Public Perceptions, Gang 'Reality'
and the Influence of the Media.

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ABSTRACT

This research was designed to address the hypothesis that there is a wide disparity between how the public perceive gangs and the 'reality' from the gang's perspective and; that in part, the New Zealand media are responsible for this difference, portraying a negative image of gang members. Sixty members of the Horowhenua public and seven gang respondents were interviewed. The small sample size of the gang respondents made it impossible to statistically compare the two groups. Analysis was carried out on the spoken discourse of the public and gang respondents and the printed discourse of the news media. Chi square analysis was used on the public respondent sample. Demographic characteristics of the public respondents such as gender, ethnicity and employment status resulted in observable differences in the public's perceptions of gangs. In particular, feelings of having a gang resident in their neighbourhood, estimates on the number of people involved with gangs in New Zealand and perceptions of the media accuracy in reporting about gangs. Previous contact with a member of a gang was also found to influence respondents' perceptions of media accuracy. Increasing the sample size is likely to clarify these findings. Ethical and practical implications in conducting research on gangs are discussed and suggestions for future research are identified. Some practical implications of the present findings are mentioned.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Gangs, or more specifically, crimes committed by gang members receive wide coverage in the New Zealand media.

Although in New Zealand the number of people involved in gangs appears to be quite small, images of criminal activity, rape, threats and hostility from black clad individuals on motorbikes, and in dilapidated cars, are often what come to mind when the public picture the role of gangs within the New Zealand setting. This is illustrated by news media coverage of gangs in programmes such as 'Insight' (Harrington, 1994).

Criminal activity amongst members has led to a negative image of gangs. That is not to say however, that all members of gangs commit crime, rather that the ones who do receive a large amount of publicity which generates bad feeling in the community, earning gangs (as a whole) an anti-social image, an image that the police believe is quite properly earned (Harrington, 1994).

Awareness of gangs in the Southern half of the North Island has increased in the last two years as a result of a police task force, 'Operation Damon'. In addition, alleged gang violence and crime has been widely reported in the local print media such as the Manawatu *Evening Standard*, *The Chronicle* and in some cases the Wellington *Dominion*.

Literature available on gangs in the New Zealand setting is both dated and limited, although a study by Kelsey and Young (1982) on members of the Black Power, Headhunters and Stormtroopers provided some insights into the role of the media in providing information, misinformation and propaganda about gangs to the New Zealand public.

Although there is some research on gangs (Brown, 1978; Campbell, Munce & Galea, 1982; Copeland, 1974; Jansyn, 1966; Kennedy & Baron, 1993; Lyon, Henggler & Hall, 1992) there are problems in applying information gathered overseas to a New Zealand setting owing to such problems as ethnic differences and population size.

Few New Zealanders have more than a fleeting and uneventful contact with gangs, and what knowledge they have is usually gained from what others report has been happening and why. Thus, the biases and misconceptions of the person who is telling the story is incorporated into others' repertoires and passed on.

The emotions and fears which are aroused in us by gangs do not come from our own knowledge of reality, rather they are the images and definitions we receive from others, who therefore configure our evaluation of, and reaction to, gang members. These images and definitions determine, in effect, our attitudes to gang members, our expectations of them, and the part they are perceived to play within our social organisation (Kelsey & Young, 1982).

Background - The Nomads

The Nomad gang is predominantly based in the lower half of the North Island. Although the gang is relatively small with only 14 patched members in the Horowhenua chapter they "[h]ave built a fearsome reputation for violence among both the police and criminal fraternities of New Zealand" (Payne, 1991, p. 64).

Founded in 1977 as a splinter group of the Black Power Gang, 70% of the Nomads are in some way related to each other. The strong familial bonds may be reflected in the loyalty which the members have for one another.

The population of the Horowhenua region, which consists of the rural area and urban townships of Manakau, Ohau, Foxton, Shannon, Opiki, Tokomaru, Waitarere and Levin currently stands at approximately 29,300 people. Of these,

just under 20,000 reside in Levin which is the largest town in the Horowhenua District.

Foxton is a small coastal town about 30 kilometres from Palmerston North. Approximately 20% of the Foxton population are Maori, of whom a significant number are Ngati Raukawa, and some of their descendants are Nomads. Currently in the Horowhenua the unemployed and non-labour force make up 53.7% of the adult population (Searle, 1994).

Foxton made the headlines with increasing frequency during 1994-95 as the police launched a specific programme focusing on alleged criminal gang activity. This crackdown, termed 'Operation Damon', led to the serving of 116 search warrants, and 86 subsequent arrests.

Members of the Nomads, and those people associated with them such as community worker and gang mediator Dave Williams and the Kaumatua of the Nomads, Ratana church member Gilbert Knowles, believe that the operation launched by the police, if indeed there was ever a need, was 3-4 years too late in arriving and was unnecessary by the time it was launched.

Jack Whakatehe, a Nomad member for the last 13 years and spokesman of the Horowhenua chapter, believes that the Nomads take the blame for crime committed in the area whether they are guilty or not, "[t]hey are the fall guys whether or not it's them" (Whakatehe, 1994, cited in Harrington, 1994).

Foxton residents were divided as to the effects of the Nomads in the town. According to a National Radio programme, *Insight,* broadcast in October 1994 some residents of Foxton were unaware of the presence of the Nomads prior to 'Operation Damon' being launched and are angered by the labelling of Foxton as a gang town. Other people, including the police, believe that some residents were in fear of their lives owing to the terrorism displayed by gang members.

The New Zealand Gang Scene

Despite their prominence and significance in contemporary New Zealand society - 'the dark side of a Maori renaissance', and 'an increasing visible symbol of (Maori) discontent', according to one commentator (Allison, 1989) - gangs have seldom been the subject of academic research or serious consideration (Meek, 1992, p. 272).

Difficulty in carrying out research lies in the social distance between those who would carry out the research and those who would be the subject of the research as well as the likely reluctance on the part of the gangs themselves to be completely open on their activities. In the absence of any scientific research much of the information comes from the police, concerned more with a law enforcement view and is less than objective (Meek, 1992).

According to police figures, there was a 4.3% decrease in the number of gang members in the 1981-1986 period but a 100% increase in the two years which followed, with gang membership increasing by a further 67.25% in the 18 months from September 1988 to March 1990 (Meek, 1992, p. 258).

Meek (1992) goes on to suggest the question be asked of whether the same definition of gangs was used each time.

Most literature currently available on gangs is based on overseas' research, with particular emphasis on the United States. It is recognised that the amount to which these findings are applicable to a New Zealand setting has limitations, as the cultural make-up of each country make a country's gang situation individual to that country. This noted, it is recognised that some components of the research are applicable in New Zealand; these will be highlighted and discussed in the following chapter.

Definitions

There are innumerable definitions of gangs; the Collins English Dictionary (1982) defines a gang (1) as "a group of people who associate together or act as an organised body, especially for criminal or illegal purposes" (p. 598).

However, this definition is only one of many commonly used.

The Oxford English dictionary defines a gang as: "Any band or company of persons who go about together or act in concert (chiefly in a bad or deprecatory sense, and in modern usage mainly associated in criminal societies)"
"*To be of a gang*: to belong to the same society, to have the same interests"(Oxford, 1970, p. 44).

Thrasher (1963) described a gang thus:

> The gang is an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterised by the following types of behaviour: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict and planning. The result of this collective behaviour is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness and attachment to a local territory (p. 46).

A further definition of a gang, from the Report of the Committee on Gangs, is a peer group association of mainly adolescent males. People unite together to form groups, and primary groups similar to gangs are constantly forming and dissolving at all levels of society from pre-school to adult groups. "[G]angs are found in a wide range of ethnicities and seem to reflect an important phase of adolescence" (Committee on Gangs, 1981, p. 4).

It is clear gangs are distinguished from other groups on the basis of criminal intent.

Classification

Huff (1989) attempted to classify gangs, in regard to the main purpose of each. The gangs identified in the study by Huff correspond with several loosely knit typologies:

(1)   Informal *hedonistic gangs* whose predominant goal is getting 'high' and having a good time. Although these gangs may occasionally engage in some minor property crime, perhaps to finance the purchasing of drugs, overall they tend not to be involved in violent personal crime.

(2)   *Instrumental gangs* who are more economically oriented will commit a higher volume of property crimes for financial reasons. The majority of these gang members use alcohol and marijuana, and some use 'crack' cocaine. While some individual members of these gangs sell drugs, this is not an organised gang activity.

(3)   *Predatory gangs* which may be responsible for committing robberies, street mugging, and other crimes of opportunity. Members of these gangs are more likely to use highly addictive drugs such as 'crack' cocaine and these drugs contribute significantly to their labile, offensive behaviour. The selling of drugs to finance the purchase of more sophisticated weapons may also be undertaken by gang members (Huff, 1989).

New Zealand gangs described in the Report of the Committee on Gangs (1981), were said to be a mix of tight knit organised gangs with a clear hierarchy and internal rules who could be clearly identified, and 'cult' gangs with looser affiliations, identified by dress conventions and who followed the same music trends.

There is an ever-changing gang scene as members spend time in prison or move away from the area, and new members are introduced into the gang. In New Zealand gangs the one feature that has remained constant has been the emphasising of territoriality and the definition of home territory (Committee on Gangs, 1981).

Forming branches, referred to in Moore, Vigil & Garcia's (1983) research on gaining membership to a gang, can offer a parallel to a gang chapter in a New Zealand setting where a national gang may be represented by a number of predominantly independent chapters, each chapter having its own hierarchy. These chapters may be governed by a national president as is the case with the Black Power and the Nomads. Alternatively the Mongrel Mob, although containing chapters throughout New Zealand, have no such national structure, rather their leadership is in essence located at a regional level.

History of Gangs

Gang beginnings date back to the 1950s and 1960s with the establishment of groups such as the Bodgies and Widgies, Milk Bar Cowboys and the Teddy Boys (Kelsey & Young, 1982).

Officially ethnic gangs in New Zealand first came to the attention of the public in July, 1971 (Kelsey & Young, 1982), when they appeared on *Gallery* a current affairs programme fronted by Brian Edwards (Edwards, 1971). Investigation for this programme looked first at allegations made by police, public officials and the Maori Council that gang violence was rife in South Auckland and that race relations were being threatened by a group of "young Maori who leave school to early and face limited and frustrating lives" (Carroll, n.d., cited in Edwards, 1971, p. 175).

The end result of the *Gallery* investigations led to Stormtrooper claims that members had been brutalised by the police and led to an independent committee of inquiry looking into allegations made against the police (Edwards, 1971).

According to police estimates ethnic gangs are the most numerous and visible in terms of media coverage (Meek, 1992).

By the end of the 1970s the perception of gangs had changed from that of a juvenile crime problem to a membership that comprised mostly of adults and presented not only a serious threat to law and order, but a social problem of dangerous proportions (Meek, 1992).

Kelsey and Young (1982) attributed the changed perception of gangs that occurred in the 1970's to three factors; increased membership, greater intensity in intergang rivalry and racial disharmony. The subsequent response to gangs was termed 'moral panic' with 1979 being labeled 'The year of the gangs'.

Gangs and the Community

When a 'problem' relating to a gang is identified by the police it affects the surrounding community where the gang resides. Whenever gang problems are identified, the 'problem' is more likely to be viewed as occurring at a community level as opposed to an individual level problem or a national level problem (Curry & Thomas, 1992).

In New Zealand the profile of gangs increased greatly with the election of the National party prime minister, the late Sir Robert Muldoon. His relationship with the Black Power gang continued throughout his years in politics culminating in his death in 1992 when a Tangi was held for him. Gang numbers over the last 10 years have been steadily increasing and although their profile at the time of Muldoon's leadership may have, at times, been positive (Walker, 1989), since then there has been a steady decline in their public image.

Gang members typically have low educational attainment, often a history of truancy before leaving school, and are early school leavers. "[I]t is, however, their educational attainment that is low, not their intelligence" (Committee on Gangs, 1981, p. 8).

Classifying gangs as the byproduct of a lower class is an image that is likely to be well supported by middle class New Zealanders who would prefer to see gangs as a social entity far removed from their world.

Contrary to what Curry and Thomas (1992) claim, gangs have become very much a national level problem, a political issue in the year of a general election. Gangs are very useful to political parties who can make use of the publicity surrounding gangs. The general enmity in which gangs are held may be used to good advantage in order to state a party's stand on gangs, law and order whilst condemning the overall lifestyle of gangs.

Labelling

The experience of the gang label is expressed by a member of the Vice Lords "People don't understand why you hang with them, who you are, or what. People name you. People name the club. . . . Once you're a Lord, you're branded for the rest of your life" (Keiser, 1969, p. 80).

In the United States the concept of labelling has been looked at to some degree in Moore's (1985) paper looking at the isolation and stigmatisation in the development of an underclass. In her article, Moore looks at mainstream society's labelling of deviant persons, that is, *generalised ascribed deviance,* on the basis of visible characteristics. This is compared with *targeted ascribed deviance* when members of a minority group discriminate against targeted members within their community. "Generalised discrimination makes minority people mad at Anglos (*Europeans*), but ascriptive labeling makes those same minority people mad at other minority people . . . . this generates more secondary deviance, laying the conditions for the development of a distinctive underclass" (p. 2).

The way the legal system reacts to individuals previously labelled as gang members is discussed in a study by Zatz (1985) on "The Legal Processing of Chicano Gang members." Findings indicate that the effects of factors such as characteristics of the offence, offender and the case, operate differently on court processing

outcomes, dependent upon whether social control agents have labelled the defendant a gang member.

There was found to be no evidence of direct bias in the court system against gang members, rather the number of prior referrals and the influence this had on harsh sanctions was observed to be dependent on membership of a gang. Since gang and non-gang youths did not have a significant difference in their number of prior referrals, there is an indication that a lengthy prior record was interpreted differently for gang and non-gang youth.

The deviants in this study were identified as trouble makers largely on the basis of their dress and the families and neighbourhoods to which they belonged. Thus the labelling effect would seem to be influencing an individual's perception of a problem, based on membership of a gang. However some variables, such as progression through the educational system, resulted in gang members being treated more leniently, suggesting perhaps that there is an indirect reward for efforts to abide by the rules of mainstream society.

In conclusion the author emphasised that "belonging to a gang did not in and of itself result in harsher treatment" (p. 28). Zatz (1985) suggested Chicano youths may already be so disadvantaged and devalued owing to ethnicity or social bias that membership of a gang, by itself, makes little difference.

In New Zealand the Report of the Committee on Gangs (1981) pointed out the need to find alternatives to traditional custodial sentences, incorporating elements of personal development and community involvement. It was recognised that there was a high rate of recidivism following custodial sentences. "According to gang members themselves, court proceedings did little or nothing to control or discourage gang offending" (Kelsey & Young, 1982, p. 98). On the whole, the court room was alien and meaningless, and governed by a set of rules which had no relevance to their lives. They viewed criminal law and enforcement as alien and weighted against them (Kelsey & Young, 1982).

Looking more closely at culture and identity in New Zealand, Novitz and Willmott (1989) stated "It is a sad comment on our dominant culture that so many of us associate difference with threat: we are frightened by anyone different from ourselves, and therefore we ignorantly classify all gang members as criminals" (p. 15).

This finding of perceived risk outweighing actual risk (Rogers, 1993) is relevant in the New Zealand setting where public fear is provoked by adverse publicity. Faced by gangs, perceived risk far outweighs the actual risk to the average member of the public.

Social Factors Leading to Gang Membership

Gangs appear to be almost entirely a lower socioeconomic class phenomenon and are almost entirely made up of adolescent males. Gangs are inclined to arise in urban areas and are particularly likely to be formed against migrant populations and ethnic minorities in cities. They are customarily made up of members who come from homes where general family breakdown and division has occurred (Committee on Gangs, 1981).

In a report to the Minister of Police (Department of Justice, 1986) on the gang situation within New Zealand, gangs of whatever type, 'organised' and 'disorganised', were said to outnumber and 'outgun' opponents, adhering to criminal principles and using intimidatory tactics in order to enhance their reputation. The adoption of a uniform or stylised dress is used by the members of the gang in order to hide their individual identity, confuse witnesses and investigators and thus evade subsequent arrest or conviction.

Whether the purpose of the gang uniform is to deindividualise or to 'unite as one' is debatable but the gang colours and patches appear to be worn with pride and honour.

The authors of the Report go on to say that the raison d' etre of the gang is seldom crime itself. However, gang members frequently refer to themselves as 'outlaws', see themselves in opposition to the police, and engage in illegal activity. A large number never work, but unlawful business within the gang is usually personalised and not related to the formal orientation of the group. Like exclusive men's clubs and guilds, gangs are merely collectives of males who choose to exist under a common brotherhood. Except as companions of the men, therefore, women are seldom included in gangs affairs (Department of Justice, 1986).

The attraction of belonging to a gang with its increased risk of violent confrontations, danger, ostracism and closer scrutiny from the police, has been discussed by researchers, parents, police and the public alike.

The Report of the Committee on Gangs (1981) claimed that being in a gang provided:

- a measure of status and respect to societies 'failures' and security through uniformity;
- an identity and an alternative status system; through which 'achievement' is possible for the members;
- power over others, which gives the status of manhood to gang members; and
- companionship, protection, and a shared identity, which fulfils strong emotional needs on the part of gang members.

These factors outweighed the negative effects of the sometimes vicious gang discipline (Committee on Gangs, 1981).

Effect on the Gang Family

Parental attitudes to gang membership varies according to the individual. For some, their son's gang activity is a continuation of a family tradition. However, for others the knowledge that their son is a member of a gang will result in the breakdown of the family relationship.

While some parents appear to remain largely ignorant of what occurs in the streets, other parents, if pressed, acknowledge suspicions about their sons involvement in gang violence. However, to make his behaviour more consistent with their standards, they may argue that he never starts any fights and that his particular gang is really a group of nice young men (Horowitz, 1987, p. 443).

