Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship 2014 –

Eric Phelps

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1. Abstract

This report examines the use of mediation as an intervention for reducing gang violence in London, whilst examining the outcomes of other intervention techniques currently used in Chicago, New York, Boston and Los Angeles. This study is a result of three years of qualitative and quantitative research in London, England, which incorporated 17 interviews with trained conflict engagement specialists, an ex-gang member and police officers and the analysis of intervention reports of 246 gang members. This research begins to address the gap that currently exists in a thorough and meaningful evaluation of intervention programmes and outcomes that specifically address gangs and serious violence. To date, exhaustive checks conducted shows no research has been completed which determine if mediation is an effective tactic to reduce violence. This report goes some way to address this, and posits that mediation is an effective tactic in the fight against violence escalation in London, whilst exploring the outcomes of similar interventions employed in major US cities.

In London, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with conflict engagement specialists or mediators and service providers to gain an insight into their expectations and the perceived outcomes of mediation. I conducted semi-structured interviews with an ex-gang member who had first-hand experience of the mediation process and examine the outcomes and experiences. In the US, I interviewed law enforcement personnel, a district attorney, academics, and community-based interventionists, such as youth workers, the clergy, and an ex gang member involved in rehabilitating young offenders.

The development of mediation as a tactic, delivered by a London-based not-for-profit company called Capital Conflict Management (CCM) is examined in this research. The initiative has evolved from using mediation to diffuse serious threats of recurring violence between two or more individuals involved in intra-gang conflict, to single conflict negotiation interventions following a shooting or stabbing where actual threats to life exist. Conflict negotiation focuses on the situational causes of violence, learning lessons from initiatives such as the Boston
“Ceasefire” Gun Project. Defining what gang violence encompasses is problematic, mainly because defining “gang” membership or association is not easy. Due to inconsistencies amongst first responder agencies regarding what being a gang member actually means, joined up preventative and enforcement action is wanting. Agencies less inclined to label young people as gang members have created more practical problems that have led to the stagnation of activity as practitioners fail to reach a consensus over the best tactics to employ in reducing gang violence. There are many practical difficulties identifying individuals who belong to gangs, or perhaps more importantly, those who are at risk of becoming members, and hence warrant early intervention. This fundamental issue has created a legacy of disagreements between service practitioners in their assessments of the risks faced by individuals involved in gangs. In fact, the selection process for young people who are potentially at risk is, in itself, problematic, as there is concern that young people risk being stereotyped as gang members can suffer negative consequences as a result.

My observations are:

- A multi-agency approach is needed to support interventions.
- Referrals for interventions must come from all those involved in the Criminal Justice Partnership in order to facilitate targeted interventions and transformational support. Transformational support includes training, employment, access to better housing and healthcare, for example, and it should sit alongside or bolt-on to the intervention process.
- Specific patterns of violent behaviour, rather than gang membership, should trigger preventative and enforcement attention.
- Improvements are needed in intelligence sharing between the police, probation and prison services so that interventions can be properly co-ordinated.
- Enhanced legitimate testing of preventative interventions is needed to ensure funding for programmes are appropriately targeted where they are most needed.
2. Introduction

“There is no generic form of gang, only similarities among diverse forms” (Klein, 1996:71)

I am Detective Superintendent Eric Phelps of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Whilst working in the Specialist Crime Directorate at New Scotland Yard in 2009, I became involved in identifying interventions that reduced gang violence in London and sharing best practice across the organisation. I was responsible for rolling out mediation as an intervention to reduce gang violence across London. In 2010, I began a Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice where I explored the outcomes of mediation.

I applied for the Winston Churchill Fellowship because I wanted to explore other types of interventions currently being used in cities comparable to London, and more importantly, establish if any of these interventions actually work. I identified four major US cities: New York, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles as cities comparable in size and demographics to London in order to draw clear parallels with the situation in London. The Boston Globe reported on 31st December 2013 that these large cities were reporting reductions in homicides, using data submitted by the state police departments in New York, California, Illinois and Massachusetts.

In New York, the number had decreased to 329 in 2013 from 413 in 2012. In Chicago, the number had gone down to 412 in 2013 from 497 in 2012, and in Los Angeles, 246 in 2013 compared with 299 in 2012. Boston reported 40 homicides in 2013, down from 58 in 2012.

London had 99 homicides in 2013 down from 106 in 2012 (met.police.uk).

Defining the meaning of “gangs” for this report

Before examining the outcomes of interventions to reduce gang violence, it is necessary to provide some background into the nature of gangs, in particular, describing what gangs look like and how they operate. Existing UK literature lacks a sufficient framework from which to introduce such an investigation relating to gangs in London. It was for this reason that I sought to travel to the USA, as having extensively examined the various sources of literature
emanating from studies conducted there, it was apparent that the phenomena of gangs and gang violence had been the subject of research for almost 100 years. In an ethnographic seminal study of 1,313 Chicago gangs, conducted in the 1920s, Thrasher determined that no two gangs are exactly alike. (Thrasher, 1927).

Even after nearly 100 years of study, scholars are still unable to universally agree who is and who is not a gang member. (See Thrasher, 1927; Klein (1971); Haskell and Yablonsky (1982) Miller (1982) Curry and Spergel (1988) Hallsworth and Young (2008)) and even today, there is little consensus amongst practitioners as to what constitutes a gang.

Many definitions seek to determine membership by placing emphasis on the number of meetings and amount of contact between individual gang members (Miller, 1982; Short, 1990; Huff, 1993). The existence of an obvious leader is another method used to define a gang. (Johnstone, 1981; Miller, 1982; Spergel, 1984). The volume of its members is another factor, whilst most definitions portray a gang as being a group (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996, Curry & Decker, 1998).

The communal feature that unites the various definitions of what comprises a gang requires that its origins and essential purpose for being is its involvement in criminal activity. (M. W. Klein, 1971)

This report will adopt the Centre for Social Justice definition:

A relatively durable, predominately street-based group of young people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence, (3) identify with or lay claim over territory, (4) have some form of identifying structural feature and (5) are in conflict with other, similar gangs (Centre for Social Justice 2009: 21).

However, I would agree that “There is no question that the major criterion used by many audiences in the definition of gang is the groups’ participation in illegal behaviour” (Spergel, 1990:179) (Miller, Maxson, & Klein, 2001)
The Los Angeles’ Sheriff’s Department define gangs as "A group of three or more persons who have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community." (Bacca, 2013)

Malcolm Klein is recognised among the leading researchers on the subject of gangs. He describes five different types of gangs: Traditional, Neoclassical, Compressed, Collective and Specialty. (M. Klein, W., 1996) Each type is determined by characteristics such as their duration, their size, the presence of subgroups, the age range of members, a focus on territorial boundaries and commission of specific crime types.

In 2004, The Rt Hon Ian Duncan Smith set up the Centre for Social Justice with the aim “to put social justice at the heart of British politics.” The UK Gangs Working Group formed in 2009 and is made up of “prominent academics, practitioners and policy makers who have expertise in the relevant fields.” This group “consult nationally and internationally, especially with charities and social enterprises who are the champions of the welfare society.” (Antrobus, 2009)

This working group attempted to introduce a common definition to be used by all those involved in tackling gangs to end this lexicon confusion, and thereby enable meaningful comparative analysis between the various different studies and interventions in place. The current Coalition Government has continued adopting the Gangs Working Group’s five-point definition and that is the definition chosen for the recent Ending Gang and Youth Violence report released in 2011. (Home Office, 2011)

**Mediation**

Mediation in the context of gang violence can be described as an intervention that seeks to identify the cause of the problem and identify those involved in the conflict. Trained conflict engagement specialists then make contact with those identified. The specialists tell the individuals who they are, why they are there and what the consequences of continuing a violent
course of behaviour will mean. They provide support, mentoring and often solutions to social problems such as housing, education, access to jobs etc., by securing support from other partner agencies already working with or potentially able to support the individuals concerned. They deliver mediation in pairs and a typical mediation involves over 30 hours of face-to-face meetings per individual. An ideal mediation outcome would be the warring parties sitting down in a room and undertaking not to continue with violence. However, the more common outcome of an individual promising to desist from escalating violence is achieved.

Mediation is a tactic that the MPS has been using for over four years. A not-for-profit company called Capital Conflict Management (CCM) delivers it. Their mediators are conflict engagement specialists, who have received an accredited training course through the Open College Network. In addition, they receive mentoring training and three monthly continuous assessment development training.

