficking, trading in drugs in prison, trading in tobacco in prison and knowing other prisoners from home.

At the same time, the effect of age was lost in the collated analysis. This is interesting because it indicates that when the best predictors of 'own gang' involvement are taken into account, younger prisoners are not as involved in gang-related activities as earlier results suggest. Clearly in terms of involvement in illicit activity in a prison setting, prisoners experienced in the prison system are likely to have more success in maximising trades and minimising the chances of detection by prison staff. Similarly, in order to traffic, for instance, drugs in a prison setting, those involved will need a certain amount of assistance from individuals outside prison. It is feasible that older prisoners are more likely to have formed networks enabling them and their associates outside the prison to capitalise on a very lucrative trade. It may also be the case that a trade in drugs is more common in adult institutions than in Y.O.I's simply because there are more adult prisoners than there are young offenders. Equally many drug users may not be incarcerated until they are over the age of 21 and so the demand

and hence the supply of drugs is likely to be higher in adult settings than in youth establishments.

Also, since recidivism seems to link so closely and consistently with 'own gang' involvement it may be that the effects of age were lost as prisoners most involved in gang-related activity were over the age of 21 when incarcerated for a subsequent time. Equally, older prisoners may be involved in the more covert gang-related activity in *addition* to the overt behaviours common in younger populations (see chapter 3). In this way, adult prisoners' gang-related activity would include more aspects than would young offenders' behaviour and thus inflate adult involvement in 'own gang' results. This might also mean that criminality develops over time as the individual continues to adapt his/her behaviour to the prison environment. Consequently it may mean that prison gang members are not the fearful, individuals depicted in the theory of prison gang development (Buentello et al 1991). Rather, it seems that they are more likely to be the confident, seasoned veterans of the prison system alluded to in chapter 1. Of course since the current study cannot make any causal inferences, it is equally possible that these individuals become seasoned and confident as a *result* of gang membership.

Similarly, it is not surprising that prisonization should relate so strongly to an overall model of 'own gang' involvement. As noted earlier, the results of the current study show that prisonization develops over time and across the number of times the prisoner has been incarcerated. What is not clear is if community experiences play some part in the development of prisonized attitudes across time. It seems highly unlikely that, on leaving prison, prisonized attitudes are put on hold until the next time the individual is incarcerated. It is more plausible that these attitudes are reinforced whilst the individual is back in the community. Indeed, as noted in chapter 1, Irwin and Cressey (1964) and to some extent Clemmer (1940) contend that the prisoner brings a set of values and behaviour patterns into the prison. Jacobs (1977) takes



this point a step further by observing that much of the supposedly unique inmate culture is not in fact a prison phenomenon, but rather a reflection of community culture.

Certainly strain theorists (e.g. Merton 1938; Cloward & Ohlin 1960) would argue that following release from prison, if legitimate means of building a future seem to be unavailable, then the ex-offender is likely to resort to any illegitimate means available. Adding to this, it is feasible that if the ex-prisoner resorts to illegitimate means rather than legitimate means, then attitudes consistent with prisonization may be reinforced. This might occur as the cultural transmission of criminal attitudes (Shaw & McKay 1931) strengthens the ex-prisoner's prisonized attitudes. However, it is also feasible, as speculated earlier, that during incarceration prisoners still maintain their criminal enterprises in the community and following release simply pick up where they left off. If this is the case then there is no 'resorting to' involved in the continuance of criminal behaviour.

Such an interaction between the effects of the community and the effects of prison may be even more pronounced if the individual continues to associate with the same people both in and out of prison. There may be physical boundaries between the prison and the community, but it appears these boundaries fail to truly separate these two dimensions of society in any real sense. Prisoners' associations with prisoners from home, together with the findings that prisoners are also involved in a number of crimes with outsiders, suggests there is more of a continuum than a dichotomy between community and prison. Consequently, it seems somewhat naïve to assume that imprisonment will act as an impediment to offending behaviour even for the duration of the prison sentence.

A further point of interest is the difference between naïve and recidivists in terms of 'own gang' involvement. It would appear that there could be some influence on the individual that occurs somewhere between the first and second sentence, since 'own gang' involvement increases significantly from the first to the second sentence. On the other hand it could be that

those receiving a subsequent sentence are individuals who were most prisonized and most involved in gang-related behaviour when they were naïve prisoners. If the former explanation is right then it might imply that more support for prisoners leaving prison following a first sentence is needed. If the latter explanation is true then it could be the case that some sort of intervention targeting prisoners with high levels of prisonization is necessary (since 'own gang' involvement might not be so apparent). Either way there are practical steps that can be taken to ameliorate the problem that gang-related events pose to the prison, other prisoners and staff in the English and Welsh prison estate.

## 8.2 Methodology

Although asking prisoners directly for information on prisoner activity promises to reveal important information about the nature and behaviour of entities such as prisoner groups, there will inevitably be limitations. There will be limitations to the amount of information prisoners are prepared to share, limitations to the amount of information prisoners actually have and limitations from the methodological constraints imposed on prisoners by the questions they are asked. Such limitations are likely to occur even when the research is framed by a sound theoretical foundation, but they are even more likely to occur if the research is fundamentally exploratory. As a result, the current study will inevitably be influenced by its methodological orientation.

Firstly, self-report data may be affected by how participants feel about divulging somewhat sensitive information to the researcher. Although this is only to be expected, it should be noted that prisoners in the current study, on the whole, seemed more than willing to discuss their own and others' involvement in gang-related activity. However, enthusiasm on the part of the participant should not be mistaken for complete honesty. Similarly, it must be borne in mind that forensic populations are likely to include individuals well versed in protecting the truth from interested parties. In addition, even if prisoners were absolutely

candid in their responses, it still remains that answers were based on subjective perceptions of events and behaviour. Such perceptions will also be subject to memory lapses or inattention on the part of the respondent. Consequently, it is feasible that even the most sincere responses will be coloured by cognitive processes that are difficult, if not impossible, to overcome.