If the community were to react to gang members as deviant, they would be faced with a number of dilemmas. Above all they would have to reject beloved family members. In order to control gang violence, the authorities would have to be called in, thus publicly questioning family honour. The cultural and existential solution is to work with gang members to maintain a relationship of mutual toleration and to persevere with negotiations which allow community life to proceed in an orderly, if tenuous, manner (Horowitz, 1987).

Vigil (1988) has suggested that gangs are able to provide the emotional support for members that may otherwise be lacking in the family. With parents of gang members unable to provide adequate supervision for their children, a sense of identity and shared association is offered to the gang's members. While some investigators have viewed peer relations of gang members as highly adaptive and cohesive, others have seen them as quite dysfunctional (cited in Lyon, Henggeler & Hall, 1992).

Membership of the Gang

Gaining membership for non-resident gang members was found by Moore, Vigil and Garcia (1983) to be based on four variables:

(1) *Kinship* may be offered as a reasonable request in order to gain access to a gang, family who reside outside the neighborhood may be easily admitted as members. This is likely to be a reason for findings of high degrees of relatedness in gang members, the ease with which they can gain entry

being a deciding factor on the gang to which they choose to belong. The importance of the family connection also seems to be stressed in the New Zealand setting with a high degree of relatedness among members of gangs. In America all gang youths are referred to as 'homeboys' *(fellow gang members)*, this position holds the same status as a 'carnal' *(blood brother)*, further supporting the importance of the cohesiveness of the gang relationship.

(2) Through *alliance* gangs may also extend membership. Common activities of the gangs may also be common to other adolescent groups such as partying, 'hanging around', and getting 'high' on drugs and alcohol, to a degree this will further align the prospective gang members. However the defining activities in alliance involve fighting.

In essence, the gang is a group of youths who are allied in fighting. In some situations this may involve youths from other communities being pressed into service.

(3) *Expansion of boundaries.* Extending the traditional boundaries of the gang through kinship and alliance enhances the feelings of mutual affinity that bind the individuals together, and increases the fighting strength of the gang, letting it prosper. Thus the inclusion of more non-residents is legitimised and further extension of territory is promulgated.

(4) Gangs may also choose to extend themselves far from their original hometowns by *forming branches*. The branch gang represents a total departure from residence in the neighborhood as a criterion of membership.

Membership of a gang does not define the boundaries of friendship, although it generally delimits the boundaries of complete gang violence. There are individuals who spend time in the same settings as gang members and interact with them freely and fairly frequently; however they do not actively seek situations in which they can challenge the reputations of peers in order to enhance their own status.

The Reason Why Gangs Develop

If adolescents feel alienated and unattached, the social control theory postulates that they may not internalise basic societal norms and may instead resort to deviance and non-conformity (Empey, 1982, cited in Clark, 1992). According to Lloyd (1985) youths who feel alienated may succumb to depression, cynicism, delinquency and substance abuse, and may choose to align with deviant subcultures (cited in Clark, 1992).

> Individuals within the subculture of violence foster naming, blaming and aggressiveness. Individuals are more likely 'to perceive a negative outcome as injurious; and are more willing to express a grievance to, and demand reparation from, the harmdoer.' They are more likely to persevere and use force in settling the dispute. Again it is in those situations where the 'fundamental properties of self are attacked' (Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989, p. 90).

General camaraderie observed between members would seem to serve only part of the purpose of the gang. To the public at large, gangs convey an image of intimidation. The colours they choose to wear, predominantly black coupled with individual gang colours displayed on such apparel as kerchiefs, vests and leather jackets enables members to be immediately recognisable. By nature of being in a gang a certain level of behaviour is expected. In response to certain behaviour violence is viewed as an acceptable response and when norms are not 'correctly followed' the individual is criticised or ridiculed by others in the group.

In New Zealand, individuals who spend time interacting with gang members on a frequent basis, may be known by the police as 'associates'. While they may individually defend their honour when provoked, developing a reputation as 'tough' is generally not a central concern. This is in contrast to the actions of the gang whom actively seek to promote a 'tough' or 'staunch' image. There is no collective reputation to protect and enhance for 'associates', as there is for the members.

"Third parties offer subcultural support for violence, serving as allies, and helping to instigate conflict at the same time serving as capable guardians to reduce victimisation" (Kennedy & Baron, 1993, p. 89).

Cultural Differences

"Middle class communities or groups with different histories and ethnic compositions may provide different gender-related socialisation experiences and opportunities for delinquent activities" (Rhodes & Fischer, 1993, p. 886).

Studies in the United States have found significant racial anomalies in regard to the ethnic makeup of gangs.

> In terms of racial and ethnic identity, it is probable that about 90% of the members of Cleveland and Columbus gangs are black, while the remaining 10% are white and Hispanic. . . . Statewide, police chiefs surveyed also reported that gang membership was more than 90% black according to their own information (Huff, 1989, p. 526).

Moore's (1985) study may be applicable to the New Zealand setting, if it is viewed from the angle that this country is a multi-cultural society. The cultural make-up of New Zealand gangs, with notable exceptions such as the Christchurch based Harris Gang, is over-represented by Maori in particular. Resentment from non-gang member ethnic minorities towards those who are members of gangs may lead to some discrimination directed at identified members of the community.

Although Maori have been singled out as a key factor in violent crime (Bolger, 1992, cited in Mahoney, 1992), Waikato psychology professor James Ritchie disputes these comments. "There is not an aspect that alone conveys our violent times. It is seen everywhere, in our education, parenting, sports, attitudes toward women, male roles, the prison system, through the media and our gun and alcohol use" (Ritchie, 1992, cited in Mahoney, 1992, p. 5).

Drug and Alcohol Use

In the New Zealand setting, reports from Alcohol and Drug dependency units would indicate that the rate of narcotic drug use is a continuing problem (Health Research and Analytical Services, 1994). There are regular calls for the decriminalisation of marijuana for personal use, citing the effects of marijuana compared with the effects of alcohol. Drug use by gangs is thought to be limited to Class C and B drugs, in particular amphetamines, barbiturates and cannabis plant and resin.

The general impression derived from the media is that gangs are heavily involved in both drugs and alcohol. Many of the publicised confrontations between rival gangs often follow a night at the local hotel. Although it had been hypothesised that heavy drinking is characterised by a need for power, coupled with a low rate of inhibition activity (McClelland, Davis, Kalin & Wahner, 1972), a follow-up study in 1982 did not support any differences in rate of inhibition and impulsivity scores. While acknowledging that heavy drinkers have a higher need for power than light drinkers and that this higher need for power is exhibited by an increased level of aggressiveness. "They concluded that heavier drinkers are more aggressive than light drinkers" (Scoufis & Walker, 1982, p. 1018).

There are some indications that gang members use alcohol to excess, a pattern of behaviour that is similar to that of other young men in their age groups (Committee on Gangs, 1981).

An important difference between Polynesian and European cultures which arises repeatedly in various situations, is the strong group orientation of Polynesians (defined as Maori and Pacific Islanders) in contrast to the individualistic orientation so typical of Westerners (Graves, Graves, Semu & Sam, 1982, p. 1002). This contrast is observable in the make-up of drinking companions in later years. In Graves et al. (1982) research it was found that more than 40% of Europeans drink either alone or with one other person compared with Maori, the majority of whom drink in a relatively large group of five or more persons. In terms of amount of alcohol consumed "Maori drinkers consumed the most, an average of almost 13 glasses at a session. Islanders were next with an average of over 10 glasses, and Europeans least with about 7 1/2 glasses" (Graves et al., 1982, p. 993).

Women and Gangs

The increased awareness of family violence in the community, has made society as a whole more concerned with the effects that violence has on the individuals involved, both directly and indirectly. Women who are involved with members of gangs, in the capacity of girlfriends, de factos, wives and mothers of gang members' children, continue to be shrouded in secrecy. They refuse to talk to reporters either because they are afraid of the repercussions, "[m]ale possessiveness within gangs is more than an attitude and can be manifested in very punitive reactions to girls who defy the norms" (Moore & Devitt, 1989); or because they have no wish to reveal personal details of their lives.

Although no woman is allowed to be a patched member of a New Zealand gang, Black Power in Wellington and Auckland tried having women as full patched members. However, National president of Black Power, Rei Harris, said that having women as patched members did not work due to their role as mothers suffering (Gee, 1988). Some women are so closely connected that to all intent and purposes they are a part of the gang (Braybrook & Southey, 1992).

Recent studies in the United States have suggested that the phenomenon of female gang membership is increasing (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993).

Criminal Activity

Results from a study by Lyon et al. (1992) found that there was a higher rate of reported criminal behaviour among incarcerated gang members than among incarcerated youth who were not gang members. Offences for gang members were found to be more than twice the number that were attributed to non-gang members who were serious offenders. These results, however, must be interpreted with some caution. It may be expected that it would be to gang members' advantage to add to their consequence and enhance their reputation by broadcasting their criminal exploits, whereas for a non-gang associated individual there is little to be gained from taking responsibility for a greater number of offences, other than an increased sentence.

Relationship to the Police

"Overall the attitudes of group members to the police is one of suspicion, disrespect, distrust, dislike, contempt and occasionally even fear" (Smith, 1975, p. 25). However, this judgement is likely to be reciprocated in the attitudes that the police have towards gang members.

Smith (1975) concluded that the hostility of group members did not seem to be so much directed against the role of the police as enforcer of the law, rather directed against the ways in which the local police chose to fulfil this role.

Police officers operating from the remoteness of a 'cruiser' or 'eye car' have little opportunity to defuse this hostility, since they would normally only interact with people when an offence has been committed. Thus, their main contact with gang members is likely to have been when tensions were running high, the law was allegedly broken and arrests were made.

The Roper Report voiced concern over the police attitude to gangs which they reported was "[c]ompletely negative, which can only result, and is resulting, in a comparable attitude by gangs towards police" (Roper, 1987, p. 89).

Gangs in Prisons

Officially there was recognition of a gang problem in New Zealand prisons in 1980 following four serious incidents involving the Mongrel Mob. At this time the most strongly represented gang was the Mongrel Mob who accounted for approximately half the total number of gang affiliated inmates in prison. The only group with comparable nationwide coverage was the Black Power which comprised approximately 25% of gang affiliated inmates. "The combined total of 'patched' members and ex-members/'associates' comprised 26.8% of inmates in the 1987 Prison Census and 24.5% in 1989" (Braybrook & O'Neill, 1988; Braybrook, 1990, cited in Meek, 1992, p. 260).

"Unpublished data from the 1989 Prison census show that gang membership in prisons is overwhelmingly a Maori phenomenon; 85.6% of 'patched' members and 76.7% of ex members and 'associates' were identified as Maori" (Meek, 1992, p. 268).

Since 1980, in New Zealand prisons there have been at least 16 major disturbances involving gangs. The Mongrel Mob have featured in a large proportion of these incidents which, with one exception, have rarely resulted in serious injuries to combatants, "suggesting perhaps that the purpose is as much symbolic as intended to inflict serious damage on rival gangs" (Meek, 1992).

There is an infrequency to the outbursts of violence which is paralleled in the community that Meek (1992) also suggested, illustrates that the gangs tend to co-exist, for the most part, with only periodic outbursts of violence, rather than engaging in continuous conflict.

In 1989 the number of inmates associated with the Mongrel Mob and Black Power reached virtual parity with the Mongrel Mob making up 44.8% of the total patch members and the Black Power accounting for 41% of the total (Meek, 1992).

In 1989, 65.9% of all inmates were under 30, while those of patched members who were serving jail sentences made up 84.7% of this number. There was a considerable difference in the type of sentence being served by patched members in comparison with unaffiliated inmates. Patched members serving sentences for violent offences made up 64.3% compared with 48.3% of unaffiliated inmates. The length of gang members' prison sentence was also longer with 20.7% of patched members' serving 7 years or more compared with 12.8% of unaffiliated inmates serving sentences of a comparable length.

The number of previous convictions was higher and the age at which the first conviction was made was younger for 'patched' gang members. A third (33.1%) of 'patched' members received their first custodial sentence at age 16 years or less, compared with 17.5% of unaffiliated inmates. Among male inmates, a significantly higher proportion of 'patched' members were classified as requiring maximum or medium security (55.1%) than ex-members and 'associates' (43.4%) or unaffiliated inmates (42.6%). A correspondingly smaller proportion of 'patched' members were classified as minimum security (40.1%) compared to the two other groups (55.8% and 52.8% respectively) (Meek, 1992).

Paremoremo is New Zealand's Maximum Security Prison. Built in 1969 it has normal cell accommodation for 248 inmates. However, on a day to day basis it usually holds approximately 200 men. Maximum security has two principal functions, that of security and control. Admittance to a maximum security prison may be based on one of three criteria, repeated attempts to escape, prisoners who would present a serious threat to the community if they escape, and those prisoners who when placed in lower level security prisons have proved to be a disruptive influence (Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into the Prisons System, 1989).

A survey in 1985 of the total population of prisoners at Paremoremo identified 32.2% of inmates as belonging, or having previously belonged to, a gang (Meek, 1986).

In the early days of gangs the management policy of the prison was to down play gang affiliations. This policy is still implemented in the present day. However, to minimise disruption to the whole prison system it has been deemed advisable to hold a large group of members of a particular gang in a wing apart from other inmates.

Significant changes in the basic parity of the numbers involved in gangs, with a marked increase in the number of Mongrel Mob members has disrupted the equilibrium of numbers of Black Power members to Mongrel Mob members This has led to the assigning of different gangs as inhabitants of each block.

The numbers of gang members in prison have increased in recent years. One explanation for this could be that,

> Penal institutions are, of cause, fertile ground for the recruiting of new members as gangs offer group support and comradeship, attractive commodities in what can be a lonely and threatening environment. The Mongrel Mob at least, is actively involved in prospecting for new members in prison, although this is frowned on by some other gangs (Meek, 1986, p. 43).

The recruitment of new gang members in institutions is a strong impediment to the Justice Department's attempts to integrate inmates into a law abiding life in the community, partly because of their cohesiveness and the power that this brings. Gangs and their leaders can enjoy considerable 'mana', making them attractive to youthful and easily influenced inmates.   In addition, it is easy for gangs to use intimidation in order to encourage recruitment.

Influence of the Media

In New Zealand (on a typical day) more than 1.7 million people over the age of ten read a newspaper. This increases to 2.3 million New Zealanders who read a daily paper in a typical week (The Newspaper publishers of New Zealand, 1995).

For the purpose of this research the main emphasis will be on the print media, as opposed to broadcasting. Newspapers are the most frequently named source of local news (Gunter & McLaughlin, 1992).

To give the public a 'murder a day' is one way of guaranteeing a readership and given the competitive nature of news production, crime as a theme becomes a key factor in the news values (Crandon, 1992, p. 11).

A study by Broadhurst & Indermaur (1982, cited in Gebotys, Roberts, & Das Gupta, 1988) found 96% of respondents cited the news media as their source for information about crime and criminals. Anyone relying on the news media for this information runs the risk of inferring a negative image of them both. Doob (1985, cited in Gebotys et al., 1988) reported that 50% of crime stories in a sample of Canadian newspapers dealt with offences involving violence. For the same period offences involving violence constituted less than six percent of reported offences (Solicitor General of Canada, 1984, cited in Gebotys et al., 1988).

In a study of news media use and public perceptions of crime seriousness, a significant positive relationship was found between media use and perceptions of crime seriousness (Gebotys et al., 1988)

The sensational reporting of sexual crime and violent crime, the way victims are represented, dramatic reconstructions of events, and fictional representations have all been cited as possible inducers of fear (Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994).

The Roper report in 1987 was an independent report on the state of gangs in New Zealand. This report claimed that "[t]here is probably no subject in the field of law and order that can provoke more selective and distorted coverage from the media, or more emotive and often ill informed rhetoric from those in authority, than gangs" (Roper, 1987, p. 87).

The extent to which the media are responsible for the negative view of gangs is illustrated overseas and in New Zealand. Although violence plays only a small part in gang behaviour, coverage by the media focuses on this to a large extent. In New Zealand the media have presented the image of gangs and gang activities in a limited and distorted light (Kelsey & Young, 1982).

A number of submissions made to the Committee on Gangs indicated concern that attention, by the police, politicians and the various news media, given to gangs has negative results. It was feared that by focusing attention on gangs, especially around their violent activities, these groups were "serving to reinforce and 'glamourise' the gang's tough image" (Committee on Gangs, 1981, p. 62).

The world of crime as it is illustrated in the news media is discrepant with reality (Gebotys et al., 1988).

The world of the press should not be considered the real world, rather a world skewed and judged. Actual events are subject to the conventional process of selection: they are not intrinsically newsworthy, rather they only become 'news' when selected for inclusion in news reports. The majority of events are not mentioned, thus selection of news worthy events immediately creates a partial view of the world (Fowler, 1991).

The Roper Report recommended that efforts should be continued by the news media to strike a balance between the public's right to be informed about gang activities and avoiding coverage that has the effect of glamourising the gang's 'staunch image' (Roper, 1987).

CHAPTER 2

PERCEPTIONS AND REALITY

This research investigates the difference between people's perceptions and the reality, as it is seen from the perspective of the members and 'associates' of a gang.

There are a number of current models that offer an explanation as to the way perceptions of others are formed. Dissonance theory, inference model, and the social skills model, are mentioned in this chapter.

Festinger's (1957) dissonance theory explained that an individual's inconsistent perceptions, high real-ideal disagreement about herself/himself or her/his environment result in a state of unease, friction and confusion which s/he attempts to lessen.

Once a decision has been formulated about a group, that may seem unfair or at odds with a previous attitude there is an inconsistency that an individual will seek to change. This may include a justification process of why it is now correct to think differently.