### 3 Aims and Objectives

I travelled to four cities in the US to study their intervention programmes which prevent and reduce gang violence to draw comparisons and glean best practice to compliment the great work that already exists in London. My hope was to obtain an informed perspective on innovative creative programmes currently underway and to discover new initiatives that are achieving visible results in reducing the continuum of violence. My goal was also to determine how law enforcement officials secured buy-in and support from those involved to roll out their intervention programmes in their jurisdictions.

As part of the study for my Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice, I hoped to validate my initial findings that that the gang offenders deemed the most violent were four times less likely to engage in violent reoffending once referred for mediation than those similar gang members not referred.
The outcome of this study was achieved by asking two research questions:

- How do members of gangs engage with intervention tactics when instigated?
- What are the outcomes of a successful intervention?

I had four key objectives in my study:

- To determine how interventions are established as a tactic for diffusing gang tensions and reducing violence
- To examine what opportunities are provided for gang members who engage with intervention programmes to exit their lifestyle
- To determine the benefits and limitations of intervention programmes and transformational services (to illustrate how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate responses develop or reactive behaviours become apparent during the course of an intervention programme)
- And finally, drawing on the outcomes of the above to identify the implications in practice for a mediation programme.

3. Research methodology

I adopted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the outcomes of mediation. For the quantitative study, I examined 123 individuals involved in gang violence that had been referred for mediation and compared them to a control sample of 123 individuals also involved in gang violence but not referred for mediation. Regarding the qualitative research, the first set of data originated from 17 in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted between March 2012 and December 2013, in London. I interviewed nine conflict engagement specialists; one youth worker involved in gang desistance programmes; three police analysts; and four police officers from the Specialist Crime Directorate at New Scotland Yard.

Having concluded that much of the research into gang initiatives are rooted in the US,
I chose to visit the cities of Boston, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles between February and November 2014 to speak with those directly involved in gang intervention programmes. In total, I conducted a further 27 semi-structured interviews to gain insight and data from police officers, clergy, probation officers, a district attorney, academics, and former gang members involved in community projects that aim to support gang members who wish to give up their gang lifestyle.

I chose not to study actual gang behaviour in the field and did not conduct routine observations of gang members’ lives and their interaction with family and friends outside of the gang. For this perspective I relied on the accounts of others who witnessed first-hand these occurrences.

The interview questions followed these themes:

- What does mediation or the intervention mean to the interviewee?
- Engagement of those referred for the intervention
- What does a successful first meeting look like?
- What methods are employed to facilitate engagement?
- What information do interventionists receive prior to the first meeting?
- Are the most appropriate people referred for interventions?
- Availability of additional transformational services
- Does the intervention work?
- What would enhance the programme?
- Do those who engage always want to exit their gang lifestyle?
- Are there different levels of interventions?
- Limitations
- What does success look like?
- What outcomes are those who commission the programme looking for?

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analysed thematically.
4. Findings

Gangs are made up of predominantly young people aged between 18 and 24 years, but even younger children are involved in or on the periphery acting as lookouts. There is a trend for adult or teenage criminals to conceal illegal items on young children in a bid to avoid detection as they are less likely to be subjected to stop and search tactics than a youth over 10 years of age (Barrett, 2009).

Street Gangs have their own identity and their own language, which sets them apart from mainstream society. They use words such as Beef to mean dispute or feud and Bling to denote their unique gangster fashion style, usually symbolised by gaudy and ostentatious jewellery. They operate collectively in Crews or Posses, which are terms for gangs. Their leaders are called Face and more established members called Elders and their followers who operate on the street are known as Soldiers. The new recruits or mid-level gang members are called Youngers, whilst aspiring recruits (usually very young in age - under 10) are known as Tiny. Their territory where they hang out or operate is called Endz or Turf. There is great emphasis placed on Rep, which means reputation and any perceived affront to this is often a root cause for violence, which inevitably follows.¹ (Simon, 2012)

Why do people join gangs?

A study by the Gang Free Project in Los Angeles ("Risk Factors associated with gang membership" 2013) cite six risk factors which increase the odds of a young person joining a gang:

- Lack of jobs for youth
- Poverty compounded by social isolation
- Domestic violence

¹ Semi-structured interview with CCM Operations Manager Andy Simon, November 8th 2012
• Negative peer networks
• Lack of parental supervision
• Early academic failure and lack of school attachment

Getting involved in gangs can be the beginning of a cyclical process that can ruin a young person’s life. With a criminal record it can be harder to get a job or progress into further education. Being caught up in violent incidents can lead to being arrested, sent to prison, being seriously injured or even killed.

5.1 London

Gangs exist all over London but are more established in about 20 London boroughs. (Gardener, 2012) Accepting the definition used by the Centre for Social Justice’s report, Dying to Belong (2009), the MPS estimate that there around 257 active gangs within London consisting of 4,500 individuals. (MPS 2012) This relatively small number of people is responsible for approximately 22% of serious violence, 17% of robbery, 50% of all shootings and 14% of rapes in London. (Dawson, Stanko, Higgins, & Rehman, 2011)

What is the MPS doing to reduce gang violence?

“No single agency, community group, discipline, or approach alone is sufficient to successfully address a complex problem such as gang crime.” (Spergel & Grossman 1997:469)

The MPS has recognised that gang membership and criminality associated with it is not a problem it can tackle alone. Enforcement tactics, when used effectively, do go some way to displacing the problem, whilst not eradicate it completely. To effectively tackle this problem the MPS sought the assistance of London’s communities. By doing so, they sought to increase the opportunities to bring offenders to justice with supporting independent evidence and reduce opportunities for gang criminality with a particular focus on violence reduction.
This reasonably fresh approach to tackling gang violence is having some positive outcomes. The MPS has ensured its internal structures are fit for purpose in terms of enforcement and intelligence, and are further developing a partnership working structure. They are exploring alternative methods that a few years ago may have been unthinkable, such as independently delivered mediation which targets those suspected of having committed, or about to commit serious violence.

A well-used police tactic is to deploy a highly visible presence into known gang areas and to increase its use of targeted stop and search to reduce risk and harm posed by those who carry weapons. However, the Guardian reported “In the year 2011/12, there were more than 1.1 million stop and searches, 90% of which did not result in arrest.” (Shiner & Delsol, 2013) The numbers of weapon sweeps conducted is increased in an effort to take away as many weapons from the street as possible. Gang members, knowing that they are likely to be stopped and search, hide knives and blades in bushes and gardens to avoid detection.

Few determined efforts have been made to date to understand gang-related violence in the UK and to successfully develop anything that could prevent it recurring. The overarching and favoured response to perceived gang-related violence has been to identify those involved and arrest them, rather than to ascertain its cause and develop and implement transformational interventions to prevent further incidents occurring. (Hallsworth and Young, 2008)

Mediation as a disruption and violence prevention tactic has been available to the MPS and widely used amongst 12 of its 32 boroughs since 2009. (MPS, 2010)

**Mediation in London**

The use of mediation in Great Britain as an intervention to diffuse deep running arguments between rival gangs or groups is not new. In Northern Ireland, after a loyalist arson attack at Drumcree, County Ballymoney on 12 July 1998, three young boys (the Quinn brothers - Richard aged 11, Mark aged 9, and Jason aged 7) died after Loyalists threw a petrol bomb through a
rear window at 4.30am during the stand-off over the Orange Order march. The boys' mother and family friends escaped the resulting fire with minor injuries. The family was of mixed religion, the father being Protestant and the mother a Roman Catholic, who were living in a primarily Protestant housing estate. The M.P. for the area, Dr. Ian Paisley, visited the site of the attack and described the murders as "diabolical" and "repugnant." (BBC, 1988) Representatives of groups from all sides of the constitutional issue in Northern Ireland also condemned the killings. Thousands of Catholics and Protestants attended the boys' funeral two days later. The Community came to Mediation Services Northern Ireland, which had been in existence since the mid-1980s, and asked for conflict negotiation intervention.