Nevertheless, the current study was designed bearing many of these issues in mind. Interviews with prisoners were conducted in total privacy and each participant was assured, with the exceptions stated before the interview began, of complete confidentiality and anonymity consistent with the ethical demands of psychological research. Under these conditions, it did appear that prisoners spoke quite unreservedly about their behaviour and that of other prisoners.

For the sake of caution, responses were examined to see if any particular factors seemed to associate with prisoners' perceptions of event frequency and involvement. In terms of frequency of gang-related events, ethnic origin and length of sentence did not relate to responses, but age and number of sentences served did link to prisoners' perceptions of events. Younger prisoners reported higher levels of gang related events than did older prisoners, however, this was not sufficient to cause a difference between young offender institutions and adult institutions. Consequently, it appears that prisoners over the age of 21 also perceive gang events as more frequent than do older prisoners. Quite why younger prisoners would report higher levels of gang-related events is not clear. From staff reports (see chapter 3) it seems that younger prisoners are involved in more visible/overt gang-related behaviours than older prisoners and may consequently more easily observed and more easily reported.

Similarly, recidivists were more likely to report higher levels of events than were naïves. This may be because recidivist prisoners, more experienced in prison life, are more aware of some of the less obvious gang-related activities than are naïve prisoners. However, it

could be argued that such awareness would also be found in prisoners serving longer sentences and as the results show, this is not the case. However, since recidivists and younger prisoners are more personally involved in gang related activity, it makes sense that they would be more aware of the actual levels of events than non involved prisoners. It would be unrealistic to expect that even in a relatively small environment such as a prison that *all* the prisoners would be aware of *all* the activities taking place around them. It is only to be expected that prisoners involved in illicit activities would try to keep their many of their activities as inconspicuous as possible in order to avoid detection by prison staff. In this way, prisoners who are not involved in the events may simply be unaware of their occurrence, a possibility that may have been reflected in the current results.

Prisoners' perception of other prisoners' involvement gang-related activity was also examined to see if any particular factors related to perceptions of other prisoners' gang involvement. The results offered some interesting insights into which prisoners considered others as most involved in gang events. For example, white prisoners reported higher levels of 'other' involvement than did non-white prisoners and yet earlier analyses revealed that the two groups did not differ in their perceptions of the levels of gang-related events. Quite why such an effect should be apparent is not clear. It could be that, even though racial effects did not impact on results overall, white prisoners, as part of the majority group, may be privy to more activities than non-white prisoners.

A surprising finding relating to 'other' gang-related activity is that as the age of the prisoner increased so did perceptions of 'other' involvement. This contrasts with prisoners' perceptions of gang-related events where, as the age of the participant increased so reports of levels of gang-related events decreased. An explanation for this may lie in the difference between the questionnaires. The gang-event questionnaire referred specifically to the activities of prisoner groups and the effects of those activities. The questions used to create

the measure of 'other' gang activity referred primarily to the basis of prisoner group formation, the function of the group in terms of protection, trades and violence and the structure of the group in terms of leadership and rules. In other words, the events questionnaire concentrated predominantly on the activities of groups and the formation questionnaire focused on the existence and structure of prisoner groups. Consequently, it is possible that older prisoners were more aware of the existence and structure of prisoner groups than they were of the gang-related activities of those groups, particularly the more covert activities. However, it is possible that older prisoners, less likely to be involved in gang-related activity and prisoner groups reported the levels they did because *all* group formation and activity relates to *other* prisoners. In contrast, younger prisoners' reports of other prisoners' activities may have been offset by *personal* involvement in-group activity, which they did not consider to be *other*.

In a similar way, naïve prisoners' reports of other involvement was not less than recidivists reports. This result also contrasts with reports of the levels of gang-related events, where recidivists reported higher levels of events than did naïve prisoners. A possible explanation for this is that naïve prisoners, like older prisoners, were not as aware of the extent of gang-related activity as they were of prisoner group formation and structure. If this is so, then it is unlikely that recidivist prisoners' reports have *decreased* to the level of naïve prisoners' reports, it is more likely that naïve offenders' reports have *increased* to levels comparable with recidivists' reports.

In terms of length of sentence and prisoners' reports of 'other' involvement, results showed, just as they did with reports of events, that length of sentence did not influence prisoners' perceptions of 'other' involvement. It could be expected, as it might be with reports of gang-related events, that prisoners serving longer sentences would have more knowledge of events within the prison. However, it must be borne in mind that although many prisoners

in the current study were serving sentences of more than five years, the average length of time spent in any category in this study was less than two years. Consequently, many prisoners may have spent an insufficient amount of time in the prison to be aware of many gang-related events. However, the stipulation that prisoners taking part in this study should have served at least six months in the current prison condition should have offset some of this ignorance effect. Nevertheless, it must also be considered that most prison populations and certainly the data in the current study supports this, are relatively transient. As prisoners are shipped in or out of institutions it is likely that some events and behaviours either come or go with them. Certainly, the American experience indicates that moving prisoners from institution to institution led to the gradual spread of prison gangs throughout the prison system (Camp & Camp 1985). However, this was a lengthy process, occurring over a period of many years and so if the same effects are to occur in England and Wales it is likely that they too will be long-term. In the short term, however, the movement of prisoners from institution to institution is likely to result in the dispersal of groups and an alleviation of gang-related problems within that particular institution. If this is the case, then it will not necessarily follow that prisoners serving longer sentences will have any greater insight into the activities and relationships within the prison than will short term prisoners.

An interesting, but not really surprising result was that prisoners report other prisoners as being more involved in gang-related activity than they themselves are. This is not unexpected given that previous research notes how in forensic settings, responses to questionnaires are likely to be self-serving (Gudjonsson 1992). Gudjonsson claims that individuals in forensic settings may 'fake good', to make a favourable impression on the interviewer. Admittedly, under the terms of confidentiality and anonymity carefully outlined to each individual participating in the current study, such impression management may be less likely and indeed, prisoners did, somewhat surprisingly, admit to personal involvement in

many gang-related events. Nevertheless, it is only to be expected that, to some extent, participants may have tried to create a favourable impression or perhaps more likely, to not create a bad impression. In this way, it is quite possible that respondents either played down their personal involvement in gang-related activity, or played up others' involvement in order to make their own involvement seem minimal or relatively commonplace in comparison to others' behaviour.