For example:

If having always thought of oneself as a fair-minded person it may cause some inner turmoil and guilt to have said something that is judgemental and which has no evidence to support it. Thus, one has experienced dissonance. If one comes to believe that what has been said is actually correct, one can reduce this dissonance, particularly if there is external justification (Myers, 1983).

The Inference model provides an explanation of how judgements are made. Particular judgements are inferred from the evidence available and from general principles about human behaviour (Cook, 1971, p. 32). An example of this model in practice would be:

> All gang members are criminals
>
> This man is a gang member
>
> Therefore he is a criminal.

There is a general expectancy that the way people present themselves and the way they are rated as being, is how they actually are. "He behaved just as I should have expected a great, fat, self-indulgent man to behave under trying circumstances - that is to say very badly" (Wells, n.d., cited in Cook, 1979, p. 80).

The social skills model separates perception of others into entities, initial impression and feedback. The perception of how some one is, coupled with one's knowledge of how one wants him or her to be, determines one's actions. Thus the concept of the stereotype is developed, the prediction of what most people will do in a particular situation.

Rosenbaum (1986) has proposed an alternative explanation to a general finding that similarity increases liking in two individuals, rather that dissimilarity fosters dislike. This research would indicate that groups considered to be removed from the mainstream public may be disliked because of it.

The literature available on gangs gives some credence to the 'Horns Effect' where poor ratings are given consistently to unpopular people, the assumption being that these traits go together (Cook, 1979). Gangs are often condemned and rejected as intimidating, anarchic and psychopathic (Kelsey & Young, 1981).

Gangs are usually perceived as appearing in groups dressed in the same clothing, predominantly black coupled with a patch. Although little research has been carried out on gangs, they are regularly portrayed in the paper, usually in relation to crime. To the population at large they tend not to be universally popular. The lack of positive information about gang activities in the community make it easy for members of the public to believe adverse publicity, and to attribute further negative characteristics to gangs.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are widely held convictions that people have specific characteristics because of their membership in a particular group (Weiten, 1992). They are broad overgeneralisations that ignore the diversity within different social groups and foster inaccurate perceptions of people (Stephen, 1989, cited in Weiten, 1995). Most people who subscribe to stereotypes realise that not all members of a group are identical. However, they may still tend to assume that certain people are more likely than others to have certain characteristics.

Stereotypes are prejudiced beliefs, a set of cognitions that establish mental schemas about a particular group. They support the prejudiced feelings that are invoked by that negative affect or by cues that are characteristic of the target. Once they are formed, stereotypes may exert powerful influences on the way relevant information is processed. Stereotypes serve a basic cognitive goal of simplifying complexity, and helping make the perceived world more predictable and controllable by the act of catergorising individual bits of information. In this way, stereotypes influence the way in which information is perceived, classified, stored and retrieved (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991).

Perception is subjective, and people often see what they expect to see.

Stereotypes develop and become entrenched from exposure to images and messages from mass-media, peer pressure, family influence, and a need to offer a simple explanation on a particular subject.

It is human nature to seek to justify something on rational and distinct terms that can be easily recognised.

> For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first
> and then see. . . .We pick out what our culture has already defined for
> us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form
> stereotyped for us by our culture (Lippmann, 1966, p. 81).

Individuals such as drug addicts, prostitutes, people with physical disabilities, former mental patients, people from different ethnic groups, and the elderly, are perceived by the majority as having attributes that do not accord with prevailing standards of the normal and good (Katz, 1983, cited in Blumberg, Hare, Kent, & Davies, 1983).

Studies on impression formation have shown that certain labels can change the perception of a person. "In the same way, the labels *black* and *white* distort impression formation. White perceivers who observed an interview without being able to see the skin colour of the interviewer clearly believed that they agreed with the interviewer less when they were informed that the interviewer was black not white" (Dienstbier, 1972, cited in Bierhoff, 1989, p. 144).

The most discriminating and pervasive of all influences are those which conceive and preserve the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We picture most things before we actually experience them. These preconceptions, unless education has made us particularly aware, govern the whole process of perception (Lippmann, 1966).

The Fundamental Attribution Error

The Fundamental Attribution Error refers to observers' bias in favour of internal attributions in explaining others' behaviour (Ross, 1977).

The Attribution Error can be explained as the process by which people attribute causal interpretations to the events occurring around them. The theory applies more generally, however, to the process whereby people attribute characteristics, intentions, feelings, and traits to objects in their social world. The attribution process seems to fill the need of the individual to make sense of the world around her/him (Kanouse & Hanson, 1972, cited in Jones, Kanouse, Kelly, Nisbett, Valins & Weiner, 1972, p. 47).

As people observe behaviour there is a tendency to overestimate the likelihood that an individual's behaviour reflects personal qualities as opposed to situational factors. In the same respect there is a tendency to blame any misfortune that befalls a person on that person, thus, one personally feels less likely to be affected in a similar way (Weiten, 1992).

Individuals have a tendency to attribute their own actions to situational requirements, whereas observers tend to attribute the same actions to stable personality dispositions (Jones & Nisbett, 1972, cited in Harris & Harvey 1981).

According to the 'just world theory' when someone is judged to be kind, friendly, good looking, energetic, conscientious, generous or intelligent, they are seen as deserving of certain desirable fates. People, on the other hand, who are seen as ugly, lazy, stingy, or stupid, deserve some degree of punishment. If someone is miserable and suffering, they were either stupid, careless, or getting their 'just deserts' for the way they typically treat others.

From a sociological perspective, if gangs in general were a body of people typically seen as criminals, using intimidation tactics against the general public, committing assaults and burglary as commonplace, by the same rationale, according to the interaction of the attribution model and the 'just world theory', then any individual who is a member of a gang, or who was associated with gangs, would be seen as a criminal who deserves whatever punishment that should happen to them.

Pepitone (1975) analysed attributions in the criminal justice system and have found that particularly when there is some doubt over their good character, victims are often blamed for their crimes. More blame is allotted to offenders when they are less likable or attractive (Landy & Aronson, 1969), or when they have a prior record (Lussier, Perlman, & Breen, 1977). If there are serious consequences to their crimes, offenders are blamed more (Rosen & Jerdee, 1974), and blame varies with the perceived intent of the offender (Shaw & Reitan, 1969, cited in Freize, Bar-Tal & Carroll, 1979).

The Media Influence

That the media have an important role in influencing peoples' perceptions is unquestionable. A community conflict highlights the method by which newspapers operate within the media structure as instruments of information control. Actions and statements by individuals and groups take on special intensity and prominence during controversy, and focus is drawn to the newspapers' quality and quantity of reporting of the crisis (Tichenor, Donohue & Olien, 1980).

In a study of news sources, Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1989) reported that a senior judge believed that news often may put in the minds of prospective jurors or witnesses a view which may not be entirely accurate. They have found that once something is planted in one's mind, it is not always easy to remove it. They claim that many people, through the inaccuracy of the media, may come into court with a preconceived idea of guilt or innocence in a particular case.

Once a person has an idea, s/he does not want then to have to reject what s/he thinks has been arrived at independently, ignoring any possible influence of the media. Accepting statements in the newspapers as factual enables a conclusion to be reached which the individual becomes reluctant to toss aside even when hearing evidence, sworn testimony to the contrary. This is why jurors and witnesses in America are warned continually about the influence of the media (Ericson et al., 1989).

The way the media portray and present the world is known as the *symbolic* reality. *Subjective* reality is defined as the way people interpret the world and what they believe about it. The basic facts and ingredients that comprise the core material of symbolic and subjective realities is known as the *objective* reality (Cohen, Adoni & Bantz, 1990).

The media are not neutral, common-sensed, or rational mediators of social events, but in essence help reproduce preformulated convictions (van Dijk, 1988). The reporting of crime news provides an opportunity for a newspaper to appropriate

the moral conscience of its readership (Chibnall, 1979, cited in Crandon, 1992, p. 9).

In a study by Bell (1991) on "The language of the news media within New Zealand" it was found that in a total of 360 press and broadcast stories sent to local professional and scientific sources for measures of accuracy only 29% of the stories were rated as absolutely accurate. Those rated slightly inaccurate accounted for 55%, and 16% were judged to be highly inaccurate. In one full page feature, sources found no less than 23 inaccuracies.

Mis-reporting may be caused by overstatement in headlines and leads, misquotation, and misattribution. This can take the form of scientific and technical terms being misused, wrong figures given, omissions or exaggerations, and distortions of emphasis.

Concern over the influence of the media is not a recent development. In 1967, a Unesco statement on race and racial prejudice concluded that the mass media reach vast numbers of people at different educational and social levels, therefore their role in encouraging or combating race prejudice can be vital. Those who work in the media should maintain a positive approach to the promotion of understanding between different groups and populations. Representation of people in stereotypical roles and exposing them to ridicule should be avoided (Unesco, 1974).

The potential influence of the media is immense, they have the power to select issues to focus on, conferring approval or disapproval accordingly. They may define problems, and legitimise behaviour, in the process labelling people, places and things (Unesco, 1974).

The integrity of the reporter is one of the most important factors in any story. In television and radio a skilled interviewer can make the interviewee seem to be quite different from who s/he really is. Additional editing can further accentuate the

bias. Careful selection of footage and montaging the interview can further mislead the viewer. A reporter has the power to select who is featured, choosing advocates for only one side of a controversy. It may be said that an individual refused to comment thus conveying the appearance of guilt (Larson, 1986). Print media can be biased by simply taking things out of context or by misquoting a source. As black Muslim leader Malcolm X stated, "I don't care what points I made . . . it practically never gets printed the way I said it" (Larson, 1986, p. 283).

Studies in the area of media have converged on four main functions that the media may provide:

1) Entertainment and diversion;
2) Information and knowledge about the world;
3) Social contact;
4) Personal identity and self definition.

                (Kippax & Murray, 1976, cited in Murray & Kippax, 1979).

The effect of the media on human behaviour makes up one of the most-studied areas of communication research. There is extensive agreement that the media greatly contribute to 'enculturation', spreading a society's typical views about the nature of social reality, and to 'agenda setting', indicating what topics people should think about (Oskamp, 1984, p. 328).

"Enculturation is the process of implanting and reinforcing the values, beliefs, conventions, behavioural standards, and views of reality that are held by most members of a given culture" (Oskamp, 1984, p. 310).

News values control the news story. News is not a neutral vehicle, neither is news production a neutral process, despite the journalist's century old creed of impartiality (Schudson, 1978).

The impact of the newsprint media on public beliefs has long been a concern in mass communications research (Hertog & Fan, 1995). Although people often perceive the media as more likely to affect other people rather than themselves (Duck & Mullin, 1995), this perception has been found to be largely a misjudgement (Gunther, 1991, cited in Duck & Mullin, 1995). Davison (1983) studied the third person effect and found the greatest impacts of the effects of communication was perceived to be, not on "me" or "you" but, on "them" - the third persons.

Duck and Mullin (1995) found that the perceived effect on others of media influence was more pronounced when considering the impact of violent, sexist and racist media content. The authors go on to say that there may be an underestimation of the personal effects of negative media content.

Looking at the social construction of reality, Adoni and Mane (1984), found that perceptions of remote social conflicts were more influenced by television news portrayals than perceptions of conflicts that were more accessible through direct experience.

In the analysis of news media coverage of racial issues on youth perceptions, Hartmann and Husband (1971, cited in Adoni & Mane, 1984), found that those youths living in low immigration areas were more likely to reflect the definitions and terms used in mass media than youths who lived in high contact areas. This intergroup contact may lessen the influence of the media as a source of learning.

Another illustration of the influence of the media was observed by Hertog and Fan (1995), who researched the influence of newspaper and magazine coverage on the transmission of HIV and found a strong relationship between press coverage and public beliefs.

The authors also claimed that new information had a greater impact on prior beliefs than had been previously thought. This may have an implication in the present

research where, prior to publicity on the Nomads, some residents in Horowhenua were unaware of the Nomad gang prior to the start of Operation Damon (Harrington, 1994), and the subsequent publicity they received.

Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson (1992) have stated that "[t]he overwhelming conclusion is that media operate in ways that promote apathy, cynicism, and quiescence rather than active citizenship and participation" (p. 373).

The familiarity and availability of information through the media also distorts peoples' perceptions.
For example,

> One hundred times as many people die from diseases as are murdered, yet the newspapers carry three times as many articles about murders. The problem is that media coverage makes some causes of death more available than others. As a consequence, peoples' estimates are influenced (Matlin, 1994, p. 407).

The media also misrepresent the frequency of other events. Television programmes which feature violent and other anti social behaviour on fictional programmes influence viewers by the availability heuristic; a resulting tendency to exaggerate the prevalence of anti social behaviour in society (Matlin, 1994).

People currently live in two worlds: a true world and a media world. The first is confined by direct experience; the second is bounded only by the decisions of editors and producers (Zucker, 1978). Public surveys have reported that as many as 95% of the general population cite the mass media as their primary source of information about crime (Graber, 1979).

It is interesting to note that while the mass media supplies a large amount of information about specific crimes, it provides comparatively little analytical or evaluative information to help the public put this information into a realistic perspective (Graber, 1979).

The mass media have been among the most praised and criticised, "the most cussed and discussed" aspects of modern society (Oskamp, 1984, p. 297).

Individual cases (exemplars) are commonly used in the protrayal of gangs (Bell, 1990; Bain, 1995).

A study by Brosius & Bathelt (1994) found that the use of exemplars, compared with general statements, had a strong effect on public opinion.

Illustrating a news story by portraying an individual experience to exemplify a societal problem, communicates the message that anyone may undergo the same experience.

The aim of exemplifying an issue is to evoke a higher interest in the reader by increasing the vividness and perceived authenticity of the article. "Exemplars with their episodic nature can be comprehended easily" (p. 50).

The authors concluded that, if as their results indicated, it "is easy to influence recepients' perceptions of problems by the composition of exemplars, the way in which exemplars are put together and distributed should become a matter of concern" (p. 75).

As they have a high profile and are readily accessible to outsiders, as well as the media attention their activities generate, (Kelsey & Young, 1982) the haranguing of gangs elicits wide support.

Few people would argue with the assertion that gangs are associated with a higher level of detected crime than the average citizen but, it is unlikely that their offences are any more heinous or occur more frequently than those of a large number of corporate offenders who are generally left alone unless reported for specific acts. The main purpose of 'gang-bashing' and other crime control programmes is to produce the impression that something is being done about the evils of society -

something for which generally gangs and the lower class take a disproportionate measure of the blame (Newbold, 1992).

Source of News

In a study in Britain by Gunter and McLaughlin (1992), newspapers were named as the primary local news source by 48% of all respondents, compared with 25% who named television and 13% who named radio. When asked to rate their 'first three' sources of local news 8 out of 10 named newspapers. Talking to people was rated as a first source for local news by 35% of respondents.

Readers' preferences among newspaper content in a survey in the United States found that local community news is usually read by 84% of newspaper readers, this is the highest catergory of news read (Cook, Gomery & Lichty, 1992).

However, newspapers replace television as the most frequently named first news source only at the most local level. In news about the wider region, television is often seen as the primary news source (Gunter & McLaughlin, 1992).

Smith (1987) found a strong relationship between public concerns and newspaper coverage. Olien, Donohue and Tichenor (1984, cited in Smith, 1987), found that media coverage of community conflict peaked during the later stages of the conflict and, that in the earlier stages, newspapers were the most heavily used source of information.

To the extent that media coverage of community issues contain conflict, it is to be expected that higher levels of negative feelings by the public, directed toward individuals and groups involved in the conflict, will be forthcoming (Smith, 1987).

The perception of impartiality in respect to the reporting of news and current affairs programmes, within which it would seem logical to categorise coverage of gangs, was felt by nearly 25% of respondents to show some groups as favoured and some as discriminated against (Gunter & McLaughlin, 1992).

On a social and cognitive level therefore, a considerable amount of generally shared knowledge, beliefs, norms, and values must be presupposed. Without such presuposed information, the news would not be understandable (van Dijk, 1988).

> [A]nalysis suggests that the newspaper has focused on the issue of gangs as a high profile issue at certain times, and that this has led to intense but poorly balanced coverage of gang related issues. This must be a matter of serious concern since it raises the possibility that news media coverage, upon which the public are dependent for information, fosters more consistently negative images of gangs than may be justified (Committee on Gangs, 1981, p. 63).

The first and foremost aim of the popular media is to maximise profits, and the way to achieve this is by making the media as newsworthy as possible in order to increase sales. Eye catching headlines designed specifically to elicit interest and a desire to know more are one device used by the print media to ensure that this happens. It would seem that in the race to maximise profits, accuracy has perhaps been left to run a slow second.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT THE MEDIA SAYS

Gangs and the Community

The number of individuals who are involved with gangs in New Zealand, as patched members or gang 'associates' account for less than 1% of the population ("Mob blame", 1996; "MPs talk", 1996) but, there are few people who would not have some degree of knowledge of gangs and the activities they are generally suspected of being involved in.

> The gangs of New Zealand have few champions outside their own ranks. A small minority recognises that gang structures offer some prospect of positive social discipline where otherwise there might be none at all. The majority of New Zealanders perceive of the gangs as outlaws, made up predominantly - but not exclusively - of young Maori (Beatson, 1987).

The harsher line being taken in dealings with gangs can be observed in reports of legislation focusing on intimidation by gangs. The wording of the article, "Legislation aimed at stopping groups of disorderly people intimidating the public was pushed through Parliament yesterday" (p. 1), evokes feelings of some urgency being involved in the process. This article went on to discuss a non-association order as a sentencing option for offences that were punishable by imprisonment, the feeling being that this would prevent association with gangs by people who had previously committed offences ("Legislation zeroes", 1989, p.1). This insinuates that the gang environment was one in which more crimes were committed.