In the West Midlands, mediation was used following the murders of art students Charlene Ellis, 18, and 17-year-old Letisha Shakespeare, who were shot dead in January 2003 when they were caught in the crossfire between rival gangs in a nightclub in Birmingham. West Midland’s Centre for Conflict Transformation was formed as a direct consequence of these murders and began to mediate between the two rival gangs.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) acknowledged enforcement was not the answer to the problem of street violence involving young people. They identified a gap in the provision of a high-risk mediation capability in London. There were various third sector organisations purporting to offer mediation services on an ad hoc basis, but they often lacked the necessary transitional services needed to support individuals or families post conflict. These mediation service providers were treated with scepticism by local authorities, the police and those involved in conflict alike. There was a need for a more sophisticated, high-level conflict resolution service, independent of the authorities but that could operate in extremely challenging and high risk situations; a service that could be trusted by all those involved in the process. Capital Conflict Management (CCM) was initially setup and implemented by Peter O’Neill (who was instrumental in setting up the West Midlands Mediation service) with support of the Metropolitan Police Service and additional support from London Councils and South East Network alliance of councils. CCM is a Community Interest Company and is based on the
Northern Ireland service and West Midland’s Centre for Conflict Transformation, both of which have had high levels of success.

The challenges that CCM face are many. Group violence in London is widespread, disparate, and chaotic and covers a large geographical area. London is comprised of 32 independently run boroughs, which makes for a complex operating environment for legal and social service providers. (Tribal, 2010)

Mediation services take time to start up, and building capacity in such a complex and politically charged environment takes great care and diplomacy. As a result of strict governance and control measures required by (predominantly) the Metropolitan Police Authority, CCM did not start delivering services until September 2009, despite being first registered in April 2008.

The young people that come to CCM’s attention are far removed from what would be considered “normal” for many young people today. Notwithstanding the complexities surrounding the labelling of individuals as gang members, the individuals referred to CCM are believed to be involved in gang activity. A large majority of them live in constant fear of being killed, and are as much at risk as they are a risk to the rest of society. The high level mediation that CCM provides is successful in obtaining initial access to these individuals - who are often volatile and suspicious of the authorities - and once trust is established, mediators are able to drill down to the root causes of the conflicts that brought them to CCM’s attention. Often, these issues are completely different to the issues initially identified by the authorities. It’s critical to note that without knowing what these underlying issues are, there is little or no chance of successfully resolving the conflict and preventing future occurrences of violence.

CCM uses dynamic risk assessments and high level training to deal with some of the most disenfranchised and disadvantaged members of society. These (mostly young, black) men face concerns around unemployment, substance abuse issues, and often suffer poor health due to their lifestyles and a failure to successfully integrate with mainstream society. They are likely to
have been excluded from school, been marginalised by society and coexist almost exclusively with like-minded individuals with no hope or aspirations for the future. (Simon, 2013)

Referrals are made to CCM in several situations: following a series of violent activities, upon receipt of information regarding the likelihood of serious violence occurring, or at worst case scenario, following a homicide. CCM mediators and conflict engagement specialists (some of whom have first-hand experience in gangs themselves) use their skills and experience to access criminal networks, friends and families in ways that police and other 'first responders' are unable to do. They offer advice as well as support and help in conjunction with other local service providers to begin the mediation process and reduce the cycle of violence wherever possible.

**Determining gang membership for the purposes of mediation**

The Metropolitan Police Intelligence Bureau (MIB) scan intelligent reports submitted from across the 32 MPS London boroughs daily. These reports are created as a result of incoming information from members of the public, partner agencies, e.g. local authorities, and tip information from informants (referred to as covert human intelligence sources). Information is also obtained from scanning social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. MIB also identify isolated instances of violence or increasing gang tension from incidents occurring over the past 24 hours and look at anniversaries of public disorder, murders, and high profile arrests to predict future potential escalations in violent incidents. This complex web of analysis seeks to identify those deemed to pose the most risk and harm to individuals or communities. This intelligence may also come to light following a violent incident (a stabbing where paramedics have been called or a person presents themselves at an Accident and Emergency department at a hospital, for example). Intelligence checks are conducted on the victims, or if known, the suspects, and it is at this point that the MIB piece together supporting intelligence, such as identifying known associates and addresses etc., to identify individuals who could be linked to gangs. These violent incidents are discussed at daily risk meetings in the borough
where they occurred, to establish a borough-wide response and seek to prevent further outbreaks of violence locally. They are also analysed centrally to provide additional asset support to the boroughs and discuss deployment of alternative tactics like mediation where appropriate.

The MPS also have a gang matrix, which prioritises the threat of harm and risk amongst the various gangs in the London area by using a series of point scores based on violence and tensions, in order to prioritise preventative and enforcement activity. Whilst not a perfect predictor of violence, it is designed to systematically highlight emerging or escalating tensions. The boroughs can then be notified accordingly so they can take action.

Rarely do local authorities, probation or prison contribute fully to the picture of gang activity within their area of operation although, some boroughs are realising that they have conflict issues that requires the use of a different tactic. There has been reluctance, particularly amongst certain local authorities, to acknowledge that gangs even exist in their areas. This could be political, in so much as local authorities, by recognising or acknowledging the issues, are then legally committed to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within their boroughs. By not mapping or accounting for the issues, it is sometimes perceived that they do not have to be directly dealt with. However, there are a number of progressive boroughs within London who are covertly monitoring gang activity and have secured the services of Capital Conflict Management (CCM) funding to deal with lower level conflicts, such as those that fall outside the MPS contract which only deal with threats to life issues. They also support “transitional projects” which aim to remove individuals from the cycle of violence. The MPS still provide the risk management and intelligence support to these boroughs and the Local authorities are able to show how they are reducing anti-social behaviour and harm in communities.
**Outcomes of Mediation**

Following my analysis of 123 gang members referred for mediation compared with 123 gang members not referred, my initial findings suggest that those referred are four times less likely to commit a violent offence (or any offence) than those not referred. (Phelps, 2014)

Early indications, using the first 4 cases to be closed by CCM show the following outcomes and that the intervention of conflict engagement specialists was successful. Through analysis of the 4 cases, CCM can demonstrate that they prevented one crime of homicide and one of violence against the person (Tribal, 2010)

**Costs Associated with Mediation**

The costs indicated below are taken from the Home Office website, Cost of Crime calculator. ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case number</th>
<th>Likelihood of incident occurring</th>
<th>Implication</th>
<th>Apportioned total saving in 2009-2010</th>
<th>Of which to the public services</th>
<th>Of which to UK PLC.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Highly likely (100%)</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>£1,658,774</td>
<td>£167,257</td>
<td>£1,491,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Highly likely (100%)</td>
<td>Violence against the person</td>
<td>£11,832</td>
<td>£3,734</td>
<td>£8,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Probable (80%)</td>
<td>Violence against the person</td>
<td>£9,466</td>
<td>£2,987</td>
<td>£6,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Probable (80%)</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>£1,327,019</td>
<td>£133,806</td>
<td>£1,193,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£3,007,092</strong></td>
<td><strong>£307,784</strong></td>
<td><strong>£2,699,308</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Learning from London**

- I would propose that the findings in London demonstrate that a co-ordinated, targeted approach to violent offending and offenders, using mediation as an intervention, delivers positive tangible evidenced-based results that cannot be ignored.
• If those charged with keeping London safe want any further evidence into the outcomes of mediation, they need look no further than this analysis.

• I would advocate that additional transformational services, if properly directed and administered, will provide that additional support and safety net needed to prevent any individual lapsing back into a world which they once knew so well, but that carries too many risks to their lives and to others.

• Increased funding is needed to enable local authorities to commission targeted mediation as an intervention in the areas of most need.

• On going mentoring to those engaging in the mediation process is required to provide the relevant support needed to divert individuals into education, training or employment and minimise opportunities to revert to the gang lifestyle.

I will now detail my findings of outcomes of interventions currently taking place in US cities as part of the Winston Churchill Fellowship requirement.

5.2 Chicago

A city of approximately 3 million people (8 million in Greater Chicago) and with 59 known gangs, the make up of Chicago gangs (typically territorially divided and racially segregated since the 1930s) has shifted with economic and technological progress.

What are Chicago Police Department doing to reduce gang violence?

I met Officer Sherman, who explained that there are currently 13,000 officers employed in the Chicago Police Department. There are a team of six analysts working on specifically gang analysis in his unit. They concentrate on gangs in the city limits of Chicago. Old borders had deteriorated. “It’s no longer about race and territory. It’s about money. Gang alliances are forged by drugs. If they can get together; if they can deal together, they will then become allies.”

Officer Sherman talked about the phenomena of social media which fuelled violence. Chicago is a city with a very strong music scene and identity. Rap videos “dissing” (disrespecting) other
gang members abound across the Internet. As a result, the police have had to move with the times. There are currently 20 officers assigned to social media monitoring. Gang members like to boast about their exploits and post their gains, successes, and triumphs across Facebook and Twitter. They use Instagram to pictorially document their spoils, their attacks and their battle scars.