On the other hand, it is always possible that prisoners who participated in the current study were *not* as involved in gang-related activity as their counterparts who did not participate in the study. Admittedly, not advertising the nature of the study in the prison before running the data collection should have helped offset any influence gang-involved prisoners could have on who should participate in the study. Even so, it did take a few days to collect data in each institution and it is only to be expected that within those few days, prisoners would tell each other the aims of the study. As a result, it is possible that prisoners most involved in gang-related events would elect not to take part themselves and possibly even persuade other prisoners to do the same. Unfortunately, such eventualities, although a real possibility when researching in an applied setting, cannot always be counteracted.

Nevertheless, given that research in a prison setting is plagued by a number of difficulties not least of which is the choice of methodology, the design of the current study has its merits. Prison records may be used to verify certain factual information such as age, length of sentence and number of convictions. Records may also be used to assess the incidents recorded by staff, however, this may not offer a comprehensive picture of actual levels of events, since some incidents, for example intimidation or threats, may not be recorded. Equally, as observed in chapter 3, it is possible that levels of recording will differ from institution to institution or even wing-to-wing in a single institution. Furthermore, prison records are unlikely to offer a picture of the more implicit aspects of prison life and gang-

related behaviour. The levels and nature of events in a prison can really only be assessed with any degree of accuracy from those most closely involved either as participants or observers.

Consequently, although the methodology used in the current study is not without its flaws, on the whole prisoners did appear to offer sincere accounts of what they knew about gang related activity in the prison. Even though there is a relationship between reports and some demographic/institutional variables, it would appear that many of these relationships can be explained in terms of which subsections of the prisoner population are likely to have knowledge of gang-related variables. Of course a certain amount of impression management is likely when asking such questions of such populations and this is one of the reasons why the current study asked questions relating to self and other involvement in gang-related events. However, the results do not indicate, as American researchers (e.g. Camp & Camp 1985; Fong 1990) have suggested, that it is not a valid method of researching the prison gang issue. Given the inherently difficult nature of research in a prison setting, prisoner reports certainly seems to offer one of the most effective ways of developing an understanding of prison populations.

On the other hand, this is not to say that other methodologies would not improve the scientific rigor of research of this kind. The current study indicates a number of ways that gang-related activity and prisoner group formation could be studied further. Clearly longitudinal research would be useful in terms of examining, for example, the development of prisonization over time and also for helping to clarify issues of causality. Similarly, an observational methodology similar to that employed by Schofield (1979) in a classroom setting may answer some important questions relating to prisoners' associations. Using this method, group formation and contact could be determined, as could inter-race and staff-prisoner contact within the prison. If this kind of observational work were also supported with staff and prisoner interviews, then a more thorough picture of group formation might be



established. Equally, since violent events often occur in full view of staff and other prisoners, then some of the contributory factors to these, might also be determined. However, even observational methodology will have its limitations since it is unlikely that some gang-related activity will ever be clearly observable. For instance, drug trafficking is likely to be conducted surreptitiously and even the most sharp-eyed researcher may find it difficult to observe such covert practices. In this way, it would be useful if observations were to be supported by staff and prisoner interviews in order to pick up information relating to covert activities. Nevertheless, even though the merits outlined above, of observational research are clear, the logistics and safety issues associated with such work would probably result in the Prison Service refusing this kind of research access.

Also, since the current study indicates a clear change in prisoners' gang-related behaviour from the first to the second sentence, it would be useful to examine possible community influences on prisoners following a first prison sentence and how these interact with, or influence, prisonized attitudes. It might be the case that some of the difficulties prisoners experience following release into the community lead to the maintenance or even further development of prisonized attitudes and re offending behaviour. On the other hand, it might be that prisoners who already hold attitudes consistent with prisonization are more criminally inclined and so continue to offend regardless of opportunities they have to lead law abiding lives. Subsequent interviews with ex-prisoners following release from prison and continuing over a period of time, may offer some insight into the developmental process of prisonized attitudes following release. In addition, further research could be conducted examining the effects of imprisonment on prisoners' relationships with family and how these relate to the development of relationships within the prison. For instance, research could investigate the current and past relationships prisoners have/had with the family to see if, as

speculated earlier, prisoners who have problematic or non-existent relationships with family members are those most involved in groups in prison and gang-related activity

Also of interest for further research is the finding that whilst in prison, prisoners are involved in criminal activity with individuals in the community. The results of this study cast doubt on the assumption that incarceration at least removes the offender from society and curtails his/her criminal activity for the duration of the sentence. Clearly, as the results indicate, this is not the case for some prisoners. Quite what it is that differentiates these prisoners from other prisoners is not clear. However, further investigation into this issue is clearly warranted since it seems to fly in the face of the most basic function of imprisonment - incapacitation. The activities of penal/community criminal networks have implications for the both the prison and the community in a gang-related and a criminal justice system sense and therefore warrant further study.

### 8.3 Implications for policy

The results of the current study may have implications in terms of prison policy. Clearly there are issues of control and order that relate to gang-related activities. Although it cannot be established that staffing levels relate to order and control, the experience of the U.S.A. seem to indicate that a low prisoner/staff ratio and a dependence on technology to monitor prisoner activity has done little to reduce the formation or activities of prison gangs. Even if prisons in this country move to increase CCTV surveillance of prison populations, the American experience suggests that prisoners are resourceful enough to avoid technological detection. Similarly, prisoners in the current study noted how CCTV 'blindspots' were exploited by prisoners intent on violence to other prisoners (see chapter 7). Although in this country, preliminary work such as the current study has no point of reference by which to establish if gang-like groups are increasing in number, the evidence so far suggests that many prisoners in this country are involved in gang-related activity. Where groups exist, research

suggests, others will develop (e.g. Knox 1994) and so it seems that gang-like groups are more likely to increase rather than decrease in number.