Efforts to reduce gang fortifications, with legislation ready to go before the Cabinet (Grafton, 1989) was reported in the *Sunday Star Times*. However, these rulings have not taken place without a fight by the parties involved and legal proceedings in civil courts have delayed substantive hearings on any case.

An Auckland police officer in charge of the youth aid section described the latest loose knit gangs as the result of social problems such as poverty, dysfunctional families and unemployment. He talked of "families with the least income, which means the least control, which means the least value for education and convention" (Davey, 1993, cited in Barton, 1993, p. 9).

The story of Mr Torea, "The lone man who stood up to gang bullies" asks the question "Did Terry Torea save a town? Certainly behind the counters and on the streets of the Wairarapa town of Masterton they'll tell you Terry Torea did what they all wanted to do. He stood up to a gang" (Fogarty, 1995, p. 4). While it is possible that a significant number of residents certainly support Mr Torea's stand, it may be an overstatement to say that "Mr Torea did what they *all* wanted to do", or indeed that everyone felt the need to stand up to a gang.

Also news worthy, because of his conversion from gangs to God, was the "Former gang member who sought God's help". This former gang member once charged with rape, assault, possession of firearms and car conversion is now a Pastor in South Auckland, married with two children (Mollard, 1992, p. 18).

> When all else fails in a long hot summer when the supply of Phil Goff promotional pics runs out and editorial writers cast about desperately for fresh subject matter, there's always that faithful old standby - gangs. . . . Gangs are bad, and that's all there is to that. They're rotten through and through, and what's more they don't wash (Welch, 1988).

This editorial remarked on how papers such as the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Evening Post* have raised issues such as the editorial reminder to the Police Minister Peter Tapsell in his declaration, after being sworn in as minister that "[w]e have all had a gutsful of the mindless violence and thuggery of some gang members and I am determined that it will be halted dead in its tracks" (Tapsell, 1988, cited in Welch, 1988).

Nine years on, and although police have the legal power to demolish gang fortifications, nothing has been done. Sporadic outbreaks of violence between rival gangs continue unabated, to the apparent detriment of the communities. There is a cycle of blame which no one is prepared to take responsibility for and so the violence continues.

Overseas Reports

Although the extent to which gang research in the United States can be applied to the New Zealand setting is limited, some similarities may be observed in newspaper articles reporting on the gang situation in both these countries.

The *New Zealand Herald* (1989) report on the "War against Gangs" in New York illustrated the effects of drive-by shootings and the importance of wearing the right colours in a particular part of town in order to be identified as a member of the right gang (Hayward, 1989). Some parallels may be drawn between this and articles which ran in *The Press* on consecutive nights on the 10th and 11th October, 1988 which began with the headlines "Four shot, one dead in gunfight". This involved what "police described as not a fight but 'a war'", a stand-off between rival gangs, the Mongrel Mob and the Black Power ("Four shot", 1988, p. 1). The culmination of this violence led to 24 arrests and two men dead.

In the New York gang situation the problem for police and welfare organisations is the increasing growth of gangs in both South and East Los Angeles. The gang houses, secret hand signals, shared danger and comradeship provided by gang members "offer a sense of identity and shared association to young people from broken homes or who have deemed themselves to have failed" (Hayward, 1989, p. 2:1).

A Federal Study in 1988 found that 30% of the nation's 'crack' trade was controlled by Los Angeles gangs. The profits gained by selling drugs, worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year, have enabled many gangs to heavily increase

their arms supplies thus attracting increasing numbers of disenchanted Blacks and Hispanics of lower education (Hayward, 1989).

If the question is being asked of New Zealand, then Australia is certainly also being asked, as to whether it is becoming an increasingly violent and lawless society and, if so, are the youth of Australia making it so (Ansley & Kearney, 1993). "Last November a national crime prevention conference in Melbourne was told almost unanimously by Australia's most senior lawmen that crime had reached beyond the capability of police to contain it" (Ansley & Kearney, 1993, p. 2:1). Police have been alarmed at the American style 'colour' and 'bandanna' gangs, although there are some doubts as to whether this is a recent phenomenon.

The History of Gangs

The two most prominent gangs in New Zealand are the Black Power and the Mongrel Mob who, together in 1989, accounted for 57% of the total patched and associate members (Grafton, 1989). There is a current tendency to associate the Mongrel Mob as the 'baddies' and the Black Power as the 'good guys' (Nichol, 1991). Certainly the Black Power are presented as a more cohesive force, members are now being taught Maori language and culture, and rape as a gang organised activity has been banned, "[s]ince 1978 there have been only three convictions for rape - none of them gang rape" (Harris, 1990, cited in Stirling, 1990, p. 11).

The proposition and the force behind the banning of rape has come from the, Black Power National president, who somewhat ironically, in 1978 when the resolution banning rape was passed, was in prison for rape; supported by the, former magistrate and district commissioner of colonial Burma, now the Black Power political adviser.

In the article previewing the documentary of the Black Power gang on *Fast Forward*, film maker Peter Cathro said that the idea of the documentary was to give Black Power the opportunity to show who they are. Included in the film is some archival footage of a convention in 1976, this

is included in the documentary to show the contrast between where they were, which is basically where the public believes them to be, and where they are now. In the old footage they talk about 'blocking' [gang-raping] women and they play with knives (Jenkin, 1990, p. 42).

Membership of Gangs

In 1989 Peter Tapsell, the police minister, released police estimates that put the total number of gang members at 5 356, a 20% increase on figures released the November before. "Gang members also account for at least a quarter of the prison population" (Grafton, 1989, p. 1).

The transition from 'prospect' to 'patched' member is apparently made after certain initiation rites have been fulfiled, these appear to vary according to which gang you wish to belong to.

> Rape was not a formal part of the Black Power initiation rites - some gangs still require prospects to get their 'red wings': to have intercourse with a menstruating women who may or may not be delighted to oblige - but it was always a reasonably good idea to prove oneself 'a dog beyond doubt' (Stirling, 1990, p. 11).

The wording of this statement would seem to indicate that while rape was not 'formally' recognised as a means of proving oneself, informally it may well have served the purpose of substantiating ones claim to manhood.

Gang 'Associates'

The definition of a gang 'associate' is a contentious issue. There is no agreed definition of what constitutes a gang 'associate'. However, Minister of Police John Banks said that 'associates' may number up to 20 for every gang member (Ansley, 1992). It could be argued that this is an expedient way to explain the logical problem of attributing an inordinate amount of crime to a small gang chapter.

Timaru police have claimed that it is generally not gang members themselves who commit the arson, bombings, stabbing, assaults and murders "which have hit the headlines repeatedly over the last eight years." Instead, younger 'associates' and 'prospects' are attributed as doing the 'dirty work' (Gardiner, 1991, p. 1).

According to the latest Police Criminal Intelligence Services figures there are an estimated 4 000 patched gang members. Police estimate a total between 8 000 and 10 000 gang members, 'prospects' and 'associates' ("Mob blame", 1996). These figures do not equate to those of Mr Banks.

Police estimates (over an 18 month period) of gang membership including members, 'prospects' and 'associates' show steady increases;

September 1988   - 4 400
July 1989   - 5 356
March 1990   - 6 550 (Meek, 1992).

These estimates of gang numbers differ markedly from those that were presented when two Labour MPs went to Australia as part of their lobbying for more effective measures against gangs. Moore and Goff said that New Zealand appeared to have more gang members than Australia, giving police estimates of between 10 000 and 15 000 gang members, 'associates', and 'prospects', compared to Australia's 3 000 to 4 000. However, the Press Association points out that the two sets of figures do not correlate, with the Australian figures reflecting only motorcycle gangs ("MPs talk", 1996). In New Zealand, motorcycle gangs make up only 27% of the total number of gangs (Meek, 1992).

Maori and Gangs

'Ethnic' gangs comprise the largest group in the breakdown of gang membership consisting of 64% of the total number of gang members (Meek, 1992).

Although members of gangs in New Zealand are predominantly Maori, in gangs such as the Black Power and the Mongrel Mob membership is open to any race.

In 1988 the Minister of Police, Peter Tapsell, deplored the malign influence of gangs on young Maori and stated that he would like to steer them into "more fruitful and, in the long term, more enjoyable pursuits. . . like sport" (Tapsell, 1988, cited in Welch, 1988, p. 15). It is unlikely, given that gangs have been publicly acknowledged as a problem since the early 1970s, that a good game of rugby is likely to solve all problems.

The negative way Maori issues are sensationalised in newspapers engenders racial fears which Pakeha have about Maori, according to Ranginui Walker (1989). Walker's column in *The Listener* looked at the success of the Auckland chapter of the Black Power who, with the support of the late Prime Minister, Sir Robert Muldoon in the early 1980s, now prosper with an Access programme, low cost housing building contract, their own newspaper and a liquor licence for their clubhouse.

Comments by the 1993 Minister of Police, John Banks, that "New Zealand would be the safest place in the world if it were not for Maori criminals" caused a furore when they became public ("Crime comments", 1993, p. 2). The Minister said that while Maori made up 12% of the population, they contributed 50% of the jail musters. Mr Banks made the comments following the release of an international survey that showed that New Zealand had the worst crime rate in the industrialised world.

The Maori occupation of the Moutoa Gardens in Wanganui was reported by the *New Zealand Herald* which said that police had expressed concern that Nomad

gang members were being used on the site to restrict access. A protest spokesman said that all gang members were at the gardens as iwi members and were not wearing patches ("Police claim", 1995).

There is a connection between the high rate of Maori offending and membership of gangs as reported by *The Dominion*. One way of earning gang patches may involve the serving of prison time for experienced members, or committing crimes as a means of gaining acceptance into the gang. "A spate of serious crime in Wanganui was being committed by Maori gang 'prospects' trying to earn their patches and the community was getting sick of it" (Scott, 1991, cited in Bell, 1991, p. 3). Mr Scott, a Detective Senior Sergeant, said that he felt awkward every time he had to tell the news media that a Maori was again being hunted after another robbery. "I'm not Maori bashing *but* the community is getting sick of it", he said. "I don't feel good about it. I feel embarrassed" (Scott, 1991, cited in Bell, 1991, p. 3).

If the legal system offers a fair and just system to all, then Mr Scott has no reason to feel embarrassed at having to tell the media that a Maori is being sought for questioning, although perhaps the use of the terminology 'hunted' is misplaced as it tends to evoke feelings that guilt has already been decided, contrary to the right of the individual, assumed to be innocent until proven guilty. It would seem likely in a town with a sizeable Maori population, such as Wanganui, that Maori gangs would be a likely component.

The disclaimer of "not Maori bashing but. . ." is unnecessary as the article goes on to do exactly that, for example, "he was sure members of the Maori community cringed and were ashamed every time he said he was looking for a Maori" and "Police were *again* hunting a Maori after the armed robbery on Sunday night..." (Scott, 1991, cited in Bell, 1991, p. 3). It is known that several people who had been charged with aggravated robbery and offences associated with the robberies of the Wanganui banks were members of the Black Power and Manga Kaha gangs. However, this does not offer an explanation for the remainder of those involved

with the same offences.   If the crimes are being committed to enable 'prospects' to earn gang patches and prestige, how can the lack of gang 'association' that has been intimated, explain the presence of others who were also charged for the same crimes.

The Official Maori Perspective

The Maori Council are considering a proposal where Maori in gangs, their families and associates would be offered special education and job training to break the cycle of gang membership.   The likelihood of the government agreeing to other points in the proposal: decriminalising possession and use of cannabis, as well as encouraging gang members to send their children to Maori boarding schools, is unlikely to happen in the near future.

The council's gang liaison director, Peter Love, was reported as saying that gang members were increasingly becoming excluded from mainstream Maori organisations that did not like gangs and that most gang members were feeling their inadequacies and lack of skills and now wanted to be educated ("Council urged", 1996).

This reported attempt to join mainstream society would not be supported by all. Harry Tam, patched Mongrel Mob member and Justice Department employee, believes that if they cleaned themselves up and walked around in suits they would not be the Mongrel Mob (Ansley, 1990).

Eastern Maori MP Mr Tapsell does "not believe Maori are inherently more likely to behave more criminally than other people, even though the statistics for 1992 show 3 610 European offenders per 100 000 of the population, but 14 558 Maori offenders" (Tapsell, 1993, p. 6). Mr Tapsell cites two main causes of the high rate of Maori offending, the first, that the effects of the last war are still being felt, where liberalism has replaced the enforced discipline and restraint of the war years. The second cause relates to the gradual destruction of the traditional Maori social

structure coupled with urban drift, while nothing effective has been put in place to replace it.

Christchurch Polytechnic's Kaumatua, Hohua Tutengaehe, also describes gang members as the product of urban drift, and says that gangs are the response of young Maori setting up their own 'iwi' after migrating to largely European dominated cities that alienate Maori from their values. Tutengaehe says that tattoos on the faces of gang members are the moko of a lost generation and gangs will remain lost unless they are cared for by their own people (Iosefa, 1992).

Also seeing the positive side of gangs is Sir Graham Latimer, 1988 Chairman of the New Zealand Maori Council. Sir Latimer believes that Maori gangs have the capabilities to be a positive force in New Zealand society (Gee, 1988). "I know there's a lot of criticism leveled at gangs, and there are odd gangs that cause a lot of trouble, but in the main a lot of them are trying to get on in society and establish themselves" (Gee, 1988, p. 12).

"Maori gangs see themselves in many ways as contemporary tribes" (Riley, 1989, cited in Allison, 1989, p. 23). The tribal connection is also made by O'Reilly, of the Group Employment Liaison Scheme, he asks the question "What is it about gangs that frightens our society so much that we seem to be prepared to sacrifice basic civil liberties to contain the perceived problem?", and answers "I think it has something to do with the deep seated colonial fear of the Maori warrior calling for the rent" (O'Reilly, 1988, p. 11).

Women and Gangs

Women associated with gangs and gang members are even harder to gain access to than their male counterparts according to Bill Payne, author of *'Staunch' Inside the gangs.* "Gang members refused point blank to let Payne speak to their women, and in one case made Payne sign a piece of paper promising not even to try" (Hammond, 1991, p. 3). Payne defined the role of gang women as living apart

from the males serving a purpose that has been set out succinctly by the men as either 'the slut', or 'the cook'.

Payne (1991) is convinced that there are two distinct types of women involved with gangs, the woman whom has been in a relationship with a gang member for a few years and who is essentially the more dominant person, although the male must always be observed to be in charge and the "crazy young ones who were willing to do whatever the gang said - crime, sex or violence - just so they could belong" (Payne, 1991, cited in Hammond, 1991, p. 3).

Offering an insight into gangs, Payne has said that the common pattern is that of violent male models who beat their spouses and children. Children leave home to become street-kids and 'prospects' to gain admission into gangs. They win their patch by doing the bidding of a patched member. This may include beating up enemies, car conversion, burglary, and not informing the police, to the extent of even doing a 'lag' for one of the established gang members. These initiation tests prove that a prospect is 'staunch', which is for them both stable and reliable. The gang gives meaning to an otherwise meaningless life (Payne, 1991, cited in Walker, 1991, p. 11).

"Payne is adamant that the negative image of gangs is fostered largely by the news media coverage they get" (Payne, 1991, cited in Nichol, 1991, p. 7).

In 1987 the *Auckland Metro* magazine published a full story of the kidnapping and subsequent gang rape of a young women at Ambury Park, Auckland, the site of the first Mongrel Mob convention. This article looked at the aims of the convention, the role of women within the structure of gangs and the development of the gang prospect to fully patched up gang member. The importance of the patch is paramount, "For these 'Dogs' the patch is more important than the person who wears it. Loyalty to the patch, a bulldog motif with Mongrel Mob and the name of the chapter written around it, is almost fanatical" (Du Chateau & Roger, 1987, p. 140).

Articles such as "I've got five girlfriends all raped by the Mob", which tells the story of a seventeen year old victim of a gang rape, offer further illustrations of the violence and savagery associated with the Mongrel Mob (Ferguson, 1991, p. 11).

Criminal Activity

A committee on gangs visiting Napier city and Wairoa township was an effort to control and reduce the gang problem. The chairperson, Richard Prebble, identified these areas as having a serious gang problem without the resources to call on large police numbers.

Although the itinerary of the committee included meetings with "local civic leaders, police, news media, housing corporation and local bodies as well as a visit to Napier Prison" (Kilroy, 1989, p. 2), there were no plans to meet formally with the supposed crux of the problem, the gangs themselves. The visit of this committee to Wairoa came after an incident the year before when a clash between Mongrel Mob and Black Power had led to the hospitalisation of several people, two dead and a number of arrests.

"'Lesser lights' sentenced over role in Wairoa gang incident" was the headline that described the outcome of the four men who had admitted an involvement in the clash between Black Power and factions of the Mongrel Mob ("Lesser lights", 1989, p. 4).

While the stereotypical view of gangs tends to conjure up images of a predominantly Maori domain, the Harris gang in Christchurch offers irrefutable evidence against the idea that gangs are solely an ethnic concern. When members of the Harris group, a European gang, were jailed in 1992 for intimidation, arson, burglary, kidnapping and aggravated robbery, they were described by police as "Four of Christchurch's most dangerous criminals" (Clarke, 1992, p. 2).

"Witness house destroyed" ("Witness house", 1991), "Man says gang trial left his family in tatters" ("Man says", 1991), "Harris gang 'urban terrorists' BIKIE

WARS" ("Harris gang", 1991), "Harris gang henchman jailed" (Clarke, 1992), and "Harris group the target of Operation Persil for the last year" ("Harris group", 1992) headline just some of the articles that ran in the Press over a 12 month period from September 1991. "Police say that comparing Christchurch's notorious Harris gang with urban terrorists in Northern Ireland is no exaggeration" (Clarke, 1992, p. 2).