As the police begin to utilise more sophisticated techniques to bring offenders to justice, so they are rewarded with additional staff to replicate their successes and ultimately reduce the opportunity for violent offending to occur in the Communities they protect.

Officer Sherman said some gang members in Chicago have been radicalised in prisons. Through social media monitoring, one gang member was arrested and convicted after reaching out to Gadhafi supporters in Libya, trying to procure missiles capable of bringing down airplanes over US soil.

Officer Sherman explained that murder and shootings form 90% of the crimes that the department handles. He explained a key priority for his unit was turning around intelligence as quickly as possible – actionable intelligence. This is done in a variety of ways but one of the quickest is to circulate any intelligence as an information bulletin or officer safety briefing. Officers receive this on smart tablets or computers. Simultaneously, there is a dedicated team of sworn police officers that works on developing the intelligence. He explained the importance of having an officer who has been on the street that understands what is actually happening (versus a civilian) when something is reported that at first may not be apparent. He gave an example of a reported increase in theft of copper wire. He explained the motive and suspects for this crime baffled the civilian analysts. However, the officer who had worked in the area knew that this was close to a hangout for homeless people, and there was a scrap merchant in walking distance of the crime. It became apparent that the homeless people had been ripping out the copper wire to sell to the scrap merchant and then enable them to feed their substance
abuse habits. According to Officer Sherman, this type of insight is vital to the staffing of the operation centre “with cops with a proven track record of investigation and the city.”

Officer Sherman showed me some of the intelligence tools used to predict prevent and detect crime – one of which is a mapping system of the city overlaid with data on gangs, violent crimes, serious offending patterns and murders. This map details Police Operational Devices (PODs), often cameras, from which images and videos can be live-streamed and analysed in an attempt to detect crime in progress or track those that have just happened. It’s worth noting that the level of camera coverage in Chicago is comparatively small to the expansive CCTV capability currently in existence in the UK, and London in particular.

I was then taken into the Crime Prevention and Information Centre where these officers work, which are similar to the Grip Centres² that exist in the MPS. There is a large wall covered with state of the art TV screens and every desk has a series of monitors that access wireless computers from various locations. The officers receive live time feeds of information from various sources and where events are happening and are able to pull all relevant data and intelligence relating to that area to assist with a joint approach which runs parallel to the initial response. For example, if there is a report of a fight in a particular street involving large numbers of youths, they will pull up the intelligence relating to the gangs that operate there and circulate the relevant information to assist officers responding. Gang Units on the ground will also be able to assist by deploying to the area or to areas nearby to capture any additional information or intelligence about the event.

Federal monies have funded this operational centre as it would be too expensive for the CPD to fund alone. Commander Christopher Kennedy and Sergeant Charles Daly run the gang investigation unit, the purpose of which is to undertake long-term gang investigations. They

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² Grip centres are hubs in the MPS where a senior police officer is alerted to significant incidents happening across London. Fast time decisions are made as to the type of response warranted and resources are shifted across force boundaries to deal with each event. Decisions around specialist units and future preventative action can also be made here.
work with informants to gather intelligence that can be used in court to prosecute violent offenders.

Commander Kennedy and Sergeant Daly gave me a case study presentation one of their long-term investigations. Using social media monitoring, the team are able to link the various gang members with their associates and build a picture of who is connected to whom and who does what job within the gang. They discussed a member of the community who "was tired of all the gang violence happening on his doorstep." He came to the police volunteering to assistance in stopping it. Wearing a covert wire, he taped a gang member bragging about a shooting. The police then used that tape as a basis to employ a wide variety of other law enforcement techniques to arrest and convict all those involved, without compromising the source of their intelligence and his safety. They were able to secure convictions for other offences (such as being involved in dog fighting and unpaid fines, etc.) that culminated in the dismantling of the higher echelons of the gang. In another example using social media research, the Unit was able to determine that a member of public had been executed and that money was paid as a bribe to individuals not to give evidence. They determined that the main gang leader routinely used a van and would drive around the community carrying out his day-to-day criminal business using this van. The police were able to obtain confessions relating to acts of violence committed in the van, which led to the successful conviction and imprisonment of the top gang leader.

**Gang Enforcement Division**

I interviewed Kevin Ryan, Commander of the Gang Enforcement Division, a plain-clothes division that does not work under cover, that targets high volume gang members in the North and South parts of the city. This unit is made up of 38 teams with 300 police officers. Each team selects a gang that is a priority. Each district has 2 teams which are made up of one Sergeant and six to eight officers. Additionally, within the Division there are also two gang safety school teams who work directly in schools. Although they make up just 2% of the police population, they recover 20% of all firearms in Chicago. This is a significant seizure accomplished by so few
resources. They deal with 59 gangs and 625 factions comprising approximately 100,000 - 125,000 people, ranging from hard-core gang members to associates.

This Division collates huge amounts of intelligence by monitoring social media like Facebook and Instagram. Their work provides direct intelligence to District Police Commanders and the gang unit's directive is to disseminate intelligence to the rest of the police organisation through the Open Source Intelligence Initiative.

The Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy

The Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy is a collaborative approach bringing law enforcement, community members and outreach and support agencies (collectively, the 'Stakeholders') together to reduce group or gang-related shootings and homicides in the local community. There are similar programmes in other cities in the US, but I was struck by how succinct, organised and structured this approach is. The Strategy involves directly approaching individuals identified as gang members in an intervention style communication programme. There is one unified message to the gang members in this strategy: “The violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated anymore.”

The objectives of the Strategy are:

- To reduce group/gang violence by conveying a single moral voice directly to the perpetrators of the shootings and homicides
- To deliver a message of immediate change, on-going support and swift accountability via all stakeholders
- To encourage reconciliation and trust amongst all stakeholders that will foster collaboration towards the common goal of reducing violence

The Strategy has a three-pronged approach:

- Notification (via Call-in or Custom Notification)
Outreach and support

Enforcement Action

In the first step of the process, a detective constable liaises with members of the community to identify individuals involved in gang violence. There is then a Custom Notice that is served on the gang member and his family. The letter is succinct and clear, with these key points:

- Members of the community who are involved in the programme (the stakeholders)
- That those stakeholders involved have "had enough of the violence"
- The specific reason why the individual is being visited and that the individual is known for this reason to the community and law enforcement
- Because of the individual's past violent behaviour, the next time he offends, there will be severe consequences

The notification team consists of:

- **Law enforcement officials** who share a new approach and the response to violence – with the intent that continued violence will bring focused and intensified attention and prosecution
- **Community members** who share concern for the individual, aspirations for the community and the believe that redemption that is available through change, and also feel the pain that violence causes personally and as a community
- **Service providers** who reiterate concern for the individual(s) personal risk and offer services and professional help for him/her and their associates

The Tools required for this are:

- An information pack of the individual about to receive notification (This includes photos, personal information including current address, criminal history, gang affiliation, etc.)
- A Custom Notice Letter (the individual must have felony convictions to constitute a Notification under Illinois law)
- A business card/contact information for outreach support point of contact

Roles

Law Enforcement Role:

- Initial identification of gang members to be notified
- Create notification letters and information packets
- Obtain Intelligence on accurate addresses and any potential risk factors
- Schedule visits with community members/outreach and support representatives
- Coordinate transport and security for notification visits
- Conduct visits with notification team

Community Member / Outreach and Support Representative Role:

- Identify/build network of resources for direct service delivery
- Schedule notification visits with District Commander and his/her team
- Conduct visits with Police on notification team
- Document details of the initial visit
- Respond immediately to any outreach for more information/support needed
- Document the details of any subsequent outreach

Messaging

The objective is to deliver message directly to the individual/significant other(s) and the key to successful messaging is be transparent and direct: “Put down your guns. Stop the violence.”

There are two stated “guarantees” to the individual gang member:

- You will be held accountable for your actions
- Help is available if you need it
Critical success factors include:

- Unity among stakeholders
- Short, direct and honest messaging
- Consistent and visible accountability and support from stakeholders

**Measuring Outcomes**

The outcomes are measured in a number of ways:

- Number of attempts and number of notifications
- Numbers previously attended call in
- Number of times individual reaches out for more information/support services during a specific time period
- Number of individuals that have been arrested for violent offences after notification
- Number of individuals who have been a victim of violence after notification

**Outcomes of the intervention**

David Kennedy from the John Jay Fellowship is in charge of the programme. More often than not there is a good response to the visit, due in part to their organisation and implementation of the visits. There are specific roles and responsibilities in each notification, each stakeholder representative “sticks to the script” for their role, i.e., police are police and not social workers. The visits are coordinated, documented and followed up on by the relevant stakeholders.