Also, the results so far highlight the need for legitimate order and control to be maintained if the activities of gang-related groups are to be inhibited. Since the behaviour of such groups need to be detected before they may be curtailed and the only people who can carry out the detective work are prison staff, it would seem rather imprudent to contemplate reducing staff levels. Yet, staff numbers have been reduced in some prisons by as much as 30% leading H.M. Inspectorate of Prisons to express concern over the inadequate supervision of prisoners (The Guardian 31.7.2002). In the face of a rising prison population and an ever-present overcrowding issue, the potential for prisoners to develop gang-related activity is likely to be aided and abetted by sentencing practices and staff cutbacks. Apart from the effect that overcrowding may have on staff/prisoner ratios, it will add an extra dimension to issues of deprivation as prisoners are forced to share single cells and the lack of adequate staffing levels results in prisoners being confined to cells for most of the day (Prison Reform Trust 2002). Furthermore, the European Court of Human Rights has recently ruled that prison governors do not have the right to add days to a prison sentence as punishment for transgressions committed in prison (Guardian July 28<sup>th</sup> 2002). This ruling effectively removes any possibility that the threat of an even longer separation from family members will deter prisoners from involvement in gang-related activity.

Similarly, there has been a formal race relations' policy in place within the prison system since 1983, and the prison service appears to have made an active effort to reduce racism and discrimination in penal institutions. However, findings in this study that the presence of prisoner members of organisations such as the B.N.P. relates to a reduction in staff order are a cause for concern. Although the relationship between membership of organisations such as the B.N.P. and staff order is not clear, it may be, as argued earlier, that

the presence of members of extremist organisations creates tension amongst the prisoners. This situation may be exacerbated even further by the disproportionate number of non-white prisoners held in prison (Home Office 2000). If the presence of prisoners affiliated to extremist groups is associated with discord between prisoners then it is understandable that staff may find it difficult to maintain order. This is purely speculative, since the results offer no clear indication as to why these two variables relate as they do, but there may be implications for prison policy in terms of suitable placements for members of extremist groups.

The current study's results also have implications for programmes aimed to reduce offending behaviour and rehabilitate prisoners. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Woolf (1991) recommended that prisoners be held close to home. As the Prison Service tries to accommodate this recommendation, it may inadvertently contribute to prisoner group formation based on community associations. As the current results indicate, this is the most common basis for groups involved in gang-related activity, but it is not clear whether any of these previous associations arise from street gang membership. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the importation of street gangs into the same institution leads to prison gang formation as some American authors claim (e.g. Jacobs 1977). Nevertheless, given the relationship between shared regional origin and gang-related activity in prison, it would be extremely surprising if prisoners from the same street gang did not re-group following incarceration.

In view of prisoners' relationships based on home/criminal/social ties linking so strongly to involvement in gang-related activity, there may be a temptation to reconsider the notion of housing prisoners close to home. However, this would probably lead to further problems, especially if recidivists' involvement in gang-related activity does stem from a breakdown in family relationships. Holding prisoners further from home is likely to have an

adverse effect on the preservation of prisoners' family relationships and consequently may indirectly play a part in prisoners' affiliation to gang-like groups. This is aside from the negative impact such a policy is likely to have for non-gang prisoners. Consequently, it would be more prudent to target prisoners who have few family ties and offer them more in terms of legitimate support both during imprisonment and following release. Of course, such a policy would also demand sufficient resources and adequate staffing levels both in prison and in the community.

Similarly, some form of intervention could be devised specifically to help prisoners who have attitudes consistent with prisonization. The consistently predictive nature of prisonization in terms of gang-related activity suggests that prisoners who hold these particular attitudes are especially vulnerable to gang-related involvement. That this relationship occurred despite the somewhat low reliability of the prisonization scale, indicates a compelling relationship between prisonization and 'own gang' involvement across all types of prisoner. Furthermore, the finding that prisonized attitudes increases with the number of sentences suggests that there is a possibility of at least impeding the further development of prisonized attitudes.

A further interesting finding that may have implications for prison policy is the prevalence of a trade in medication, especially in female establishments. As noted in Chapter 7 medication and illegal drugs may differ in terms of origin. Illegal drugs such as heroin, cannabis etc can only be acquired from outside the prison, but some forms of medication may originate as prescribed substances within the prison. This has implications for the monitoring of the kind and number of prescription drugs, that are issued to prisoners. Quite how a trade in medication is so common in female establishments is unclear from the current results. It could be that medication is more freely available in female prisons due to more female prisoners receiving prescription drugs. Clearly, if they subsequently trade the medication then there

exists the possibility that they do not need the level of drugs prescribed. The implication here is that some drugs may be being over-prescribed and are consequently ending up as a trade within the prison. Alternatively, it is possible that prisoners who are prescribed accurate levels of drugs for their needs are either being pressured to trade them or having them forcibly taken from them by groups intent on trading the medication. Either way, the administration of medication within prison clearly needs closer scrutiny in order to prevent trades emerging from drugs legitimately prescribed within the prison.

#### 8.4 Concluding comments

The results of the research outlined in this thesis cannot be considered as definitive proof that prison gangs, consistent with the American model, exist and are active in the English and Welsh prison estate. However, the current work does indicate that gang-related activity is a common occurrence in England and Wales and that this activity relates negatively to legitimate order and control. Even if the levels of order and control are, as in the current study simply based on prisoners' perceptions, it is still worrying that prisoners should consider staff as not being fully in control of the prison. Using Buentello et al's (1991) criteria, these groups can also be considered to be synonymous with at least stage 3 of an American prison gang. Apart from the obvious cause for concern regarding the impact of such groups on the prison, it is also possible that similar groups will develop in response to these groups as Knox (1994) argues and should this occur then the current situation is likely to worsen.

In terms of what the research has to offer regarding how these prisoner groups come to form, the indications are that prisoners who seek the company of prisoners on the basis of similar backgrounds in terms of regional origin, penal history or criminal activity are those most likely to be involved in gang-related activity. Similarly, the research offers some insight into the most common activities of these particular prisoner groups. It notes the involvement

of such groups in violent events and discovered that staff presence was not necessarily the deterrent to violent behaviour that might be expected. Also, the eruptions of violence in a prison setting do not follow any clear pattern; they can occur at any time in any area of the prison.