> The police dismiss news media claims that violence with the Highway 61s was racially motivated. The Harris's are European, the Highway 61s predominantly Maori. Some Harris's wore White Power T-shirts, and Nazi paraphernalia was in their headquarters. But the police say the incidents were typical gang violence. A rift had developed and neither side backed down ("Harris group", 1992, p. 1).

Research into violent crime in New Zealand is still in its infancy. By 1992 there had been four official inquiries into violent offending in New Zealand. As reported by Mahoney (1992), one of these inquiries, the 1981 Report of the Committee on Gangs, concentrated solely on gangs in New Zealand.

The 1987 Roper Report recognised Maori offending as one of the most important issues of the inquiry and their findings indicated that the amount of Maori offending was disproportionate to the population. The Report also stated that 75% of violent offending was committed by those under 30 and that a large proportion of the Maori population were in this age group.

It is worth mentioning that "Caucasians suspected of offending are less likely to be charged, and that when they are charged the Justice Department found they are less likely to be convicted than suspected offenders from other ethnic groups" (Harrod, 1993, p. 7).

According to retired Wanganui CIB chief, Rob Butler, criminal violence and gangs are eating away at the very fabric of society. Rob Butler recommends a good hard

look on the part of all those concerned with Justice in New Zealand to see where they have all gone wrong. "The gang threat is very serious and people are just waking up to the fact" (Butler, 1988, cited in Waters, 1988, p. 5).

Another strong antagonist of gangs is Labour MP, Mike Moore. He says evidence on gangs is real and chilling. According to Mr Moore there is involvement in counterfeiting and extortion, contracts are put out for the assassination of policemen, police stations are bombed, witnesses are intimidated, and there is involvement in drugs and prostitution. Protection rings operate in prisons (Moore, 1996).

The actual evidence of these activities seems to be somewhat harder to find and even more difficult to link directly to gangs. It should be remembered that membership of a gang is not in itself a crime. The headline of this article "Hit gangs before they hit us" (Moore, 1996, p. 8), seems to contradict the intentions of the 1986 Submission to the Committee of Inquiry into Violence which states:

> There is a need for publicity which, while not downgrading the significance of violent crime, places the risk of becoming a victim into perspective. It is also important that those in a position to influence public perceptions of crime take care to avoid unduly heightening fears of crime (Committee of Inquiry into Violence, 1986, p. 6).

Supporting a call to eliminate anti-social gangs, the Assistant Commissioner, Brian Duncan, said that if necessary laws should be passed to prevent people from assembling in situations where crimes are liable to be committed. This followed the gang rape of a 15 year old girl in Auckland at a house used by the Tongan Cripps gang (Fea, 1995). This belief contrasted with that of a Christchurch lawyer invited to appear before a parliamentary select committee on gangs who stated that he could not offer an opinion on how to dis-band gangs when "for a lot of people gangs are their whole life and family" (Ruthe, 1996, cited in van Beynen, 1996, p. 1).

A leaked report from the Police Association, also seeking to dis-band gangs, reported that New Zealand was in imminent danger from the international gang movement. To combat this threat the police wanted government funding for gang-busting units to infiltrate gangs, and increased police powers such as non-association orders, seizing of premises used as gang meeting places, seizing of vehicles and gang assets and the outlawing of patches in public. They also wanted the power to take samples of skin and clothing from anyone suspected of using firearms ("Police Association", 1996). It would be imagined that civil liberties groups throughout the country would have something to say on this subject. The Maori Council questions the need for police to have increased powers to deal with gang friction ("Legal dope", 1996).

This follows an earlier report in May when the Police Commissioner told the justice and law reform select committee that the entire gang situation in New Zealand was less than five years away from being intensely difficult to police and control. Police said that gangs had a very negative impact on law abiding citizens through terror and intimidation (Gamble, 1996). Some of the residents of inner Auckland who shared their neighborhood with the Hells Angels were ambivalent about wider police powers. Although many residents were in support of a crackdown on gangs, most said that the 'Angels' were not a problem. One residents' view was that certain groups might become the target for the entire public's anxiety about crime in society ("Police happy", 1996).

As Canterbury University sociology lecturer, Dr Greg Newbold, says "What constitutes a gang member and a gang? The way the legislation might be worded could mean the law applies to everyone, not only gang members. It could mean any member of the public could have their phone tapped" ("Police happy", 1996, p. 4). The lead paragraph in this report, "[t]he Government's election-year crackdown has scored Brownie points with law enforcers but stoked public anxiety about excessive police powers" (p. 4), may offer some insight into the motives of such zeal in dealing with gangs. Perhaps a question of not just taking action, but being seen to take action, may be applicable.

The Harassment and Criminal Associations Act, which has targeted gangs, made it easier for local bodies to order removal of gang fortifications (Young, 1996). However, the Christchurch City Council found that most of the eight motorcycle and gang fortresses recently surveyed had permits for additions to buildings such as watchtowers (Clarke, 1996).

Relationship to the Police

By nature of their direct relationship, the police and gangs will seldom agree at all levels. A former Mongrel Mob leader in the central Hawkes Bay chapter offers an illustration of this situation in an article that ran in the *Sunday Star Times* (Harding, 1989). "Gang members and police in the central Hawkes Bay town of Waipukarau are not exactly bosom buddies but they have a good understanding of each other" (p. 8).

The *Dominion Sunday Star Times'* article preceeding Harding (1989), looked at the police team in Waipukurau, focusing on the above average crime clearance they had managed to achieve. The interview with the Sergeant in charge was a 'back to the basics' advert for community policing. He believed that despite a strong gang presence in the town, there were no prospective gang members currently within their young population. In his words they were cultivating "a climate where the kids would feel if they did something wrong they would be letting us down" (Kitchin, 1989, p. 8). This situation does not seem quite so straightforward in the view of the former Mongrel Mob leader who says that the children of gang members and 'associates' did their own thing, tending to avoid police organised recreational activities (Kitchin, 1989, p. 8).

Insight into the town gang mentality was offered by an Otaki police officer who seems to be a news worthy person because of his Christian views and how these may present difficulties in his role as a police officer. While he could see the problems between the gangs, he did not see them as an 'uneducated rabble'. On the contrary he said that it was up to the community to realise that gangs fulfil a function, not just for the underprivileged. He suggested the Lions, Rotary and

Round Table are a form of, albeit 'respectable', gangs formed by people with common interests. He went on to say, that prisons were institutions that failed to benefit the criminal sent there. They were a place where affiliations were made and individuals encouraged to come back to (Barton, 1994). Today with lap top computers and cell phones, gangs had become more sophisticated. They had 'grown up' and so must the communities in which they exist.

With headlines such as "Gang war gunfire shatters the night" (Bingham, 1992) and "Foxton fights back" (Meyer, 1993) the message is unequivocally that gangs are 'bad news'. To further illustrate this point, *The Dominion*, (Bell, 1990) offers an example of David Lammas, an ex police officer who left the force reputedly after a beating by gang members in 1986, which, according to a constable who was also attacked, left him not quite the same fellow. He now seemed to worry about a lot of things. The former police sergeant had begun his first job since leaving the police, as a Dannevirke court bailiff and disappeared after four hours at work. He was found later with head injuries, thought to have been caused by a fall from his bicycle. Admitted to hospital he disappeared again and was found, still wearing his hospital pyjamas, on a nearby farm.

While the psychological effects of a beating may well have long term effects, there is certainly no indication that this is the case and would appear to be an emotive story designed purely to elicit sympathy for the role of the police. It is unlikely that a similar story profiling a victim of, for example, the Spring Bok Tour demonstrations, would be profiled to see how they have progressed following the use of excessive force that could be clearly seen on the nightly news by some, obviously over eager, police officers wielding long batons.

Prejudice in the Justice System?

Another pre-election suggestion on how to deal with gangs appeared on the front page of the *New Zealand Herald* on September 20, 1996. Mr Moore suggested that membership of a gang should earn offenders a sentence of twice the duration of non-gang members. At present New Zealand law defines a gang as two, three

or more individuals who co-operate on a consistent basis for the purpose of illegal activities. The legislation suggested by Mr Moore is under consideration in the United States (Wall & Gregory, 1996).

As a contrast from the usual portrayal of gang members as the defendent in the court situation, a member of the Road Knights was awarded $20 for being prevented by police from leaving Timaru in October 1993, thus breaching his right to move freely. Although seeking $20 000, the Road Knight member was only awarded $20 which as the judge said, was for someone who associated with people who have been convicted of serious offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act, less than a decent law abiding person may expect. According to the Judge another way of looking at the assessment of damages was to evaluate the likely cost of 10 minutes of the Road Knight member's time ("Gang member", 1996).

Influence of the Media

The means by which the majority of the public form their perceptions of gang activity is through the media. The challenge for the media during this decade has been to explain and evaluate radical changes. Journalists have a duty to address the fundamental question underpinning much of their work - what does this all mean? Their role is not merely to inform but to assist the public to make sense of a complex and rapidly changing world (Tully & Fountain, 1994).

Coverage of gang warfare, altercations with the police, and gang connections linked with violent crime and intimidation is guaranteed to improve the sales of any newspaper, particularly if, in this age of increasingly reported racial disharmony, some ethnic concerns can be voiced as well.

The amount of media coverage gangs elicit is certainly disproportionate to their numbers, a point that is recognised by gang members. The Timaru Road Knights, when questioned about their concerns, have said, "[o]ur people getting shot outside the hotel got more publicity than the publican who was blown away up

North. What would have happened if one of them had died?. . . Everyone would have cheered" (Ansley, 1992, p. 15).

Timaru has had an acknowledged gang problem for over a decade. The history of altercations that have occurred between the Timaru Road Knights and the Headhunters may be followed through a newspaper trail of reports on shootings, burnings, and police raids on gang headquarters.

There have been claims that the present situation is largely a result of racism followed by rebuttals that racism is not involved. The community blame the gangs, the gangs blame the police and the police lay much of the blame on the gang 'associates' (Ansley, 1992), but also "reckons the community has to take some of the blame itself" (p.16).

Numbers involved with gangs as patched members and 'associates' are not suggestive of an imminent breakdown of law and order, and a deterioration of life as we know it. Perhaps there could be some truth to the idea that "visibility rather than villainy seems to be their (the gangs') chief offence" (Welch, 1988, p. 15), though this view is unlikely to grab the headlines and sell the same number of newspapers.

"Could the police computer be suffering from a gang-induced paranoia ? " That is what the *New Zealand Herald* asks when comparing police estimates of the 1989 gang population and the 40% of the total reported crime that is thought to be gang related (Rae, 1989, p. 2).

The article states that police estimate the total gang membership throughout the country as 3 000 members with another 2 300 affiliates, taking the total to 5 300. The number of gang members in prison in 1988 was just under 700 including members and 'associates'. The 4 600 members and affiliates available to commit 40% of the 431 000 total reported offences would need to be responsible for 37 crimes each in order to meet the current police estimates.

Reporting of crime in New Zealand has the effect of increasing people's awareness and fear of crime. This leads to a fear of victimisation which is out of proportion to the actual risk of victimisation. This view is supported by Sandy Manderson the director of the Crime Prevention Unit, "[t]he media contribute significantly to a public fear of crime which is out of proportion to the actual risk" (Manderson, 1994, cited in Calder, 1994, 3:1). Manderson, goes on to say that there is a much better chance of having a road accident than of being assaulted.

In *New Zealand Values Today* a 1990 survey of 1000 randomly selected New Zealanders' who were asked to rank their major social problems, 20% ranked gangs as either first or second in importance. Gangs took sixth place in a ranking of the top seven social problems (Gold & Webster, 1990) (see Figure 1).
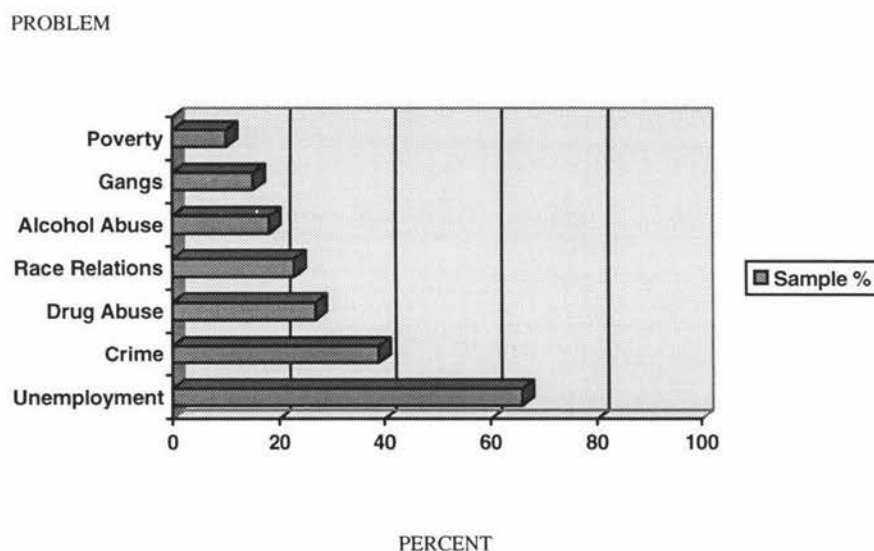
PROBLEM

PERCENT

Figure 1: IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS: PERCENT
RANKING FIRST OR SECOND

(adapted from Gold & Webster, 1990, p.41)

One of the reasons for the preponderance of crime reporting may be indicated by the *New Zealand Herald's* report on "Prime Crime" which talks of the reciprocal relationship between the police and the media: the media have easy access to crime news and the police pay claims are generally reported in a favourable way through the media coverage (McGregor, 1994, cited in Calder, 1994).

In a report by McGregor (1993), analysing five major newspapers throughout New Zealand results showed that crime coverage was high and crime reporting had increased. The study suggested that serious, violent crime was over-reported and that court reporting was pervasive. Indications were, that in addition to being a broker of news the role of the country's press agency was that of an amplifier of crime news (McGregor, 1993).

An overview of crime journalism in New Zealand shows that apart from some noteworthy but overly-long magazine articles, reporters are content with sensational stories and rarely bother with in-depth or investigative journalism. "The news media are lazy and sloppy, content to let prejudicial impressions become a media constructed reality. The media serve the cause of those in society who would meet violence with violence" (Behrens, 1992, cited in Comrie & McGregor, 1992, p. 229).

Crime prevention is a topical platform for any political party. Certainly there seem to be significant promises on how gangs will be dealt with in the months prior to an election, in comparison to the months following. For example, "Parties quick to say their policies will limit gangs, boost police" (Gamble, 1996, p. 3) and "Labour would look at other options, including more powers for the police. . ." (Wall & Gregory, 1996, p. 1).

Policy makers find media content useful, they often have no better indicator of public opinion. From the perspective of criminal justice policy, the perception and reality of an attentive public offers the media a huge influence in policy making. Government officials may make decisions, in reaction to media coverage, or in fear of media attention (Kennamer, 1994).

CHAPTER 4

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis presents an alternative approach to those offered by traditional quantitative and qualitative research methods. It is a functionally oriented approach to the analysis of talk and texts (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Potter & Wetherell (1987) are critical of other socio-psychological methodologies which ignore or pay little attention to the constructive active use of language in everyday life. They describe the inconspicuous ways our perceptions are ordered and how things are made to happen. Creation of social interaction and diverse social worlds takes place through the construction of language. Discourse analysis is analysis of any form of language whether it be written, spoken, formal or informal.

Discourse analysis focuses, above all, on the most representative psychological activities - this includes activities of justification, rationalisation, categorisation, attribution, naming, blaming, and identifying. Discourse studies link those activities with collective forms of social action, and thus have the potential to combine psychological concerns with social analysis (Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

This new socio-psychological research has emerged from the foundations of speech act theory; where sentences which do things and sentences that say things (ie. performance and constructive sentences are not distinguished between, but instead follow the fundamental concept that all utterances people make) have both a meaning and a force; they both 'state' and 'do' things, people make use of language in order to get something done.

Ethnomethodology concerns itself with the wide variety of ways that social life is put together, how language is used in everyday situations, studying the methods that ordinary people use for producing and making sense of everyday life (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), and semiology, the science of signs which is primarily concerned

with how meaning is generated in texts. This is addressed by dealing with what signs are and their functions in everyday discourse.

Discourse analysis is a way of interpretation and the science of semiotics is an integral part of this analysis. When attempting to analyse peoples' discourse there must be an understanding of the hidden interpretations that can be made from what people say. The primary issue for both participants and analysts is the social actions or interactional work being done in the discourse. The concern is with the nature of knowledge, thought processes and reality; the description and explanation of events, the construction of factual events and how cognitive states are attributed (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

Discourse analysis is an approach which investigates the communicative function of language as its primary area of concern and therefore seeks to describe linguistic form as a dynamic means of expressing intended meaning, rather than as a static object (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Foucault (1981, cited in Shotter & Gergen, 1989) has argued that what counts as true knowledge is seemingly defined by the individual, "but what is permitted to count is defined by the discourse. What is spoken, and who may speak, are issues of power" (p. 61).

The researcher has made the decision to combine traditional quantitative analysis with qualitative analysis in the form of discourse analysis. Using both these approaches should add to the validity of the research and the researcher believed that the two differing approaches will compliment each other. Allowing discourse analysis to act as a resource for more traditional work (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

"The advantage of discourse analysis is that it reframes the object - individual psychology - and allows us to treat it not as truth, but as one 'truth' held in place by language and power" (Parker, 1990, p. 202).

The method of data collection in the form of a semi structured interview lent itself to discourse analysis, which, following Gilbert & Mulkay (1984), was taken to cover all forms of spoken interaction both formal and informal and written text of any kind (cited in Potter & Wetherell, 1987). While leaving the content of the interviews to the discretion of the participant, asking specific questions that require input from the participant that can later be coded, provided information to meet the requirements of quantitative analysis.