According to the ethos of the Strategy, crime thrives through anonymity. Within this programme, anonymity is removed and members of the community tell the individuals clearly and plainly: “You’re hurting us, the community. We have had enough. You are not hurting the police. You are hurting us. You are shooting at us. We have had enough.”
The success of the Strategy, in part, is to employ a simple motto. They call it the 3 P’s – no preachers, no politicians and no press.

The following results have been recorded since July 2013: 126 individuals have been spoken with in 146 visits (repeat visits do occur). Only one person has been caught with a gun since being visited; five people who were ‘reached out to’ have been shot - two have died and three were wounded. Of the five people shot, only two people were known to be “hitters” (gang members known to carry weapons and carry out shootings themselves). One “hitter” was a female assassin who is believed to have been executed by her own gang, she was shot seven times; and the other gang member killed was shot 23 times.

Chicago has some innovative well thought-out interventions that are having significant impact and making significant in-roads into understanding the nature of gangs and gang violence in the city. However, following my visit there, the city suffered one of its worse weekends for violence, with 84 deaths recorded in Chicago over the July 4th Bank Holiday weekend. Many of these deaths were gang related. It is difficult to make any comments on what works and what does not work when faced with so many deaths in such a short space of time.

Key Learning from Chicago

- An effective comprehensive anti-violence strategy is vital. This ensures the relevant agencies buy-in to a course of action and accepts responsibility for their respective areas of the intervention.
- An inclusive strategy where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- No blurring of functions, i.e. the police are responsible for enforcement; pastors provide spiritual and community support; health attend to any public health issues.
- Joined up activity sends out a message to the community that everyone is working together for a common goal. It also professionalises the services being delivered by each agency. Everyone needs to know what everyone else is doing so that duplication and inaction are addressed.
5.3 New York

In New York, the approach to managing gang violence varies considerably from the programmes that I studied in Chicago.

To learn more about this approach I met Lieutenant Commander John Schneider who is in charge of the office of NYPD Detectives. Lt Commander Schneider was clear that his unit does not engage in intervention tactics - they do not practice gang call-ins nor do they work with partner agencies. Their priority is firmly about enforcement. Their aim, he said, is to crush and dismantle gangs. Detective Cesar Diaz (who is in Lt Commander Schneider’s unit) reiterated the point, saying “They (gang call-ins) do not work.”

Lt Commander Schneider explained to me that NYPD have renamed their gangs “crews”. They believe that the word “gang” symbolises organised criminals and that many of the people that they routinely deal with are not “gang members” but “crew members.”

This highlights the point made at the beginning of this paper regarding the difficulty in finding a common definition of the word ‘gang’.

Electronic Case Management System

To combat the ongoing violence of these ‘crews’, the NYPD uses an Electronic Case Management System, a database to which around 36,000 NYPD officers are given access. This system catalogues data gathered in the field regarding known interactions amongst “crew members” to provide the NYPD with a comprehensive picture of how these ‘crews’ work.

For example, when there is an incident in which police suspect ‘crew’ involvement, NYPD patrol officers initially respond and secure the scene. At the same time, the gang divisions also respond and run a parallel investigation, which includes building the groundwork on suspects and victims. They then use information in the database to try to establish connections between individuals to see the wider picture. They use this information to devise a strategy to dismantle
gangs, targeting the drivers for the crimes. They then employ several different methods to prevent further incidents: “Street suppression,” undercover operations, and “test purchases,” for example.

Lt Commander Schneider explained that there are 36,000 NYPD police officers and of those, 22,000 are uniformed patrol officers, with no central intelligence division – meaning each officer inputs and manages their own intelligence. More than 16 million documents have been added to the database in the past seven years, comprising over 1 million cases.

Although this could present obvious risk to the quality of the data in the Case Management system, there are strict protocols that are followed before a member of the public can be labelled as a ‘gang’ member. In fact, four levels of supervision are required before an individual can be classified as a gang member: three chief officers and one supervisor must verify the information. Only when approved will that person get the police attention administered to gang members, called “activating a person to a criminal group.”

Whilst each NYPD unit sets their own targets to manage performance (with no political involvement from the NYC Mayor’s office, for example) Lt Commander Schneider listed the following statistics as proof of the success of their system: 331 murders between 1 January and 29 May 2014 (when I visited). At its peak, New York suffered 2250 murders in a single year in 1990, so the city has made considerable progress in reducing homicides.

**Social Media and Gangs**

Sergeant Brian Dadon and Sergeant Andrew Dunton form part of a team who monitor social media sites to analyse photos and communications of known gang or crew members. They gave me a presentation about their work with social media and open source monitoring. Their unit uses a variety of tactics, for example they get warrants and download communications on Facebook of identified gang members, and they trace IP addresses (Internet Protocol addresses that identify locations of computers used online). They explained that their unit does
road shows where they go into the community and talk about the work they are doing, pointing out to the community that the gang or crew members that they are tracking normally range in age from 8-24 years old. Because of their strong links to the community, this unit was invited by Mayor Boris Johnson to come to London at the beginning of June 2014 to give a presentation on how they use social media to identify the illegal activities of crew members and bring them to justice.

Commissioner O’Connor of the Community Affairs division oversees their activities. Sergeant Dunton told me,

“We admit we have a gang issue. We tell the community. The commissioner publishes gang lists showing where the gangs are and where they operate. This is a problem and innocent people are getting shot.”

**Key Learning from New York**

- New York Police Officers believe that with sheer numbers of officers on the street in the city, using enforcement and suppression tactics, murders and violence will reduce and evidence suggests that crime is reducing.
- They believe they are well-resourced, well-funded and properly equipped to meet the challenges that they face. There are in excess of 36,000 police officers in New York. In addition to the various other law enforcement personnel in New York City, such as the transport police and the sheriff's department.
- NYPD invest heavily in technology and social media monitoring.
- It is important to provide the community with relevant information on gangs: Admit a gang problem if there is one and be upfront.
5.4. Boston

Boston was the next city that I visited. Although considerably smaller than the other cities I studied (42 square miles, population circa 700,000), my interest in the Boston programmes is based on the focus they have of integrating law enforcement into the education system to prevent gang violence and the well known and well cited Boston cease fire programme that claims massive successes, not only in the city of Boston but in other cities around the world.

Detective Sergeant Thomas Sexton of the Boston Police Public Schools' Office leads a unit of 21 staff consisting of police officers and three detectives, who are charged with providing a physical police presence in public schools (middle schools, students normally aged 10-15 years).

A major issue facing the Boston Police Department, and Detective Sexton's unit in particular, is the ease with which students and young people can buy guns. Detective Sexton said that around 700 guns were recovered this year in Boston's schools.

Operation Homefront

Sergeant Sexton gave me a presentation on Operation Homefront (OH), a collaboration programme involving the Boston Police Department; Boston Public Schools and several faith based organisations, which began in the early 1990s when officers and clergy conducted informal home visits to at-risk young people and their families. In 1998, OH integrated with a similar anti-gang initiative, a collaboration between the Youth Violence Strike Force, Boston School Police and local faith–based organisations, with a focus on at-risk 9 to 18 year olds. Today, the amalgamated programme has grown into a collaborative, partnership-style intervention programme targeting those individuals who pose the greatest risk to society and themselves. It is funded by a grant from the state of Massachusetts.
The ethos of the operation is, as Sergeant Sexton put it, to recognise that family is first line of
defence against gang and criminal activity among the youth. OH has been hailed as one of the
most successful initiatives for the Boston Police Department and its partners within the City of
Boston.

The programme is initiated when an incident occurs (usually in a school) that may affect the
safety of students or the school climate. In a similar style to the Chicago Violence Reduction
Strategy, the members of the OH team coordinate a meeting with the family of the individuals
involved in the school incident. In this case, the goal is to provide a direct line of communication
between schools and parents to prevent further recurrences of problems with their children.

A face-to-face meeting is arranged with the parents and members of the OH team. The
parent(s) are given a letter regarding the incident. It says, in part, “We are here because a child
in your home has been identified by school officials or police officers as being engaged in
activity at school or in the neighbourhood that makes them at risk.”