The research also offers insight into the trading activity of prisoners involved in gang-related activity. Results demonstrate that although these groups were prepared to trade most items in prison, drug trafficking was most clearly associated with involvement in gang-related activity. Adding to this, the study also reveals that prisoners involved in gang-related activity were likely to be involved with individuals outside the prison in a range of offences including drug trafficking, violent and non violent crime. This finding gives cause for concern in terms of the criminal justice system's ability to curtail the criminal activity of offenders even for the duration of a prison sentence.

This point also relates to the debate in American research surrounding the issue of importation vs. indigenous prison gang formation. As chapter 1 argues, if prison gangs form in prison, then they may be considered to be a penal problem, if they result from community gangs being imported into the prison, then they may be considered to be a community problem. However, the current findings seem to imply that to consider prison and the community as dichotomous in terms of crime is inaccurate and that prisoner group activity, given its links to the community, is a social problem that influences and is influenced by both prison and community settings. Consequently, it is a problem that does not owe its solution to *either* the prison *or* the community, rather, it needs to be addressed by both.

Finally the current research shed some light on which prisoners are most vulnerable to involvement in gang-related activity. To some extent age is associated with involvement in gang-related activity, but it is a limited relationship. When the best predictors of gang-related activity are considered, age no longer plays a part. Similarly, gender clearly links to some

prisoners' gang-related activity, since male naïve prisoners were more involved than female naïve prisoners. However, as with age, the relationship of gender to gang-related activity is not relevant for all prisoners, since male and female recidivist prisoners do not differ in their involvement in gang-related activity. In the same way, the role of social support plays a role in the gang-related activity of naïve and recidivist prisoners, but in different ways, yet when the best predictors of gang-related activity are considered overall, then the role of social support is lost. However, the relationship between recidivism and gang-related activity is consistently clear and is apparent as early as the second sentence. Similarly, the relationship between prisonization and prisoners' involvement in gang-related activity is compelling and indicates that prisoners who integrate into the prison's subculture are those most vulnerable to involvement in gang-related activity.

Consequently it is not possible to draw unequivocal conclusions about who is most likely to become involved in prisoner groups and gang-related activity. Nonetheless, from the current findings it is possible to make some cautious inferences that may facilitate the development of future research into a number of issues associated with gang-related activity in the English and Welsh prison estate.



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# Appendix 1

## Staff survey Questionnaire

**Prison gang related events**

**Please answer each question truthfully. Please indicate how often you have encountered each of the following events in this prison.**

1) Prisoners forming close knit groups

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

2) Prisoners physically assaulting other prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

3) Prisoners involved with outside gangs' activities

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

4) Prisoners requesting transfers to other units in the prison

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

5) Prisoners' families being threatened by groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

6) Prisoners verbally threatening staff

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

7) Physical assaults on staff by groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

8) Prisoner groups threatening the safety of prison staff

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

9) Groups of prisoners having more control over events in the prison than the officers?

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

10) Groups of prisoners making you believe that staff may lose control of the prison might be lost

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

11) Prisoners requesting protective custody

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

12) Prisoners with tattoos indicating membership of a gang

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

13) Prisoners with more tobacco than they are allowed

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

14) Prisoners with more phone cards than they are allowed

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

15) Prisoners with drugs

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

16) Groups of prisoners physically dominating other groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

17) Groups of prisoners verbally dominating other groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

18) Prisoners forming groups according to their race

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

19) Prisoners forming groups according to where they come from

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

20) Opposing groups of prisoners arguing over personal possessions

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

21) Prisoners who belong to outside groups such as the British National Party

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
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22) Prisoners who belong to outside groups such as British National Party trying to take charge of groups of prisoners inside

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

23) Groups of prisoners making you afraid for your safety

Never (1)      Sometimes (2)      Frequently (3)      Very Frequently (4)

24) Prisoners possessing alcohol

Never (1)      Sometimes (2)      Frequently (3)      Very Frequently (4)

25) Secret racial groupings of prisoners

Never (1)      Sometimes (2)      Frequently (3)      Very Frequently (4)

Finally would you please state:

Your age \_\_\_\_\_

Your gender                      (Male)                      (Female)

How long you have served as a prison officer \_\_\_\_\_

Your officer grade \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 2:

Briefing sheet for staff survey

## Research into group behaviour in prisons

### Participant copy

Jane Wood is conducting a survey into the existence and development of prisoner groups, in order to assess what, if any, interventions need to be developed in order to address this possible problem. Jane is a postgraduate student at the University of Kent at Canterbury and has the support of H.M. Prison Service for this study. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. It would help the research if you completed all questions asked, however, you are free to leave out any which you feel you cannot answer.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary and confidential. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. If, at a later date, you wish to withdraw from the study, you should contact the Psychology Department (phone no 01227 764000) at the University of Kent at Canterbury and quote your questionnaire number. Research records are confidential and people reading the results of the study will be unable to identify individual participants.

At a later date, if you wish to withdraw from the research, then your questionnaire number will enable identification of your questionnaire, which can then be withdrawn from the study. There will be no record of your identity and there is no way that questionnaires can be linked to people's names.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Your questionnaire number is:

---

## Appendix 3:

Gang-related events questionnaire:

Pilot and main study

## Pilot study

**Prison gang related events**

**Please answer each question truthfully. Please indicate how often you have encountered each of the following events in this prison.**

1) Prisoners forming close knit groups

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

2) Prisoners physically assaulting other prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

3) Prisoners involved with outside gangs' activities

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

4) Prisoners requesting transfers to other units in the prison

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

5) Prisoners' families being threatened by groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

6) Prisoners verbally threatening staff

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

7) Physical assaults on staff by groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

8) Prisoner groups threatening the safety of prison staff

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

9) Groups of prisoners having more control over events in the prison than the officers?