The use of discourse analysis was appropriate because of the expected small sample size of gang respondents. The Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads consists of only 14 patched members. Of these 14 members only one was still resident in the area. Tracing some of these members was expected to be difficult, however, every effort was made to do so. By including Nomad 'associates' in the target group for the gang respondents it was hoped that the sample number would be increased.

The researcher acknowledges that not only is the language used by the participants important, so too is the researcher's own contribution in the interview process: her discourse, orientation, how she constructs her language and the function it serves.

For the purposes of this research a Potter and Wetherell (1987) approach to discourse analysis was used. There are three features of discourse analysis that render it particularly relevant for use in research practice.

1)   It is concerned with talk and texts as social practices, thus paying close attention to 'content' and 'form'.

2)   Discourse analysis has a triple concern with *actions* people perform through their different kinds of talk and writing, how they accomplish this through the *construction* of their discourse through a range of styles, linguistic resources and rhetorical devices. The third concern is the

variability in the descriptions of a phenomenon, as participants perform different kinds of actions.

3)   Concern with the rhetorical or argumentative organisation of talk and texts is the third feature of discourse focusing the analysis away from the question of how a version relates to some putative reality and instead asking how this version is successfully designed to compete with an alternative (Potter & Wetherell, 1994, cited in Bryman & Burgess, 1994).

As discourse analysts read texts they continuously put what they read into quotation marks: asking the questions 'Why was this said, and not that'? Why these words, and where do the meanings of the word fit with different ways of talking about the world? (Parker, 1992).

Potter and Wetherell (1987), have divided the process of discourse analysis into 10 stages although in practice these stages are not clearly defined and sequential, rather they merge together.

Stage 1: research questions
The participants' discourse is approached as a primary entity. It is treated as a strong, action-oriented medium in its own right, independent of attitudes, events or cognitive processes.

Stage 2: sample selection
The determination of sample size is dependent on the specific research question being asked, 10 interviews may provide as much information as a hundred responses. Everyday conversations can be as interesting as important texts.

Stage 3: collection of records and documents
Records and documents are frequently used by discourse analysts. These texts have minimal input from the researcher.

Stage 4: interviews

Interviews have the advantage of allowing the researcher room for active intervention by enabling her/him to ask a specific question of an entire sample of people on the same issues allowing for comparability in responses and increasing the simplicity of the coding. Consistency in the interview process is important in identifying regular patterns in the use of language by the participant.

Stage 5: transcription

Accurate transcription is imperative for a form of analysis which involves repeated readings of sections of data. Transcription is a constructive and conventional process.

Stage 6: coding

The goal in coding is to organise a large body of discourse into a manageable quantity of information. It is an analytic process preparing the way for a more intensive examination of the material extracted, through the selective coding process.

Stage 7: analysis

Rather than a specific analytic method, there is a broad theoretical framework which focuses on the constructive and functional dimensions of discourse. This combines with the reader's proficiency in identifying noticeable patterns of consistency and variation.

Stage Eight: validation

The four main analytic techniques that can be used to validate the findings of this type of research are:

a)   coherence

b)   participants orientation

c)   new problems

d)   fruitfulness

These four techniques permit a rigorous scrutiny of any claims for validating the findings of discourse analysis.

Stage 9: the report

When presenting the final report the aim is to present the analysis and conclusions in a way that those reading the report are able to make an assessment of the researcher's interpretations. To do this means that a sizable portion of the report will be taken up with extracts from transcripts as well as elaborate interpretations which select patterns and organisation in the materials.

Papers using the discourse analytic approach provide the reader with the detail of interpretation of a text which previously, in traditional reports, have had to be taken on trust.

Stage 10: application

There are various models for discourse analysis in the application of the practical use of this work one of which is *popularisation,* making as many people aware of the findings of the research as possible. The second is to have further dialogue with the participants of the research. It must be remembered that virtually the entirety of an individual's understanding is mediated by discourse in the form of conversations, newspapers, novels, TV stories etc.

Rather than a method to discourse analysis there is a broad theoretical framework concerning the nature of discourse, its role in social life, along with a set of suggestions about how discourse can best be studied and how to persuade others as to the genuineness of the findings.

Discourse analysis deliberately systemises different ways of talking so we can understand them better (Parker, 1992).

The study of language is important to social psychology because it is claimed to be the most basic and pervasive form of interaction between people. A large

proportion of activities are performed through language; rather than existing in a conceptual framework, talk and writing are media for action (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

CHAPTER 5

THE NOMADS - HOROWHENUA

The Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads under the leadership of founding member DH has 'enjoyed' regular publicity in recent years in the daily papers, as well as local papers such as the Levin *Chronicle*. The publicity involving the Nomads has never been so plentiful as it has been since the initiation of Operation Damon.

Operation Damon, an anti-gang campaign by police, was launched on May 20, 1994, by the district commander, Superintendent Mark Lammas.

Over the 12 months following the start of Operation Damon over 116 search warrants were served and 86 subsequent arrests made. The number of patched members of the Nomads in the Horowhenua is 14.

The number of gang 'associates' in the Horowhenua is unknown and is likely to remain so until an agreed definition of an 'associate' can be formulated. The question of who constitutes an 'associate' is one that is constantly being asked by the Nomads' leader, DH. He has argued that the use of the term 'associate' is one that has never been defined and while the police use of the term denotes a firm link, friendship or affiliation he argues that an 'associate' may be someone with whom there is only a brief acquaintance or someone who has participated in a conversation but nothing more; for example, the researcher was classified as an 'associate' during an interview.

Whatever the definition of the term 'associate' may be, it is one that is used frequently by the press and police alike. "Ten Horowhenua Nomad gang members or *associates* will face charges...." (Bartlett, 1995, p. 1). There have been 33 arrests of Nomads, their patched members, 'prospects' and *associates* (Bartlett, 1994, p. 1). "The police gang offensive went into full swing on Wednesday

morning with the arrest of 19 Nomad gang members, their *associates* and 'prospects' on serious charges" (Bartlett, 1994, p. 1).

According to the police Superintendent Mr Lammas, the police's long-term goal for Operation Damon, was to educate young people to put them off joining gangs. "When kids see Nomads being locked up and put away they won't see the gang as attractive" (Ferguson, 1996, p.13).

This statement however could serve to do exactly the opposite, increasing resistance and bitterness toward the police and encouraging more people to join gangs. In a chapter such as the Horowhenua Nomads where 70% of the gang are in some way related, it would seem to be an expected outcome that, having watched fathers, uncles, brothers and cousins be arrested and jailed, the children of today may become the gang members of tomorrow simply by nature of how they interpret the actions of the police.

Concerns over the welfare of the children of individuals targeted by Operation Damon have been voiced by parents, the Kaumatua of the Nomads, and other concerned individuals. "Community organisations, government agencies and social service groups are meeting in Levin today to discuss the impact Operation Damon is having on families" ("Families meet", 1994, p. 1). One person whose Nomad partner is currently in custody, said she "was concerned for her children's safety as police always "rushed" her property and she recently built a gate to stop them speeding up her driveway" (Bartlett, 1994, p. 1).

According to a National Radio programme, *Insight*, aired in October 1994, some residents of Foxton were unaware of the presence of the Nomads prior to Operation Damon being launched and they were angered by the labeling of Foxton as a gang town. Other sources, including the police, believe that some residents were in fear of their lives owing to the terrorism displayed by gang members (Harrington, 1994).

"Foxton police say that if a dozen people who have been intimidated by gang members and other criminals in the town were prepared to stand up and give evidence, they would be able to do more to fight crime" ("Come forward", 1994, p. 1).

"This gang has held the Horowhenua community to ransom for far too long. Today's arrests will seriously affect the gang" said Operation Damon head Detective Senior Sergeant Jim Lyons ("Raids nab", 1994, p. 1).

The Nomads experienced their fair share of publicity in both local and national papers when, in 1993 nationwide attention was focused on the Horowhenua with the death of the local doctor and the rape of his sister in Foxton. Although no gang *member* was involved in the burglary that ended in manslaughter and rape convictions, one of those convicted of the manslaughter was a *prospect* for the Nomads, and has since become a *patched member*. The burglary which was about the 55th suffered by the doctor, was rumoured to have been a way for this person to earn his patch.

The headlines that followed, "Doctor brutally slain" (Naylor, 1993), "Tributes flow for friend to Foxton" ("Tributes flow", 1993), "Two men charged with doctor's murder" ("Two men", 1993), "Murder accused again remanded" ("Murder accused", 1993), "Foxton farewells friend" (Paviell, 1993), "Pair plead not guilty to murder" ("Pair plead", 1993), and "Foxton fights back" (Meyer, 1992) follow the sequence of events that unfolded.

Throughout the articles any mention of gang involvement was conspicuous by their absence, although at the trial of the two accused, it was reported that there was a sign outside the courtroom that no gang patches would be allowed ("Murder accused", 1993). One of the accused, cleared on the murder charge, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the aggravated robbery of the doctor, and another Foxton man, who also raped the doctors sister, was sentenced to 16 years for both offences (Harrington, 1994).

The police organised a public meeting in Foxton on October 18, 1993 for residents to voice their concerns about crime in the town (Meyer, 1993), and took the position of warning Nomad gang members that they were not welcome and would be arrested if they showed up. The two local members who did arrive at the meeting were told by police to leave or be arrested.

Since that time there have been regular appearances of gang members coming to public attention through the crimes pages in the newspapers, for example, "Court told of persuasion" where three members of the Wellington Nomads had charged a man $5 000 to "persuade a man to move from his Oriental Bay flat" ("Court told", 1995, p. 1)

Although subject to an appeal, the "Single trial for Nomads on 'taxing' charges" looked set to cause a stir as a precedent setting case in New Zealand. The ten Nomad gang members and 'associates', all arrested during the police gang offensive Operation Damon were charged on 18 separate counts over a two year period. The police prosecutor had said "there was a logical connection of the offences which would warrant that the accused stand in one trial" ("Single trial", 1995, p. 9) (see Appendix G).

The importance of the patch, and the esteem in which it is held by members of gangs make it difficult to believe the Dominion article on January 15, "Wairarapa Nomads abandon patches". The article claimed that patches had been burned on a bonfire at a gang house, that there were no longer any visible signs of the gang, and that the town was now generally free of gang crime (Coughlan, 1996, p. 1).

The article provides no reference for comments by the Wairarapa Nomads to support the statements being made through the media by the police. There are no crime statistics to support the statements although a Masterton Detective Sergeant was quoted as saying, "[w]ithout any reference to any data at all, I can definitely say that over the last two months it has been generally quiet along those lines" (cited in Coughlin, 1996, p. 1).

The Wairarapa police viewed the presence of the Nomad gang as "a cancerous growth" also stating that "[w]e have second and third generation young people here who are dependent on the state, who have plenty of time on their hands, and a gang is the only place they can get the fellowship they enjoy" (Coughlin, 1996, p. 3).

It should be pointed out that there are a number of second and third generation young people dependent on the state who are not members of a gang as well as a number of gang members who are gainfully employed. This would appear to indicate that the being a member of a gang for at least some of the members fulfil a need that is not being met elsewhere.

A follow up to this story was the interview with leader of the Nomads, who said the assertions were "propaganda", "It's just the police attempting to get at us through the media" (Hines, 1996, cited in "Gang chapter", 1996, p. 12).

The information according to Hines, was likely to have come from a former member of the Nomads who was currently under the protection of the police. He went on to say that he was aware of only one former member who had burnt his patch, when he found his house had been burgled while he was serving time in prison. The head of Operation Levy, Detective Sergeant Toloa said that "he had seen evidence of a burnt patch but did not know whose it was" ("Gang chapter", 1996, p. 12).

It was revealing that the statement by police that the Wairarapa Nomads had abandoned their patches warranted publication on page 1 while the reply by the founding member of the Nomads only merited space on page 12.

CHAPTER 6

THE PRESENT STUDY

In looking at the differences or similarities between people's perceptions of gangs and the 'reality' from the gang perspective, one must also consider the influence of the media. There are previous research findings on the negative portrayal of gangs in the New Zealand media (Kelsey & Young, 1982, Committee on Gangs, 1981). The research that is available looks at the function of the media in informing and mis-informing the public on the newsworthy topic of gangs.

It is difficult to quantify the influence of the media because other variables such as personal experience and word of mouth have an influence on the way people's perceptions are formed.

The present study was implemented to address the hypothesis:

> That there is a wide disparity between what the public perceive about gang members and the 'reality' from the gang's perspective. It is expected that the public will perceive gangs more negatively than gang members; and that in part the New Zealand media are responsible for this difference by portraying a negative image of gang members.

CHAPTER 7

METHODOLOGY

Public Respondent Sample

Participants

Sixty randomly selected respondents, over 18 years of age, were interviewed from the Horowhenua, on the east coast of the lower North Island. Households were randomly chosen from the telephone book and the house next door selected to prevent telephone bias. The member of the household who was present and who had had the most recent birthday was interviewed. If they refused no other person in the house was approached.

Procedure

A pilot format was used in the interviews with the first five respondents (see Appendix D). Analysis of this illustrated the need for a more comprehensive format including demographic information.

Those who agreed to participate in the study were interviewed using a semi structured interview designed to allow personal perceptions and feelings about gangs to be expressed. To provide data for quantitative analysis six main topic areas evoked information of interest (see Appendix E).

The cue questions were used to elicit information that could later be collated and analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The cue questions were designed to serve as a basis for discussion but it was not the intention of the researcher to formalise the interview with a 'typical' question and answer format. By allowing some discussion to evolve more information was made available to the interviewer.

The interviews were not recorded as this was felt to be to intimidating for the respondents. Instead comprehensive notes were hand written on question forms.

Added observations and feelings as to how the interviews had progressed, were recorded by the interviewer once the interview was over.

Gang Respondent Sample

Participants

Seven members and 'associates' of the Horowhenua chapter of the Nomad gang were interviewed for this study. Six of those interviewed classified themselves as Nomad members, while the other classified himself as an 'associate'.

Selection was made initially with the help of the Kaumatua of the Nomads and those resident in the Foxton area were contacted first. Three of the interviews took place in the Horowhenua community while the remaining four were carried out at Linton Prison. The interviews were carried out with the knowledge and approval of the leader of the Horowhenua Nomads and the names of those who could be interviewed were provided by him.

Procedure

All respondents were initially provided with an information sheet describing the research (see Appendix B). Clauses that related to confidentiality, and the right of the participant to refuse to answer any questions were emphasised verbally prior to the commencement of the interview.

Assurance was made that the purpose of the research was for academic purposes.

The questions asked of the gang respondents (see Appendix F) were similar to the questions that were asked of the public respondents.

For Example:

1)   The public respondents were asked

          "Can you describe a typical gang member?"

The gang respondents were asked

"Can you describe a typical gang member?"

2)   The public respondents were asked

"How do you feel about having a gang in your neighbourhood?"

The gang respondents were asked

"How do you think members of the public in Horowhenua feel about you?"

Materials

Information Sheets (see Appendices A & B).

Counseling Services (see Appendix C).

Questionnaire Forms (see Appendices D, E & F).

Justification for the Use of an Interview Format

The use of questionnaires, although allowing for a large quantity of information to be collected, has some limitations in that they are not as accurate as interviews and do not allow the interviewer an opportunity to clarify answers (Babbie, 1989). The information collected in interview form, as with questionnaires, may be subject to social desirability bias, as the respondent seeks to provide the information that s/he believes the researcher is looking for. It is hoped that the assurance of anonymity, and the random selection of the sample, by the researcher lessened this bias. Being approached for an interview on a 'here and now' basis was a means of ensuring that the information provided by the respondent was personal to the individual.

Interview Structure

The structure of the interview was designed to elicit the most information possible. Demographic information was necessary for comparative data analysis and provided a way of easing into the interview procedure, by quickly establishing a

degree of rapport. The questions were open ended to allow the respondent to choose the direction s/he would take. A number of cue questions were included to ensure that adequate information was obtained, and to provide a means by which comparisons could be made across the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the rights and privacy of the participants were protected approval was sought, and obtained, from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of this research.

Participant Safety

Informed Consent: Interviews were carried out with the informed consent of the respondent (see Appendix A & B).

Participant Emotional Well-being: The issue of gangs in New Zealand is an emotional subject for some individuals. As the participant selection was a random sample it was possible that some respondents may have had a negative experience of gangs. Should the questions evoke some unresolved issues for the respondent, addresses and telephone numbers of a selection of agencies providing counselling services were available (see Appendix C).

Confidentiality: All participants were assured that their confidentiality would be guaranteed. For this reason, initials have been used to identify all persons except where they have been quoted from another source,

Cultural Sensitivity: The Horowhenua region has a multicultural population. Participants for this research included Maori, European and Samoan cultures. As a European female the researcher recognises that the interpretation of the discourse is based on personal experience, and as such are individual to the researcher alone. It is acknowledged that another researcher may develop a different rationale in the analysis of the information gathered in the interview procedure. Explanations for

conclusions drawn in the research will provide insight into the rationale of the researcher.

Where applicable advice was sought from supervisors and Kaumatua in order to ensure that cultural sensitivity was maintained.

Analysis

The data was analysed incorporating aspects of both quantitative and qualitative analysis   The researcher believed that in this type of study both approaches to analysis provided an important component in the methodology.   Further, the incorporation of both methods enhanced the reliability and validity of the information gathered by providing an alternative analysis for the responses of the respondents

Quantitative Analysis: Demographic information provided in the interviews, such as age, gender, occupation and ethnicity, lent itself to quantitative analysis. Analysis using chi-square allowed for a comparison to be made across participants.

The interview material was analysed in the public respondent sample by cross tabulation using chi-square to assess the association between the responses to different questions and demographic variables.

The statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSSPC) was utilised and the data met all the requirements for chi-square analysis.

Small cell expectancies occurred owing to the small sample size in the present research.   Where applicable the Yates Correction for Continuity was used in contingency tables where there was a two by two contingency, and there was a greater than 20% chance of a less than five expectancy across the contingency table.