Support is offered to the family, with an emphasis on the responsibilities of the parent(s) in
taking the situation forward. The letter says that the OH team “will make every effort to explain
their child’s behaviour so that YOU can take appropriate action. We will provide resource
information if you want it” and it then offers contact information for the members of the OH team.

In these meetings the role of the clergy is to provide the initial greeting with the family and
engage them in dialogue wherever possible. The clergy offer guidance and support to the entire
family and encourage referrals to other organisations and/or programmes (after school
activities/programmes, etc). They also provide follow up information regarding the visit.

Sergeant Sexton took me to an Operation Homefront pre-meeting attended by members of the
clergy. The attendees included Reverend Brewster, Minister Jones and the Reverend
Caramona and his wife – clergy of several different faiths. “The meeting,” Reverend Caramona
told me, “is about spiritual awareness. Our aim is to instil confidence in the young people whom
they come into contact with. We provide support by being open with the young people with whom they meet. We say to them, ‘We care. Your community cares.’”

The officers working in Operation Homefront face a multitude of challenges, and address many of them in creative and thoughtful ways. As Robert Cordasco and Jean-Paul Limontas (officers working for Sergeant Sexton) told me: “We always respond to every threat of violence that we hear about. [sic] Student harm. We work with the School administrators who have the right to search bags etc., which the police officers do not. About 80% of the children who these officers deal with have mental health issues. They are on medication, have chemical imbalances. One trained officer is dedicated to searching Facebook to find out issues of fights, disorder etc.”

In addition to Operation Homefront, I spoke with several Boston Police Officers who do gang violence prevention type work in the community work in their own time. For example, they set up a hot dog van and give out hot dogs and ice cream in social housing project areas. Another programme has black males and black females going into elementary schools (students 5-11 years old) to talk about being a police officer and provide positive role models, which many children would not otherwise have.

In another example of a creative solution, Boston Mayor Martin Walsh used his experience in Trade Unions (more than 25 years before being elected Mayor) to develop a programme called Building Pathways targeted towards finding union jobs for gang members.

I was struck by how innovative and different the approach to gangs and gang violence is in Boston. Although a small city by comparable standards to those studies thus far, Boston continues to try fresh approaches to tackle the changing nature of gang problems the city faces.

New gangs and associated problems replace the generational gangs that have existed here for over 100 years. Boston’s inclusive partnership approach and emphasis on community and family responsibility is yielding excellent results.
Key learning from Boston

- Early intervention is crucial to success. The school gangs’ unit is an effective intervention. Young people get to interact with the police in their day-to-day life in a positive way and this engenders trust.

- Spiritual leaders have a role to play, particularly in the community and can provide a critical two-way dialogue between the authorities and the affected population.

- The importance of understanding the type of gangs operating in the community. If their activity or business is identifiable, steps can be taken to disrupt, dismantle and dissolve the most violent gangs in the city.

- The community needs to be involved. There has to be opportunities for gang members – opportunities to work, retrain or go to school. Sponsorship from Trade Unions in Boston is an innovative example of the community coming together to provide such opportunities.

5.5 Los Angeles

Gang violence has steadily decreased in Los Angeles since its peak in 1995 when there were more than 800 gang related deaths, but the issue has by no means been solved. As one expert told me, Los Angeles is the gang capital of the world. And the problem of defining gangs appears to have reached a new level in LA. Their gangs not only cross local geographic boundaries, they have roots in several countries and span generations of families. The role of law enforcement and intervention, therefore, has expanded. With that comes the opportunity for corruption, but also the possibility of reaching out in different ways to try and turn the tide.

First, though, I would like to examine a stark difference between the makeup gangs in Los Angeles and London. According to Lieutenant David Auner of the Lakewood Police Department, “In South Los Angeles there is the phenomenon of generational gangs; generation after generation of families become involved in gangs.” Dr Bill Sanders of California
State University agreed. According to Dr Sanders, one reason for the continuing gang problem in the US is what he calls the 'durability' of gangs owing to their generational nature. The cycle of violence is passed from parent to child to grandchild in a cycle that is extremely difficult to penetrate, let alone dismantle.

In California, many of the people I spoke with use the word 'interventionist' to describe the roles played by individuals (non-law enforcement personnel) involved in tackling the gang problem. Whilst the word may be new, the concept here was echoed throughout my interviews – the solution requires a direct, community-based link to those at risk.

Lieutenant Auner continued "We have to exert some control over these gangs. We have to get interventionists into the area as soon as we can when violence occurs. We rely on support from the clergy as youth counsellors. In Los Angeles, the gangs are traditionally neighbourhood based. Our goal is to find interventionists from every background to participate. We need to get to these at risk youths. We need to find an alternative to detention. It is more favourable if they are put into programmes. Give them an opportunity to be better citizens. Help them to focus."

Lieutenant Auner explained that in his experience, the LAPD finds that the clergy can play a big role getting into the community. In a statement echoed from Boston, clergy are found to provide family connections and are able to get in where law enforcement cannot. As a result, there is now on-call clergy intervention available 24/7, with 12 to15 of clergy of different denominations who are crisis management trained. They have defined roles. The clergy approach the family, and the family subsequently put pressure on the gang members to seek help from them.

District Attorney (DA) Kelly Tatum, who is herself trained in mediation, told me that in her experience, mediation is most used in Los Angeles in high crime areas inhabited by gang members to diffuse property disputes and conflicts. DA Tatum said “We do mediation with the property owner and cut the tenant out of the picture.” There was no known use of mediation as a tactic to reduce inter or intra gang conflicts, apart from when there is a neighbourhood dispute dynamic attached, however.
I met Dr. Cheryl Maxson, Professor and Chair of the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at the University of California, Irvine, one of the world’s leading experts in gang study and research. Dr. Maxson’s extensive expertise among many other areas include, Crime and Delinquency: Youth Violence, Juvenile Justice System, Community-based Responses to Crime, and Policing and Street Gangs. During our meeting, Dr Maxson discussed business focussed intervention approaches that are finding success in LA.

Homeboy Industries was founded by Father Gregory Boyle and provides training, support – and crucially, hope – to gang members and former gang members through the provision of free social enterprise start-up business skills training. Some notable successes include a silk business and tortilla chip and salsa stall. The programme has, however, had some challenges. Tragically, several employees of a graffiti removal business were shot as they removed gang tags and gang graffiti. Owing in part to the charisma of Father Boyle as well as the quality of the products, local police, councillors and other first responder agencies are high-profile customers of the hugely successful Homegirls’ Café, (one of Homeboy Industries six social enterprises) where young men and women are employed (very often it’s their first ‘real’ job) working side by side with former enemies, where they gain vital skills to enter the workplace along with the opportunity to build positive relationships that didn’t exist before.

Dr. Maxson discussed the Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) project. This programme relies on community involvement and relational networks, believed to be key to reducing Youth-Related Gang Violence in Los Angeles.

Further research into the GRYD programme directed me towards the words of Guillermo Céspedes, the former director of the Mayor’s Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development for the City of Los Angeles. “Youth in a very diverse environment continue to solve conflicts through violence…we kept doing the same thing and expecting a different result.” He said that gang culture is “embedded in the identity of the city,” with many residents displaying a “certain unconscious pride” about Los Angeles being considered the “gang capital of the world.”
Dr. Maxson discussed the findings of Juanjo Medina and Judith Aldrich, who have recently written an article called, “Loading the Policy Blunderbus”, which raise questions on the efficacy of intervention programmes. They ask, how do we know these work? (See further reading).

Some programmes, although often well intentioned, have drawn severe criticisms as well. Dr. Sanders spoke about the volume of corruption associated with intervention programmes in the USA. “Before the LA Bridges programme, it (intervention programmes) was riddled with fraud. There was a lack of accountability and people were milking it. Waiting for the next million-dollar programme. Crime has gone down. But one reason for this has to do with abortion. Another is policy. There are problems with success and outcome measurement. Gang intervention is a nebulous term. If you are involved in running a programme, you should be able to say, what are you doing? Why are you doing it and does it work? There is no third party evaluation of this programme. There is a massive problem with integrity. Is crime going down because of something we are doing? We must look at what we are doing.”