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

10) Groups of prisoners making you believe that staff may lose control of the prison might be lost

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

11) Prisoners requesting protective custody

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

12) Prisoners with tattoos indicating membership of a gang

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

13) Prisoners with more tobacco than they are allowed

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

14) Prisoners with more phone cards than they are allowed

Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

15) Prisoners with drugs

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

16) Groups of prisoners physically dominating other groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

17) Groups of prisoners verbally dominating other groups of prisoners

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

18) Prisoners forming groups according to their race

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

19) Prisoners forming groups according to where they come from

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

20) Opposing groups of prisoners arguing over personal possessions

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

21) Prisoners who belong to outside groups such as the British National Party

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------

22) Prisoners who belong to outside groups such as British National Party trying to take charge of groups of prisoners inside

Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Very Frequently (4)
--------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------------





## Main study

**Please answer truthfully how often you have you encountered the following events in this prison within the last 6 months**

1) Prisoners requesting transfers to other units in the prison

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

2) Prisoners' families being threatened by a group or groups of 3 or more prisoners

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

3) Groups of 3 or more prisoners making you believe that staff might lose control of the prison

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

4) Prisoners requesting protective custody

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

5) Prisoners with tattoos indicating membership of a gang

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

6) Prisoners with more tobacco than they are allowed

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

7) Prisoners with more phone cards than they are allowed

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

**Please answer truthfully how often you have you encountered the following events in this prison within the last 6 months**

8) Prisoners with drugs

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

9) Groups of 3 or more prisoners physically dominating other prisoners

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

10) Groups of 3 or more prisoners verbally dominating other prisoners

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

11) Prisoners forming groups of 3 or more according to their race

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

12) Prisoners forming groups of 3 or more according to where they come from

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

13) Opposing groups of prisoners arguing over personal possessions

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

14) A group of 3 or more prisoners verbally threatening staff

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

**Please answer truthfully how often you have you encountered the following events in this prison within the last 6 months**

15) Physical assaults on staff by groups of 3 or more prisoners

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

16) Groups of 3 or more prisoners threatening the safety of prison staff

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

17) Groups of 3 or more prisoners having more control over events in the prison than the officers?

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

18) Prisoners forming close knit groups

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

19) A group of 3 or more prisoners physically assaulting other prisoners

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

20) Prisoners involved with outside gangs' activities

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

21) Prisoners who belong to outside groups such as the British National Party

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

**Please answer truthfully how often you have you encountered the following events in this prison within the last 6 months**

22) Prisoners who belong to outside groups such as British National Party trying to take charge of groups of prisoners inside

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

23) Groups of 3 or more prisoners making you afraid for your safety

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

24) Prisoners possessing alcohol

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

25) Secret racial groupings of prisoners

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Never	1 -10 times	Don't know	11 - 20 times	more than 20 times

**Please answer truthfully how often you have you encountered the following events in this prison within the last 6 months**

Finally would you please state:

Your age -----

Your gender (Male) (Female)

How many prison sentences you have served including this one \_\_\_\_\_

How long this prison sentence is for \_\_\_\_\_

How long you expect to be in prison for this sentence \_\_\_\_\_

How long you have been in this prison \_\_\_\_\_

Your ethnic origin:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 white           | 7 Asian Other          |
| 2 Black African   | 8 Bangladeshi          |
| 3 Black Caribbean | 9 Chinese              |
| 4 Black Other     | 10 Other               |
| 5 Asian Indian    | 11 Information refused |
| 6 Asian Pakistani |                        |

## Appendix 4:

Group formation and function questionnaire:

Pilot and main study

## Pilot study



**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

1 Some groups of prisoners are violent to other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

2 (If agreed with last question) when does this violence happen?

How does it happen?

Where does it happen?

3) Sometimes my friends and I are violent to other prisoners?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

4) Some prisoner groups trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

5) (If agreed with last question) What sort of materials and/or extra supplies do they get?

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

6) Sometimes my friends and I trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

7) (If agreed with last question) Trade in what?

8) Prisoners who take drugs often join groups to get drugs

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

9) Sometimes I take drugs

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

10) Some groups of prisoners have their own rules that they stick to.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

11) My friends and I have our own rules that we stick to

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

12) Prisoners who have done time before at the same prison are more likely to be friends in here.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

13) Prisoners who have previously done time in the same place are likely to be friends now even if they didn't know each other then.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

14) Some prisoners were friends before they came in here

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

15) (If agreed with last question) How did they know each other?

16) When new prisoners come into this prison they are likely to be in danger from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

17) When I first came into this prison, I felt in danger from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

18) When you first came in here which other prisoners did you think that you might get on with? Why?

19) What would you say is the most important thing a prisoner new to this prison needs to learn about the other prisoners?

20) When you first came in here what was the most important thing you learned about the other prisoners?

21) How do you think other prisoners decide who they will be friendly with?

22) How did you decide who to be friendly with?

23) I mix with the same prisoners most of the time

Strongly  
Disagree

Disagree

Neither agree  
or disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

24) Prisoners often stick together in groups

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

25) Some groups of prisoners look out for each other i.e. protect each other from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

26) The prisoners I mix with protect each other from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

27) Other prisoners and prison staff see my friends and I as a group

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

28) In some groups of prisoners, there is one person who is like a leader

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

29) When I'm with my friends one of us usually takes charge

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

30) I knew some of the other prisoners before I came in here

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

31) (If agreed with last question) How did you know them?

32) Some prisoners wear clothing or tattoos to show they belong to a group or gang

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

33) My friends and I wear clothes or tattoos to show we belong to the same group or gang

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

34) Some groups of prisoners are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

35) My friends and I have at some time been involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

## Main study

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

1 Some groups of prisoners are violent to other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

2 (If agreed with last question) when does this violence happen?

How does it happen?

Where does it happen?

3) Sometimes my friends and I are violent to other prisoners?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

4) Some prisoner groups trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

5) (If agreed with last question) What sort of materials and/or extra supplies do they get?



**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

6) Sometimes my friends and I trade in illegal materials and/or extra supplies

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

7) (If agreed with last question) Trade in what?