Nourisis (1992) has said that although it has been recommended that all expected frequencies in cross tabulations must be at least five, he has reported that this value is probably too restrictive and can be relaxed.

Where possible data has been modified to avoid the small cell expectancies. However, in some cases this was not possible and although the probability difference was minimal, using the Yates Correction for Continuity to replace Pearson's Correlation Coefficient meant that some of the results were no longer significant and had to be discarded.

Increasing the sample size is likely to increase the significance of the tests. However, in the present research this was not feasible (Grove & Anderson, 1982).

In the present study the conventional significance level of 0.05, or less when indicated, has been taken as the critical cut off point of statistical significance.

Investigators have no way other than replication, to determine which statistically significant results reflect true differences and meaningful relationships and which are deceptive and misleading (Grove & Anderson, 1982).

Qualitative Analysis: For the purpose of this study a Potter and Wetherell (1987) style of discourse analysis was used. In order for the discourse analysis to be in a pure form, tape recordings of the interviews would have been necessary.

Ethical concern for the recording of interviews was based on the possibility that some of the information told to the researcher might have been of a sensitive nature. It was feared that the respondent, as well as the researcher, might have been placed in a compromised position. By documenting the discourse in written form, information that the researcher was made aware of would be regarded as hearsay and, as such, would have no legal standing.

A further consideration was the reluctance of the respondents to be recorded, owing to a confusion over the role of the researcher with the role of the media.

The researcher instead made comprehensive notes of what was said. Although the dialogue was taken down verbatim, discourse analysis, in its pure form, "has embraced performance data in all its messy and ungrammatical complexity" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Transcribed talk illustrates the regularly ungrammatical utterances observed in everyday talk.

The researcher acknowledges that the analysis of the respondents' discourse is compromised owing to the inability of the researcher to record the interview. However, the discourse analysis of the respondents was intended to complement the quantitative analysis. It was not intended to be the main focus of the research.

The analysis included of the public and gang respondents discourse illustrates the functions of the language in justification, rationalisation, attribution and blaming.

The analysis of individuals' discourse provided important information that might otherwise be lost in the interpretation of responses in order to quantify data. The Potter and Wetherell (1987) approach to discourse analysis enabled the researcher to make use of the subtle and complex nature of normal explanations made by people in natural contexts.

CHAPTER 8

THE GANG RESPONDENTS

Five of the seven respondents who stated that they considered themselves members (n = 6) or 'associates' (n = 1) of the Nomads were instructed to talk to the researcher by the leader of the Horowhenua Nomads.

Initial contact with the Nomads was made through the Kaumatua of the Nomads. The Kaumatua broached the subject of further interviews with the second in command of the Nomads and he also agreed to meet with the researcher. At this time, and throughout the interviews, the researcher said that as many members and 'associates' as possible needed to be interviewed. Subsequent interviews were arranged solely by the leader and founding member of the Horowhenua Nomads. Most respondents were told to come to the interview room at Linton Prison to talk to the researcher at an agreed time.

All respondents were assured of their right to decline the interview, that all discourse would be confidential, and that it would be impossible to recognise who they were in the resulting thesis report. All respondents were given an information sheet detailing the purpose of the research and again reiterating their rights as participants in the research.

Although the researcher was aware of other members of the Nomads who were available to talk to the researcher, they were not made accessible by the leader of the Nomads.

There are a variety of reasons why this might be so:

1)   If the intention was to portray a certain image of the Nomads then
        only those members who could be relied on to reflect the 'desired'

representation would be selected by the leader of the Nomads to participate in the interview.

2) Some members of the Nomads who had been sentenced, or who were on remand for offences that were likely to incur sentences of a long duration, were likely to be bitter about the outcome and their future. The cohesiveness of the gang may be influenced by this.

3) There was a large amount of public and media interest in the Nomads following the death of the local doctor and the rape of his elderly sister in Foxton. While at the time one of the two accused was a 'prospect' for the gang, he has since become a member. Media interest in the Nomads was, at this time, intense and antipathy toward the Nomads was strong. The researcher believes that it was in the gang's best interest to shelter this member from any adverse reaction or publicity. Prison authorities also said that this individual was not a positive or happy person.

4) There is a distrust of the media that is continually evident in the interviews with the member. The gang members interviewed felt that their side of the story was not portrayed the way they told it in the media. When faced with the prospect of someone wishing to interview them there may have been some confusion and misinterpretation of the role of the researcher.

5) It is clear that the gang members, despite repeated explanations, did not appreciate the importance of a large sample.

Whilst it cannot be said for sure, the Nomad members who were interviewed seemed no different from those, observed by the researcher, that appeared in the Palmerston North High Court on March 25, 1996, for the combined trial of the ten

Nomad members. They were similar in age, race and years of experience with the gang.

Those members of the Nomads who participated in the research were all on remand, either in custody (n = 4), or on bail (n = 2), awaiting either the combined trial of the Nomads on March 25 or the grievous bodily harm and attempted murder charge of the Tyrants motorcycle member at the 1994 Mountain Rock festival on February 12, 1996, (see Appendix G).

Although knowing at the outset of the research that the Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads consisted of only 14 members it was the belief of the researcher that these numbers could be increased to a quantifiable level by including gang 'associates' in the study. This was not so. What constitutes a gang 'associate' is not defined by the gang, who, probably in defiance to the police, question how an 'associate' is defined and resent the implication that a large proportion of crime is committed by the Nomads or their 'associates'. Certainly, when the volume of crime is disproportionate to the number of people who are thought to be responsible for it, it would seem expedient to blame it on those 'associated' in some way with the gang, thus, still publicly conveying the responsibility to the gang.

In order to name 'associates' to be interviewed in the study it would be necessary to first define what an 'associate' is. That is beyond the scope of this research.

CHAPTER 9

RESULTS

The following results are tabulated from the sample of respondents from the Horowhenua. Where appropriate they are compared with the actual population of the Horowhenua District taken from the 1991 census (Department of Statistics, 1992), to indicate the representativeness of the sample.

The respondents' replies to the cue questions are categorised and tabulated according to the frequency with which they occurred. Except where stated all frequency tables relate to the public respondents.

The sample of gang respondents in the research totaling seven respondents is too few to carry out any statistical analysis. Instead observed frequencies and relationships will be described.

Gender

Table 1

Respondents' Gender

Gender	Sample N = 60	Census population
	%	%
Male	41.7	48.9
Female	58.3	51.1

The sample interviewed was reasonably similar in gender distribution to that of the Horowhenua population (see Table 1).

All of the gang respondents were male.   There are no female patched members of the Nomads. No female 'associates' of the Nomads were interviewed.

Age

Table 2

Respondents' Age

Age	Sample N = 60	Census population
	%	%
18 - 20	1.6	NA
20 - 29	16.7	18.0
30 - 39	16.7	17.5
40 - 49	20.0	14.7
50 - 59	11.6	12.3
> 60	33.3	28.0

Table 2 shows the age distribution is representative of that of the wider Horowhenua population.

The gang members ranged in age from 23 - 41. One respondent who classified himself as an associate was aged 55 years.

Ethnicity

The sample was similar to the ethnic distribution of the Horowhenua, except that there was a smaller proportion of 'other' ethnicities (see Table 3).

Table 3

Respondents' Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Sample N = 60	Census population
	%	%
European	83.1	79.1
Maori	15.2	12.5
Other	1.7	8.4

One of the gang respondents interviewed for the study was European, the remaining six respondents were Maori.

Occupation

Table 4

Respondents' Occupation

Occupation	Sample N = 60
	%
Beneficiaries	58.3
Professional	8.3
Skilled	21.7
Unskilled	8.3
Students	1.7
Unknown	1.7

The largest group in the present sample was made up of beneficiaries. This includes unemployed, domestic purposes beneficiaries and sickness beneficiaries, as well as those who have retired (see Table 4).

The number of recipients of welfare benefits in the Horowhenua district is above the New Zealand average.

Those unemployed and seeking work in Horowhenua make up 6.2% of the population with a further 47.5% being part of the non labour force. Horowhenua district has the highest rate of non-labour force in New Zealand (Searle, 1994).

Four members of the Nomads claimed to be unemployed, of whom all were currently in prison. One member was in a skilled occupation as a plasterer and one said he was self employed. The remaining 'associate' was a sickness beneficiary.

Knowledge

Table 5

Respondents' Knowledge of the Nomads

Description	Sample N = 60 %
Just a group of people	5.0
Gang in the Horowhenua	46.7
Gang involved in criminal activity	23.3
Derogatory terminology	20.0
No knowledge	5.0

Almost half (46.7%) of the public sampled described the Nomads as a gang from the Horowhenua district. Those who associated the Nomads with criminal activity made mention of the death of the local doctor. They said that the Nomads were "up to no good" and that they "stirred up a lot of feelings of aversion in the community."

Derogatory descriptions including "pack of idiots", "bunch of no hopers", "undesirables", that they "were arseholes" and that "they were trouble", were made by 20% of the sample (see Table 5).

A greater number of females associated the Nomads with criminal activity (42.9%) compared to males (32.2%) whilst 33% of each gender group described the Nomads in derogatory terms.

On the other hand, the gang respondents described themselves in more sympathetic terms. The majority of the gang respondent sample (n = 4) described the gang as being like a family.

A further two members said that being a Nomad was "Just a club sort of thing, guys that do things together". One member drew a parallel that it was the "same as being in the police force."

Estimated Number of Nomads in the Horowhenua District

The majority of the public respondents (61.0%) could not estimate how many members the Horowhenua Nomads had. Only 10.2% of the sample were within the actual range for the number of Nomads in the Horowhenua.

Over half of those respondents who gave an answer overestimated the number of Nomads in the district (see Table 6).

Of the total number of male respondents 48% could not estimate the total number of Nomads in the Horowhenua, neither could 70.5% of the total female respondents.

Table 6

Respondents' Estimates of the Number of Nomad Members in the Horowhenua

Estimate	Sample
	N = 59
	%
< 10	5.1
10 - 19	10.2
20 - 29	11.9
30 - 39	3.4
40 - 100	6.8
> 100	1.7
Don't know	61.0

'Association'

When the gang respondents were asked how many Nomad 'associates' there were in the Horowhenua, without exception, all those interviewed questioned the definition of an 'associate'. The one attempt, by a member, to offer a definition likened an 'associate' to a gang prospect.

Ethnicity of the Gang

Of the public respondents 63.3 % said that the ethnicity of the Nomads was either Maori (18.3%) or predominantly Maori (45.0%). None of the sample thought that the Nomads were a European gang. One third of the respondents said that the Nomads were made up of both European and Maori members (see Table 7).

Whilst the ethnicity of the Horowhenua Nomads is predominantly Maori all of the gang respondents interviewed said that the Nomads were made up of European and Maori. The Nomads say they are not an ethnic gang.

Table 7

The Ethnicity of the Nomads

Description	Sample
	N = 60
	%
Maori	18.3
Mainly Maori	45.0
European/Maori	33.3
Don't know	3.3

Neighbourhood Gang

The majority of the public respondents had a negative reaction to the idea of a gang living in their neighbourhood (59.3%). These replies ranged from "don't want them here", "wouldn't feel very secure", "wouldn't like it at all", "wouldn't like them next door - my children would feel scared and intimidated", "I'd be quite upset if they lived here" to "I'd put my house on the market pretty quick", "it wouldn't be my neighbourhood for much longer" and "I'd do what I had to do to protect my family" (see Table 8).

The conditional category consisted of replies such as, "as long as they leave me alone, keep themselves to themselves", "don't worry as long as they behave themselves and don't annoy me." A conditional response was made by 25.4% of the respondents.

Table 8

Respondents' Reactions to Having a Gang Resident in their Neighbourhood

Reaction	Sample N = 59 %
Indifferent	15.3
Conditional on circumstances	25.4
Negative	54.2
Extremely negative	5.1

Male and female respondents did not differ in the way they responded to having a gang in their neighbourhood.

European respondents were more likely (59%) to say that they would not like a gang residing in their neighbourhood. This compares to non-European respondents, of whom 44.4% said that they would not be bothered by a gang living in their neighbourhood. This is no longer significant when the continuity correction is used, due to a two by two contingency table.

Public Reaction

Whilst two of the gang respondents said that they did not really know what the public in Horowhenua felt about them, four thought that the public had negative feelings toward them. "Don't think they'd think to much of us to be honest", and "After all the publicity, pretty low, with Operation Damon" were some of the replies. The remaining member was defiant in his attitude when asked what the Horowhenua public felt about the Nomads with the reply "Don't really care, what they do in their spare time is their business."

Gang Members: Numbers in New Zealand

Table 9

Respondents' Estimates of the Numbers Involved with Gangs in New Zealand

Estimate	Sample N = 60 %
< 500	1.7
500 - 5 000	15.0
5 000 - 10 000	13.3
> 10 000	33.3
Not quantified	13.3
Don't know	23.3

Of the total public sample 33.3% said that the number of people involved with gangs in New Zealand was more than 10 000, this was 63.3% of the respondents who actually gave a quantifiable answer (see Table 9).

Over 13% of the sample gave answers that could not be categorised such as "there would be quite a lot", or "hard to say but there would be a fair few". Almost a quarter of the sample had no idea how many people in New Zealand were involved with gangs.

A significant difference was found between respondents who were unemployed and those who were employed, when estimating numbers involved in gangs was found. Unemployed respondents were significantly less likely to say that there were more than 10,000 people involved with gangs, while those who were employed tended to estimate gang involvement at more than 10 000 people χ^2 (3, $\underline{N}$ = 58) = 12.6, $\underline{p}$ < .01.

Table 10

Respondents' Estimates of Gang Numbers in New Zealand by Gender

Estimate	Male n = 23 %	Female n = 29 %
< 10 000	34.8	34.5
≥ 10 000	56.5	24.1
Don't know	8.7	41.4

Of the male respondents, 56.5% said that there were more than 10 000 people involved in gangs throughout New Zealand. This contrasted with 24.1% of the female respondents. The largest group of female respondents, 41.4% did not know how many people in New Zealand had involvement with gangs compared with only 8.7% of male respondents.

There was a significant difference between male and female respondents in their estimates of the people involved in gangs throughout New Zealand. Male respondents were more likely to say there were more than 10 000 people in New Zealand involved in gangs whereas female respondents were more likely to answer that they did not know how many people were involved in gangs in New Zealand. χ^2 (2, $\underline{N}$ = 52) = 8.6, $\underline{p}$ < .05 (see Table 10).

Four gang respondents said that they did not know how many people were involved with gangs in New Zealand. However, although unable to give an actual number the respondents added comments such as "thousands" and "wouldn't have a clue, even to give you a rough estimate, because there's so many."

Three of the members estimated the number involved with gangs, "not so much with the members, but they know someone somewhere along the line", as 40% or more of the population. One estimated the number as "Close to 80% that would be involved with gangs. The other 20% are too busy putting us away."

Gang Activities

A third of the public respondents attributed both positive characteristics to gangs - "support one another", "offer support for their members", "provide security and companionship for their members", "excitement", and negative characteristics - "make trouble", "don't do any good", "flout the law in some sense", "Drugs", "stolen cars."

The largest category of 36.7% of the respondents specifically mentioned criminal activity when describing what gangs did (see Table 11).

Table 11

What Respondents said Gangs did

Activity	Sample
	N = 60
	%
Positive	1.7
Same as anyone	10
Unemployed	3.3
Cause trouble	11.7
Criminal activities	36.7
Positive and negative	33.3
Don't know	3.3

Three of the gang respondents said that gangs were something to which members were loyal, for example, "loyal to our colours/patch any way to what we believe in", "I suppose they've all got their own styles, all have their own buzz, that's about all it is."

Social activities such as "Parties, concerts and organising combined family outings", "Mainly just going out and 'barbecuing it', getting out and about", were what two of the members said gangs did.

"Running a business" and "the same as anyone else", accounted for the remainder of the sample.

The Purpose of the Gang

All but one of the members of the gang described the purpose of being in a gang as having a familial base or lifestyle such as "whole new family that won't run away on you sort of picture." "Somebody that's going to stand with you. He's not always going to agree with you but he's not going to kick you when you're down." Along the same theme were replies like "belonging to something", "being related" and "More or less the thing I wanted to do since I was a child, all I wanted to do."

The remaining member when asked what was the purpose of being in a gang replied, "What's the purpose of being a psychologist?"

Source of Information

Public respondents were asked how they learnt about gangs. Replies that did not include the media were "word of mouth", "hearsay", "I just know, it's a small town" and "personal experience" (see Table 12).

Newspapers were specifically mentioned in 52.7% of all those responses that mentioned the media, compared with 19% mentioning television and 13.8% who referred to the radio. Some respondents mentioned more than one source and they have been counted in each category, others gave a generic answer of the "media".

Table 12

Source of Information in Learning About Gangs

Source	Sample
	N = 55
	%
Media	65.4
Other	30.9
Don't know	3.6

Media Portrayal

Over half (55%) of the public interviewed said that the media portrayal of gangs was negative and sensationalised. For example, "Media like everything else, they hype everything up, any story", "sensational crap", "Pump them up, give them a name."

Respondents also said that the gang used the media, "At times gangs seek the publicity, limelight", "just borrowing publicity", "publicity gives gangs a boost." (16.7%).

Nearly a quarter of the respondents (23.3%) saw the media portrayal of gangs as accurate (see Table 13).

Media portrayal was judged by 28.6% of the female respondents to be accurate compared to 16% of males. Saying that gangs were portrayed negatively and sensationalised accounted for 60% of the female sample in contrast to 48% of the male respondents.

Table 13

Respondents' Comments on the Portrayal of Gangs by the Media

Portrayal	Sample N = 60 %
Truthful	23.3
Negative, sensationalised	55.0
Gangs use the media	16.7
Don't know	5.0

Without exception media portrayal of gangs was felt by the members and associate to be negative. For example, "It's all blown well out of proportion", "Tell a lot of bullshit really, eh", and "Reckon they go a bit to far, reckon that the media are the ones that create the problem."