In conclusion, Los Angeles shared many similar issues to those faced in the city of Chicago. The main difference with Chicago, however, is its proximity to the Mexican border and the risks associated with generational warring gangs, who are fighting to seize control over not only the drug trade in California and indeed the rest of the US, but trafficking of arms, people and goods and money laundering on such a vast scale that attracts the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This dynamic has encouraged better partnership working between Federal and state agencies and it is apparent that they have a much more integrated approach in California to gang violence reduction and targeted suppression and enforcement. (See Appendices for further information)
6. Conclusion and reflection

The purpose of this study was to answer two research questions:

- How do members of gangs engage with intervention tactics when instigated and;
- What are the outcomes of a successful intervention?

As stated in my introduction, I had four key objectives:

- To determine how interventions are established as a tactic for diffusing gang tensions and reducing violence
- To examine what opportunities are provided for gang members who engage with intervention programmes to exit their lifestyle
- To determine the benefits and limitations of intervention programmes and transformational services (to illustrate how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate responses develop or reactive behaviours become apparent during the course of an intervention programme)
- And finally, drawing on the outcomes of the above to identify the implications in practice for a mediation programme.

On the first, I've found it evidently apparent that law enforcement agencies in many US cities are working with other first responder agencies and communities to deliver innovative collaborative interventions that are showing results. The range of tactics employed is not only creative; it is based on real experience of solving the problems of violence with long-term solutions that place the community at the centre of the solution. Close work amongst community groups, schools, faith-based organizations and employers helps establish the support network necessary to successfully prevent gang violence escalating. As with any government programme, funding for such interventions is always problematic and continued funding is dependant on results, often driven by the political agendas of the day.
I believe the second objective showed the variation in approaches to the opportunities offered to violent gang members in different cities. In New York, enforcement is seen as a critical aspect of breaking up gangs; whilst in Boston, mentoring and support is given to young gang members in a school environment. In Chicago, they are called in and given two choices: mentoring and support to exit of the gang lifestyle; or additional joined up law enforcement attention and harsher penal sentences on conviction.

The third objective is illustrated by how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate responses develop or reactive behaviours become apparent during the intervention programme. As evidenced in LA, many intervention programmes are marred by dishonesty and discredited due to the lack of controls or evaluation associated with them. This is unfortunate, as evidently there are some remarkably effective interventions that have outstanding results that benefit the community. The requirement of supporting transformational services to ensure young people are given opportunities to exit and remain out of the gang lifestyle they had grown so accustomed to is of paramount importance for the long-term prospects of success of any of these programmes. The work of Boston’s Mayor in garnering support from trade unions to give gang members a chance with opportunities for jobs, and the clergy providing familial support to disenfranchised communities is a welcome new facet to the traditional style of law enforcement intervention.

The fourth and final objective drawing on the outcomes of 1 to 3 above and congruent with the aims of the study is to identify the implications for policy and practice. Common themes emerged which include:

**Benefits:**

- The more at risk an individual the more likely they are to engage
- The most appropriate people do tend to be referred - i.e. those at most risk
- The support of family and friends in the mediation/intervention process enhances the programmes and delivers better results
• There is often a clear passion by the interventionists involved in delivering the service

• A successful first meeting can create a dialogue between the interventionist and the participant. A successful outcome is the reported incident not escalating or threat of violence not taking place.

• Most of the interventionists who were interviewed feel that often it may be enough to make contact. Disclosing that a “beef” is known outside the two parties in conflict is sometimes enough to reduce the seriousness of the event and prevent it culminating into a tragic situation

**Blockers of Progress:**

• Individuals do not always engage with the intervention programme

• Families are often in denial over the issues facing their children

• Too many people with a responsibility for the safety and security of young people still are not fully aware of the gravity of the situation and the comprehensive approach required solving it. There is a genuine and urgent need for law enforcement, community support, education and social services to stop working in isolation and pool resources and intelligence

• The lack of credibility and commitment of some intervention programmes and those responsible for delivering them makes an initial meeting for more successful interventions very problematic.

• Funding (as always) is a big issue. There is a critical need for better housing, training, jobs and support to safely exit their gang lifestyle, not just more ‘policing’.

• Some individuals see an intervention as being a way of amplifying their status. Law enforcement must be cognisant that increased enforcement activity on a particular individual (or gang) may highlight an otherwise less visible position or
risk thus potentially skewing the real level of harm and risk that/ those individual(s) pose to society and themselves.

- The inability of the current system in London for self-referrals or referrals from the community places an enormous burden on the police to ensure they identify the right people at an appropriate time.
- Too many interventions are not tested properly and are poorly thought out. A joined-up and well-coordinated response is required with proper control methods in place to establish, “What are we doing? Why are we doing this; and does it work?”

Root Causes:

- There is a pronounced lack of positive male role models in many cases of those individuals requiring intervention
- Conflict can arise from the most innocuous situations. A school yard spat or a perceived lack of respect between two or more individuals can escalate to violence. For any intervention to work there has to be a mutual respect for the process and the participants' views of each other. They are never going to be friends, but they must come to an understanding for the conflict to dissipate
- A key difference between London gangs and US gangs is that US gangs are multi-generational. This is a phenomenon yet to be seen in London street gangs

Learning:

- The issue surrounding what constitutes a gang causes more complications to what should be a straightforward implementation of social measures designed to address the cause, treat the problem and prevent its reoccurrence (Ball and Curry, 1995)
- Transformational support is essential to the ongoing process. Generally, a single intervention programme in isolation is not the solution to solving violent conflicts
• Those charged with delivering an intervention generally appear to have real life experiences of growing up in gang prevalent areas and lived or are still living among those involved in gangs – which appears to lend credibility to their position

• Using statistical analysis, I proved that individuals referred for mediation in London were four times less likely to commit a violent offence than those not referred for mediation. This is a significant finding that requires further analysis and research. In the first year of mediation delivery, analysing the first four cases to be closed entirely, CCM demonstrated that, through mediation they had prevented one murder and one serious violent incident and had probably (80% probability) prevented a further murder and violent incident occurring. Total cost savings of £3,007,092.

Next Steps

I intend to share my learning with the respective units within the MPS via the Specialist Crime Directorate (3), a unit based at New Scotland Yard that collates and disseminates research and policy. I also intend to submit a copy of my findings to the College of Policing at Bramshill and present to the ACPO lead for gangs and gang violence.

I will disseminate my findings at a series of Criminal Justice Seminars that I will be attending over the coming 18 months, linked to my Professional Doctorate at the University of Portsmouth and have incorporated much of the findings into my thesis, entitled “Mediation and Gangs: A Study of Violence Reduction in the Metropolitan Police Area in London” which I will be submitting in April 2015.
Appendix A

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department – Operation Safer Streets

I met with Detective Anthony Riviera and Jacqueline Read. They took me through a presentation on an intervention called, Operation Safer Streets, which looks at California Gangs and profiles gang members and leads.

They currently have catalogued 198,000 Subjects and created 6,100 gang profiles. They have a system that uses Field Identification Cards. The cards are used to collate intelligence gathered by officers on the ground. The intelligence system is not subject to disclosure at court and so this means it will contain much additional data that is not usually documented, as this could disclose source information and ultimately, put people who have provided the data or information at risk of harm. None of the information can be used as a bar to employment or college in the future. The information is vetted and evaluated. When any contact is made it is recorded on a management system. The intelligence and data kept on the card is always treated as confidential, which means it can only be accessed on a need to know basis.

Information is then downloaded onto an intelligence file. In order for this data to be inputted onto the system, the police have to notify the individual concerned by issuing a letter to them.

How are gang associates determined?

There is a vetting and an evaluation process. A decision is made that “He’s an associate or he’s a gang member”, says Detective Riviera. “A parent can dispute this. If so, we have 60 days to investigate. If they are correct, we remove the individual from our database. If not, we offer intervention assistance. Those who come from a strong family, we come to their aid.”

Detective Riviera went on to say, Californian State law treats gang members with convictions in the same way as sex-offenders are dealt with once in the criminal justice system. Gang members have to register, like sex offenders. There is a specific Gang Register where they
have ten days to register. The LAPD track them through this. There is a court order requiring them to do this. This allows law enforcement officers to track the gang offenders, as very often, they are transitory. Los Angeles County borders span Mexico to Las Vegas, covering hundreds of miles. Transitory gang members are tracked from place to place through a field intelligence process. There are 11 nodes through the state of California and each county has a local intelligence system. Each node has its own national computer system. There is Gang Net; Calgang is the Los Angeles County system, access to which is on a need to know or right to know basis.