8) Prisoners who take drugs often join groups to get drugs

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

9) Sometimes I take drugs

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

10) Some groups of prisoners have their own rules that they stick to.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

11) My friends and I have our own rules that we stick to

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

12) Prisoners who have done time before at the same prison are more likely to be friends in here.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

13) Prisoners who have previously done time in the same place are likely to be friends now even if they didn't know each other then.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

14) Some prisoners were friends before they came in here

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

15) (If agreed with last question) How did they know each other?

16) When new prisoners come into this prison they are likely to be in danger from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

17) When I first came into this prison, I felt in danger from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

18) When you first came in here which other prisoners did you think that you might get on with? Why?

19) What would you say is the most important thing a prisoner new to this prison needs to learn about the other prisoners?

20) When you first came in here what was the most important thing you learned about the other prisoners?

21) How do you think other prisoners decide who they will be friendly with?

22) I mix with the same prisoners most of the time

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

23) Prisoners often stick together in groups

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

24) Some groups of prisoners look out for each other i.e. protect each other from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

25) The prisoners I mix with protect each other from other prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

26) Other prisoners and prison staff see my friends and I as a group

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

27) In some groups of prisoners, there is one person who is like a leader

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

28) When I'm with my friends one of us usually takes charge

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

**Prisoner Groups: formation and activities. Please respond truthfully to all statements**

29) I knew some of the other prisoners before I came in here

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

30) (If agreed with last question) How did you know them?

31) My friends and I wear clothes or tattoos to show we belong to the same group or gang

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

32) Some groups of prisoners are involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

33) (if agreed with question 32) What sort of illegal activities?

34) My friends and I have at some time been involved in illegal activities with people outside the prison

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

35) (if agreed with question 34) What sort of illegal activities?

Appendix 5:

Prisonization questionnaire

### Prisonization

**This questionnaire is confidential so please be truthful. The statements relate to your feelings about being in prison.**

- 1) Other prisoners are right when they say, "Don't do anything more than you have to"

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

- 2) It's better to tell the staff what they want to hear than to tell them the truth if you want to get out soon

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

- 3) It's a good idea to keep to yourself here as much as you can

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

- 4) I probably spend more of my free time talking to members of staff than most of the other prisoners do.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

- 5) Anyone who talks about his/her personal problems with people on the staff is weak

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

6) I try to stay out of trouble but nobody is going to push me around and get away with it

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

7) I have more in common with people on the staff than I do with most of the prisoners

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

8) When a prisoner deals with staff they should stick up for their own beliefs and not let the staff tell them what's good and what's not.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)



## Appendix 6:

Social support and Significant others external to prison  
questionnaire:

Pilot and main study

## Pilot study

**Significant others Scale (external to prison)**

Listed below are various people who may be important in your life. For each person please circle a number from 1 to 7 to show how well he or she provides the type of help that is listed.

The second part of each question asks you to rate how you would like things to be if they were exactly as you hoped for. Please put a circle around one number between 1 and 7 to show what your rating is.

**Please note:** if there is no such person in your life, please leave that section blank and go on to the next section.

<b>Section 1 – Spouse (Husband/Wife) or Partner</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1) a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your spouse/partner .....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
2) a) Can you lean on and turn to your spouse/partner since you have been in prison?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
3) a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
4) a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
b) Did this match your ideal?.....	1	2	3 4 5 6 7

**Section 2 – Mother**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>				<b>Always</b>	
1) a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your mother?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2) a) Can you lean on and turn to your mother since you have been in prison?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3) a)Does she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b)What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4) a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b)Did this match your ideal?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

**Section 3 – Father**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>				<b>Always</b>	
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your Father?..... ..1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be? .....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to your Father since you have been in prison?..... ..1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3 a)Does he give you practical help? .....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b)What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4 a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b)Did this match your ideal?..... 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

**Section 4 -Closest Brother or Sister****Never****Sometimes****Always**

- |                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) a)Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your brother/sister? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) a)Can you lean on and turn to your brother/sister since you have been in prison?.....    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) a)Does he/she give you practical help?.....                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)Did this match your ideal?.....                                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
- 

**Section 5 – Other Brother or Sister****Never****Sometimes****Always**

- |                                                                                            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) a)Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your brother/sister?..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) a)Can you lean on and turn to your brother/sister since you have been in prison?.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) a)Does he/she give you practical help?.....                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)Did this match your ideal?.....                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Section 6 – Closest Son or Daughter**

Age of child \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of child \_\_\_\_\_

	Never	Sometimes	Always
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your son/daughter?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3) a) Can you lean on and turn to your son/daughter since you have been in prison?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3) a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4) a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) Did this match your ideal?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7

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**Section 7 – Best Friend**

	Never	Sometimes	Always
1) a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your best friend?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
2) a) Can you lean on and turn to your best friend since you have been in prison?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3) a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4) a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) Did this match your ideal?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7

## Main study

**Significant others Scale (external to prison)**

Listed below are various people who may be important in your life. For each person please circle a number from 1 to 7 to show how well he or she provides the type of help that is listed.

The second part of each question asks you to rate how you would like things to be if they were exactly as you hoped for. Please put a circle around one number between 1 and 7 to show what your rating is.