If the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) gets information about a gang, they share it with other law enforcement personnel, and vice versa.

The Department of Children and Families have an intervention programme called, MART Response Team. They vet social workers. The Sheriff’s Office takes these staff on search warrants. Very often there are children there. Their staff accompanies all police agency / law enforcement partners involved in this intervention.
Appendix B
Los Angeles

There is also the Los Angeles Gang Reduction Programme (GRP), which is located in the Boyle Heights area, 3 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. This area is home to a large immigrant population made up mostly of residents from Mexico and Central America. Five major gangs inhabit the target area. A number of street-front, grassroots community organizations, health providers, churches, and youth centres are located in the neighbourhood and have a history of involvement in gang prevention and intervention activities. Prevention activities focused on providing youth with alternatives and supports to prevent or resist gang involvement include:

- After-school programs for elementary and middle school youth at high risk of gang membership.
- Prenatal and infancy support for high-risk mothers to reduce risk factors related to gang involvement.

Intensive case management for youth and families residing in the target area, including mentoring for high-risk males ages 10–14.

- Gang awareness training for schools, residents, local businesses, and parents.
- Intervention and re entry activities are primarily case-managed by a multidisciplinary team.
- Other intervention services for gang members in the Los Angeles plan include:
  - Individual and group counselling for behaviour, substance abuse, and other needs.
  - Educational and vocational training.
  - Tattoo removal.
  - Anger management and conflict resolution.

Suppression activities are conducted in the target area by the Los Angeles Police Department’s Community Law Enforcement and Recovery (CLEAR) Program. CLEAR involves targeted gang
enforcement, prosecution, and community awareness.

Overall, the Los Angeles Gang Reduction Program has achieved full and effective implementation. This is largely due to strong program leadership, along with active collaboration among partners and the contributions of other agency participants who were supportive of the goals of the GRP. Outcome measures used in Los Angeles included shots fired calls for service, vandalism calls, and serious violence incidents known to the police, gang-related incidents, and serious gang-related incidents. Findings revealed that shots fired calls declined significantly post-implementation, as did violent gang crimes. The trends for all gang crimes were similar in the target area and the comparison area, although gang crimes decreased more in the target area after the implementation.
Appendix C
Los Angeles

FBI Meeting - Senior Special Agent Eric Mayo and Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Robert W. Clarke

ASSA Robert W. Clarke told me, “The FBI investigates gangs. There are Afro Caribbean gangs – The Bloods and the Cripps that operate across the USA and beyond. Our squad mission is target them but also other violent gangs”

ASSA Clarke leads on a FBI led operation called, Save Our Streets.

They predominantly look at unsolved murders and cold case crimes and as a result of their efforts, have increased the success rate for crime solving. They target the most violent criminal gang members. “There are so many and so we have to prioritise”, he says. There are 80 000 to 100 000 gang members in LA. There are tagging crews – graffiti. LA is the gang capital of the world.

We become involved in most crimes that have a RICOH\(^3\) aspect. We use phone intercept. We participate in hand-to-hand drug buys and Firearm buys. What this does is lead to federal investigation as opposed to local investigation and as a result, more resources can be assigned as it warrants the additional effort, and harsher sentences are more likely if a successful prosecution ensues.

From a programme standpoint, one may ask, why does the FBI investigate gangs? The reason being that the FBI resources multiplies. There are 750 agents in LA, 10,000 LAPD officers; 9500 offers in the sheriff’s department. There are so many issues the FBI can support, as the agency

\[\text{\textsuperscript{3} Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, commonly referred to as the RICO Act or simply RICO, is a United States federal law that provides for extended criminal penalties and a civil cause of action for acts performed as part of an ongoing criminal organization.}\]
does not have the kind of pressures associated with other law enforcement departments. They look at crime from a criminal enterprise point of view.

**How does the FBI target, disrupt and dismantle gangs?**

ASSA Clark stated,

“The FBI is unable to dismantle gangs in LA. This is because many of the gangs are multi-generational. Typically, violent offenders are getting reduced sentences these days. They return to the street with very little supervision.”

He continued to explain that his department comes at the problem from a federal perspective.

“We target those who try to further their criminal enterprise. White-collar crime. Money laundering - national and international. We have the tools to investigate. They get more time taken off their sentence.”

ASSA Clark explained that organised crime activities are rife in prisons. The FBI has improved working conditions with the prison service. There are defined information sharing protocols in place where information is shared from prison to other agencies to further intelligence gathering.

“This”, says ASSA Clark, “gives us a real sense of perspective.”

**FBI Interventions**

In 2010, The FBI and The LAPD look at different interventions. The FBI started on their own. They came up with the idea after an operation to target gang members in a violent neighbourhood in South LA, referred to as *The Jungle*. “Training Day”, the movie being was being filmed. Local gangs extorted the movie crew. They were charging them protection money to film, park their vehicles etc. The FBI went back to the community and started to clean the
neighbourhood up. They partnered with local community. The message of Save our Streets was “Health, Healing and Reclamation”.

Six agents and police officers were assigned to the community clean up aspect of the intervention.

“We know we are never going to arrest our way out of this problem”, says ASSA Clark. “One Saturday, we carried out a trash clean up programme. We selected 50 alleys, 100yds long. We had 100 plus police officers and volunteers. We cleared 35 tonnes of trash and debris.”

ASSA Clark is convinced that these types of co-ordinated interventions work as they improve the quality of life. Following this event, the FBI, by partnering with community based agencies such as The Red Cross they estimate between 80 to 100 other organisations are on board with this community impact programme. The aim of the intervention is to inform and educate. It is about understanding the needs of the community and co-ordinating efforts and supporting one another.

‘Funding is a challenge. Leadership puts money where the priorities are. It has been a struggle.” Says ASSA Clark.

I asked if the intervention is working. ASSA Clark told me that crime is being supressed. They are able to devote time to investigations. He believes that this is a tried and tested process, whereby they operate in areas where they are needed most. The FBI looks at assaults; murder and robbery. This is what motivates their activity towards a particular gang or gang neighbourhood. The strategy has an immediate impact. The FBI has a strategy to pick up the most violent gang offenders if the opportunity presents itself. At the conclusion of the investigation, it is a quick take down. Six to Nine months is spent monitoring crime statistics. Once this has been completed the FBI come in with the programme. They divert resources and allocate double-digit numbers of agents towards crime suppression.
Appendix D

New York

Dr David Brotherton – John Jay Institute of Criminology

I met Dr David Brotherton of the John Jay Institute in New York. He discussed the work of community interventionists. He had a contact, an ex-gang member, who had been deported and repatriated to El Salvador. He has now returned to the USA and works with gang members to secure truces.

Dr Brotherton gave me some detailed information about the “Bringing them Home” programme - which aims to stop juveniles being isolated from their family. It had been general practice across the US to incarcerate across the country. This intervention seeks to keep juveniles within a 15 - mile radius of their home, so that they can continue to receive family and friends support. Before this measure, the distances family members were expected to travel could be in excess of thousands of miles.

Dr Brotherton discussed the idea of territorialism and gangs. This is where gangs operate within old established boundaries. The idea of territorialism started to decline towards the end of the 90’s. Major gangs were taken down in late 90s such as the Kings. By 2001/2 these gangs never came back on such a large scale. These gang members saw themselves as part of the community. They did not seem themselves as enemies of the neighbourhoods in which they lived. Once out of prison, they returned to the community. They had no one and nowhere to hang out any more. The new crew members looked at these old gang members, as has-beens. They were not interested in their return. The new gang members are technically savvy. They are involved in credit card fraud. Scams. Victimless crimes. These crews are based in housing projects. The current homicide rate is way down on its 1990s highs. The new gang members use social media to post videos. They boast of their exploits; the money they have made; the parties they go to; the cars they drive. It is all about bravado. In Newark and Chicago the story
is very different. In these cities, they have a more traditional gang structure. There, old guys are coming out of prison and are no longer interested in reforming. They know nothing else.

Dr Brotherton discussed the situation inside the penal system. Rikers Prison on Long Island had 19,000 inmates in the mid 90s. It was known as the most violent prison in USA. Now its prison population is down by over a third, to around 12 000. However, violence is rising there again, but due to academics and researchers not being allowed access the reason for this is indeterminable.

There are constant stabbings. Is it related to gangs? Dr Brotherton explained that academics are unable to determine the relationship between prisons and the streets. These two environments are completely isolated from each other.
Further Reading