**Please note:** if there is no such person in your life, please leave that section blank and go on to the next section.

<b>Section 1 – Spouse (Husband/Wife) or Partner</b>	<b>Never</b>		<b>Sometimes</b>		<b>Always</b>
---------------------------------------------------------	--------------	--	------------------	--	---------------

- |                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your spouse/partner ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2) a) Can you lean on and turn to your spouse/partner since you have been in prison?.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3) a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4) a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) Did this match your ideal?.....                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |



**Section 2 – Mother**

**Never                      Sometimes                      Always**

- 1) a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your mother?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 2) a) Can you lean on and turn to your mother since you have been in prison?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 3) a)Does she give you practical help?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b)What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 4) a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b)Did this match your ideal?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7

**Section 3 – Father**

**Never                      Sometimes                      Always**

- 1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your Father?..... ..1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be? .....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 2 a) Can you lean on and turn to your Father since you have been in prison?..... ..1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 3 a)Does he give you practical help? .....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b)What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 4 a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b)Did this match your ideal?..... 1    2    3    4    5    6    7

**Section 4 -Closest Brother or Sister**

**Never                      Sometimes                      Always**

- |                                                                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) a)Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your brother/sister? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) a)Can you lean on and turn to your brother/sister since you have been in prison?.....    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) a)Does he/she give you practical help?.....                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)Did this match your ideal?.....                                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
- 

**Section 5 – Other Brother or Sister**

**Never                      Sometimes                      Always**

- |                                                                                            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) a)Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your brother/sister?..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) a)Can you lean on and turn to your brother/sister since you have been in prison?.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b) What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) a)Does he/she give you practical help?.....                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)What rating would your ideal be?.....                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b)Did this match your ideal?.....                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Section 6 – Closest Son or Daughter**

Age of child \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gender of child \_\_\_\_\_

		Never		Sometimes		Always	
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your son/daughter?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) a) Can you lean on and turn to your son/daughter since you have been in prison?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) Did this match your ideal?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section 7 – Best Friend**

		Never		Sometimes		Always	
1) a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with your best friend?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) a) Can you lean on and turn to your best friend since you have been in prison?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) Did this match your ideal?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Finally please could you state if there is anyone outside the prison you feel you do/should support. Please state their relationship to you and the actual and ideal levels of support you provide for this person**

**Person No 1. Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1) a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 2) a)Can they lean on and turn to you since you have been in prison?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3) a)Do you give him/her practical help?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b)What rating would your ideal be?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 4)a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?..... ..1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b)Did this match your ideal?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Person No 2 Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_ -**

- 1a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 2a)Can they lean on and turn to you since you have been in prison?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3a)Do you give him/her practical help?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b)What rating would your ideal be?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 4)a)Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?..... ..1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- b)Did this match your ideal?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Person No 3 (Relationship to you)** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 2a) Can they lean on and turn to you since you have been in prison?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 3a) Do you give him/her practical help?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 4a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) Did this match your ideal?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 

**Person No 4 (Relationship to you)** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 2a) Can they lean on and turn to you since you have been in prison?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 3a) Do you give him/her practical help?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- 4a) Did you spend much time together socially before you came in here?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7
- b) Did this match your ideal?.....1    2    3    4    5    6    7

## Appendix 7:

Social support and significant others in prison questionnaire:

Pilot and main study

## Pilot study

**Significant Others Scale (within prison)**

Please list below up to seven people **within this prison** who may have an important effect on your life in prison. If the individual you select is a prisoner please state that e.g. John – prisoner. If the individual is a member of staff please state their job.

For each person please circle a number from 1 to 7 to show how well he or she provides the type of help that is listed. The second part of each question asks you to rate how you would like things to be. As before please put a circle around one number between 1 and 7.

<b>Person 1</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4

---

<b>Person 2</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4



<b>Person 3</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>			
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

<b>Person 4</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>			
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Person 5</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>			
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

<b>Person 6</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>			
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Main study

**Significant Others Scale (within prison)**

Please list below up to seven people **within this prison** who may have an important effect on your life in prison. If the individual you select is a prisoner please state that e.g. John – prisoner. If the individual is a member of staff please state their job.

For each person please circle a number from 1 to 7 to show how well he or she provides the type of help that is listed. The second part of each question asks you to rate how you would like things to be. As before please put a circle around one number between 1 and 7.

<b>Person 1</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7

---

<b>Person 2</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7

<b>Person 3</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>			<b>Always</b>	
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

<b>Person 4</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>			<b>Always</b>	
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>Person 5</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7

---

<b>Person 6</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
1 a) Can you trust, talk to frankly and share your feelings with this person?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
2 a) Can you lean on and turn to this person in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3 a) Does he/she give you practical help?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4 5 6 7

**Finally please could you state if there is anyone inside the prison you feel you do/should support. Please state their relationship to you and the actual and ideal levels of support you provide for this person**

**Person 1 relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_**

	Never	Sometimes	Always
1 a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
2 a) Can this person lean on and turn to you in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
3 a) Does you give him/her practical help?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7

**Person 2 relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_**

	Never	Sometimes	Always
1 a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
2 a) Can this person lean on and turn to you in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
3 a) Do you give him/her practical help?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3 4 5	6 7

**Person 3 relationship to you** \_\_\_\_\_

	Never	Sometimes			Always		
1 a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2 a) Can this person lean on and turn to you in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3 a) Does you give him/her practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

**Person 4 relationship to you** \_\_\_\_\_

	Never	Sometimes			Always		
1 a) Can this person trust, talk to frankly and share their feelings with you?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2 a) Can this person lean on and turn to you in times of difficulty?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b) What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3 a) Do you give him/her practical help?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4 a) Can you spend time with him/her socially?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
What rating would your ideal be?.....1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



## Appendix 8

Briefing sheet for pilot and main study

## Research into group behaviour in prisons

### Participant copy

My name is Jane Wood and I am conducting a study into the development of prisoner groups, their activities in the prison and also the levels and sources of social support prisoners believe they receive. I am a postgraduate student at the University of Kent at Canterbury and have the support of H.M. Prison Service for this study. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study, by answering a questionnaire in the presence of the researcher. It would help the research if you answered all the questions you are asked, however, you are not obliged to answer any you feel you cannot answer.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary and confidential. However, I am obliged to disclose any revelations you make to me if you state you intend in the future to harm yourself, another person or intend to escape from prison. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. If, at a later date, you wish to withdraw from the study, you should contact the Psychology Department (phone no 01227 764000) at the University of Kent at Canterbury and quote your questionnaire number. Research records are confidential and people reading the results of the study will be unable to identify individual participants.

At a later date, if you wish to withdraw from the research, then your questionnaire number will enable identification of your questionnaire, which can then be withdrawn from the study. There will be no record of your identity and there is no way that questionnaires can be linked to people's names.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Your questionnaire number is:

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