Accuracy of the Media

Table 14

Respondents' Views on Media Accuracy

Accuracy	Sample N = 60 %
Very accurate	40.0
Totally accurate	20.0
Some accurate	18.3
Inaccurate	20.0
Don't know	1.7

Over half (60%) of the public respondents said that the reporting of gangs by the media was very or totally accurate (see Table 14).

The significant difference at Pearsons, of the perceived accuracy of the media as judged by those respondents who were employed, who were more likely to see the media portrayal of gangs as mostly or completely accurate, compared with those respondents who were un-employed, who were more likely to perceive the media as inaccurate or only partially accurate in it's reporting about gangs, was no longer observed when the continuity correction was used.

Gang respondents were fairly evenly divided on describing everything that the media say as completely untrue; with some saying for example, "I don't really believe anything that they say. Could be true, could be false, it's just a story to them", "Load of shit, 90% of what the media say, and what the cops feed to the media is a load of crap. Only things they seem to get right are your name, age, and address, the rest they make up"; and the rest agreeing that some of what the media say is true.

Reactions by gang respondents were strong and somewhat bitter when answering the question, "How accurate do you think the media portrayal of gangs is?" For example, those who said that some of the media coverage was accurate were reluctant to leave it at that. "Got a bit in there, but they're not speaking for everybody and everybody's got their own point of view", "Around about 30% accurate. A lot of the stories are so bad it's funny, we have a laugh about it", and "Depending on what the police feed them, sometime it's true, other times it's not."

Contact with Gang Members

Over half of the public respondents said they had not met a gang member (58.3%) compared to 41.7% who said that they had met a gang member. Some members of the public knew a gang member quite well, while others said that they had once spoken briefly to a member.

Of those respondents who had not met a gang member, 83.9% said that they learnt about gangs from the media. This compares with 43.5% of the respondents who said that they had met a gang member.

Those members who had previously met a gang member, were more likely to say that the media were not accurate in their reporting of gangs (40%). Of those members of the public who had not met a gang member, 71.4% saw the media reporting of gangs as mostly or completely accurate. However, this was not a significant difference, when the continuity correction was used.

Of those respondents who had never met a gang member 12.9% attributed their learning about gangs to sources other than the media. This compared to 52.2% of respondents who had met a gang member and attributed their knowledge to non-media sources. This is a significant difference (χ^2 (1, N = 52) = 8.3, p < .005).

Description of Members

Table 15 shows how the public respondents described gang members. The majority did so with terms based on physical appearance such as "Untidily dressed, wearing patches, dark glasses", "Long 'dread lock' hair, rough looking", "Dark and tattooed." Derogatory terms accounted for 18.3% of the sample and included comments such as "Threatening, intimidating, you step on my toes and I'm gonna wipe you out", "filthy, disgusting", "Greasy bastard, his arse out of his strides", "look as though they need a bath" and "Fat, black and useless."

Table 15

Respondents' Descriptions of Members

Description	Sample
	N = 60
	%
Same as anyone else	15.0
Physical description	63.3
Derogatory terms	18.3
Don't know	3.4

Describing gang members as having the same appearance as the general public accounted for 15% of the sample. Of the European respondents 55% described gang members in physical terms. None of the non-European respondents used derogatory terms, although 50% of the Maori respondents offered a physical description.

When the gang respondents were asked to describe a typical gang member, one of the respondents offered a physical description and two offered a description of attitude, for example, "One type are heavy, anti, agro, aggressive manner", "Attitude I s'pose. . .", "Just by the way they look, walk, talk, tattoos to I s'pose." The remainder of the respondents said that there was not a typical gang member rather, he could be recognised by the patch on his back.

What do Gang Members do?

Table 16

What Respondents said Gang members do

Activities	Sample N = 55 %
Same as anyone else	14.5
Beneficiaries	10.9
Social activities	10.9
Ant-social activities	12.7
Criminal activities	38.2
Other	1.8
Don't know	10.9

When asked what gang members do, 38.2% of the public sample said that they were involved in criminal activity. Equal proportions of respondents (10.9%) described their function as organising social activities and as beneficiaries. Describing gang members' activities as the same as anybody else accounted for 14.5% of the respondents (see Table 16).

All the Nomad members and the associate interviewed were men who had or were about to have families. When asked what they did on a daily basis most mentioned activities with their children, "I've got a family, obviously do stuff with them as well, call down the local for a couple with the guys", "Mow the lawns, take the kids down the park, throw the ball around, walk the dogs" and "Spend a bit of time with the kids, play a bit of sport, work out."

One respondent commented that some of the Nomads were employed and that others were unemployed but pointed out that this was the "Same as anywhere in today's society."

Gang 'Prospects'

Gang members were asked two questions relating to Gang 'prospects', "How do you become a Gang 'prospect'? ", and "How do you earn your patch? " From their responses there appeared to be no definitive answer on how 'prospects' achieve their position or what they have to do in order to attain membership status within the gang. Some of the gang respondents claimed that they did not know how certain youths became gang 'prospects', "that's a hard one, wouldn't really know that one."

Others said that rather than actions, attitude decides if a youth becomes a prospect, "Anyone could be a prospect, got to have something, knowledge, not about being in trouble or being a threat. It's more about, got to have some knowledge", "Somebody that uses their head."

With the Horowhenua Nomads relatedness does play a factor in future membership of the gang in attaining membership status, "Usually a relation. . . . majority of the Nomads are all related, all cousins."

How to earn a patch continues to be an unanswered question. The majority of the respondents said it was a waiting period and a matter of loyalty, "Loyal to the gang/club - as days go by you become a patched member", "From prospecting for a few years I s'pose", and "just comes with time." However, one respondent said "I'd be lying if I said I haven't done crimes to get my patch."

Gangs and the Law

All the gang respondents said that the law treated gangs harshly. The label of a gang member initiated different treatment once it became known. "I'd say they attack us more prejudicially than anybody on the outside. People that step across the line and go back and don't get caught", "A lot of the time for the judges as soon as they know you're a gang member you've had it. Police harassment is a lot of the time what starts it, and the boys want to finish it."

There was felt to be a different law for gang members. "Identified as a gang member, treated different, not counted by your name. Always going to be prejudiced, depending on what gang you belong to. Passed a Bill through government to tighten up on gangs", "Oh, two sorts of rules I think."

Maori and the Law

There was no difference between how Europeans and Maori were treated by New Zealand justice according to all but one of the gang respondents. The question "How do you think New Zealand justice treats Maori?" elicited a general dissociation of any ethnic differences. "Not different between race, not really into those", "Just the same as anybody else that breaks the law." "Just the same as anyone else, that's my opinion. There'd be a lot of people who'd say different. There are a lot of white guys doing long lags. The majority are Maori but I'd say that would be the way they were bought up. My opinion Pakeha and Maori if they do the crime they get charged the same."

The one differing response to this question said the New Zealand justice treated Maori badly and offered an example of "A white guy will go up for selling 'mysties' or LSDs he'll get 18 months. A Maori will go up for the same charge he'll get four years."

CHAPTER 10

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC RESPONDENTS

What follows is an adaptation of a Potter and Wetherell (1993) style of discourse analysis of the interviews of the sample of residents who reside in the Horowhenua.

The following quotations have been taken from a random selection, based on age and whether they said they had previously met a gang member, of 16 of the 60 interviews carried out. They consisted of interviews from seven men ranging in age from 26 - 74 years and nine women ranging in age from 21 - 89 years. The occupation of participants included beneficiaries, professionals and those from skilled and unskilled employment.

The entire interview transcript has not been used or reprinted owing to the ethical considerations that there could be a possibility of identifying a participant through their personal discourse. Although the lack of recorded data renders the discourse less than pure, analysis and examples of the language used by the respondents illustrate the themes in the discourse. Extracts from the replies to five of the questions asked have been used to illustrate certain points.

The five questions which are under analysis are:

1)   *"Can you tell me briefly what you know about the Nomads?"*
2)   *"How do you feel about having a gang in your neighbourhood?"*
3)   *"Have you ever met any members of a gang?"*
4)   *"How do you feel the media portray gangs?"*
5)   *"How accurate do you think it is?"*

These were selected to give an overall impression of how the public respondents perceive gang members.

Of the 16 interviews looked at, eight of the participants said they had never met a gang member.

In order to analyse the discourse of the interview the passage was reconstructed under the main naturally occurring themes of :

* Anti Nomad
* Media driven
* Racial themes
* Media accuracy
* Tolerance
* Community perceptions

These themes are readily observable in the discourse of the respondents.

Analysis

As is illustrated, the predominant theme occuring in the interviews is the Anti-Nomad feeling, however this may be a function of the questions asked and general ill feeling, toward gangs as a whole, that was vented by the participants toward the Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads.

For Example,

> *"I know they're a gang around here, quite wicked. We've had 'run ins' with them at work."*

> *"Tend to be negative because a) gangs don't tend to do positive things,*

and

> *b) not particularly newsworthy."*

Notwithstanding the anti-gang feeling, the general negativity expresed about gangs does not spread to another well known local gang in Levin, 'The Tyrants'. Indeed,

they are held up in comparison to the Nomads as having done some good in the community including taking their bikes to a local school and giving rides to the children as a community fund-raiser.

"All depends, the Tyrants' motor cycle gang, peaceful, seem all right -
depends on the gang. The Nomads - talk about the Publicans' wife
it's disgusting that someone could do that. It's the threat of them."

Comments from the interviews describe the Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads as

"People that create trouble wherever they go."

"A gang of mad, bad, brutal idiots."

As well as,

"Pack of louts, pack of arseholes."

Of these comments made by three different respondents two of the three had, had previous contact with a member of a gang.

Whilst the police are seen as *"there to look after them"* (Nomads), they, and the media, were also seen as being responsible for some of the trouble,

"Pump them up, give them a name, DH only had about a dozen or so
members at the start - pumped it up. Police don't handle it."

One participant, who previously had worked as a police officer in the area, commented,

"Do you want a description of the ones wearing the blue uniforms or
the black ?"

Of the eight respondents who said they had never met a gang member it is expected that, as they had no previous experience of gangs, they would not have any firm opinions on questions such as:

1) "Can you tell me briefly what you know about the Nomads? " and
2) "How do you feel about having a gang in your neighbourhood? "

This is not what is illustrated in the discourse, on the contrary, these participants revealed some definite ideas pertaining to gangs.
For example,

"They seem to be out against the Pakeha and against the police."

"People that create trouble wherever they go."

"Bunch of down and outers who are into organised crime but not really organised enough. Basically a gang of outcasts."

"I don't think they (Nomads) do much for the community."

It seems that there is a greater reliance than one would first expect as to the emphasis the public place on media reporting.

5) "How accurate do you think it (the media portrayal of gangs) is?" elicited answers such as,

"Sensational crap. Use scare tactics to get their point across which has the effect of scaring people. Fear is not a good thing. Don't see them when positive things are happening. When something bad happens they're here in force and they pick the eccentrics in the community to talk to."

"Not very accurate"

and

"Very one-sided what they say. They mainly have their facts right but do they need the lurid headlines. They don't give a balanced approach."

With this sort of discourse being elicited as to the media portrayal of gangs, it is somewhat of a surprise to see that the above opinions are not shared by all. Indeed some of the participants saw journalists as being,

"As accurate as they can be I guess, they can only say what they see",

and unlikely to so much as stretch the truth a little,

"Well, I don't think a journalist would print anything that he didn't have first hand knowledge of, because they go to court and listen to the police, talk to shopkeepers and homes of people they've (the Nomads) *trashed"*

It is a complex issue whether gangs use the media,

" At times gangs seek the publicity, limelight",

or the media use the gangs,

"It's a good story for them, yes. They run with their stories quite a lot, makes sure they're in a high profile position in the paper",

or whether the relationship is symbiotic with both parties gaining from it.

"Media give them too much attention, media play into the gangs exactly what they want. Dr T, media showed a Nomad sitting there, trying to

make out they were 'Oh so innocent'. Between them (Nomads) and the media, they're giving the country a wrong impression of what Foxton's like. Media has portrayed Foxton as rampant with Nomads killing everyone. The town's actually nothing like the media portrayed."

Dr T's death in 1994 sparked a public outcry that centred around the Horowhenua Nomads, although at the time neither of the two involved was a member of the gang. GT convicted on burglary charges, was a 'prospect' for the Nomads and has since become a 'patched' member. Public feeling toward the Nomads is never stronger or more bitter, than when the topic of Dr T is raised, for example,

"Think they did Dr T, bunch of arseholes, putting it politely."

Of the sample of 16 interviews looked at in the analysis six of the participants expressed some degree of tolerance toward the idea of having a gang in their neighbourhood such as,

"Really have no thoughts on them."

Yet, when the same person is asked what she knows about the Nomads she described them as a,

"Pack of louts, pack of arseholes."

A participant who was asked what he thought about having a gang in his neighbourhood replied,

"Not much. Then again it's better to have them, because they leave you alone. When they are in your neighbourhood they don't really annoy them, it's people outside of this area."

On the whole this statement sounds fair, if a bit defensive. However, the function of the discourse changes when the remainder of the text is added,

"Put it this way I'd do what I had to do to protect my family."

Thus, making the function of the speech take a more threatening line.

There is definitely a 'them' and 'us' mentality when the subject of gangs arises, to the extent that when the subject of having a gang in the neighbourhood was presented, one participant replied,

"I'd be pretty anti it and it wouldn't be my neighbourhood for much longer."

The initial rationale for the inclusion of this question was that, the researcher was aware that the Nomad gang lived in Levin and Foxton and felt that a question such as

2) "How do you feel about having a gang in your neighbourhood?",

would be answered from the perspective that the participants would be aware that, to all intent and purposes, they already had a gang resident in their community.

The nature of the question was designed to tap into predominant feelings about this state of affairs. Interestingly, this was not how the question was perceived, participants answered as if this were not already the case and answered, for the most part, in a negative way concerning the residence of a gang in their neighbourhood.

The police estimate the number of gang members and those associated with gangs is currently around 6 000, certainly nowhere near enough numbers to account for the amount of crime committed, in one case 40% of crime was attributed to gangs

(Rae, 1989) in New Zealand. This being so, in all but one case gangs seemed to be blamed for the majority of crime in the area, for example,

> *"Where ever there's trouble, they seem to be in the thick of it. If they didn't cause it they're one of the causes."*

It is the exceptional interview where the participant states

> *"Most towns have gangs. Doesn't worry me unduly. People do pretty 'shitty' things when they're not in a gang, They're not all bad. I've taught a lot of them through college. You see a different side."*

Although the Horowhenua Nomads are a predominantly Maori gang with about 70% of their members being of Maori descent, this has tended to be because there is a high degree of family relatedness between the members. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that they are in any way a racially affiliated gang. However, there is a tendency for a proportion of the people to see them as a racial group with comments such as,

> *"They seem to be out against the Pakeha and the police."*

and

> *"Are they Maori? I think, I think a lot are from Shannon and they're pretty rough. I've heard that from the kids."*

Despite an acknowledgment as to the doubts of the accuracy of the media when reporting about gangs, for example,

> *"What is it they say, 'You should believe half of what you hear and quarter of what you read'. Hype up all the bad bits...",*

from the respondents discourse on the topic of gangs there is a degree of vicarious learning occurring and positive affirmation that most of the information about gangs, that the public respondents relate, is garnered from the media coverage of events involving gangs.

It must follow that the responsibility to provide accurate, well researched information that is neither sensationalist or biased depends on the integrity of the journalists and ultimately to the wider institution of the country's media.

CHAPTER 11

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GANG RESPONDENTS

In order to differentiate between gang respondents the quotations have been numbered at the end. The researcher's quotations are ended with the letter (R).

The most noticeable point that comes across when talking to the members of the Horowhenua Nomads is the total lack of self pity that they have for themselves and the situation they find themselves in. Their awareness of the public's feelings towards them is perceptive and without resentment, although their discourse shows no reason or attempt to alter this negative image.

> *"Terrible, because they don't really know them. See them with a patch on their backs and say, 'Oh, God, here go that bunch of guys'."* (1)

> *"Don't really care. What they do in their spare time is their business."* (2)

Although a significant majority of the public interviewed spoke of a racial component in the composition of the gang, seeing the Nomads as an ethnically oriented gang, this is strongly rejected by the members, who, while acknowledging a 70% Maori membership see this as quite unintentional and more as a function of familial connections.

> *"We've got Maori and Islanders in with us. Doesn't matter what colour you are."* (2)

> *"Not intentional to be 70% Maori. It's just the way it happened."* (3)

The discourse of members of the Nomads has elements of defensiveness within it, perhaps understandably owing to the publicity they seem to receive. For example in reply to the question,

16)   "What is the purpose of being of being in a gang?" (R)

there was a quick comeback,

"What's the purpose of being a psychologist?" (3)

There is a sense of oneness and support that comes through in discourse about the purpose of belonging to a gang,

"Whole new family that won't run away on you, sort of picture.
Somebody that's going to stand with you. He's not going to
agree with you but he's not going to kick you when you're down." (4)

and

"Being related,
Gathering" (6)

"So the purpose is a family thing?" (R)

"Yeh." (6)

"Belonging to something." (7)

There is a predominant theme in the discourse of the gang members that the gang is seen as a family, and that membership has eventuated owing to a lack of familial support prior to the joining of the gang.

Another example of the defensiveness of some individuals when asked,

17)   "How do you think the media portray gangs?" (R)

"Badly," (7)

"Give me some examples," (R)

>*"To me the media are being used at the moment as a weapon for the police for our court cases. Didn't you think it was funny you didn't hear about us for six months and now that the trial's only six days away a piece of news pops up about mass burnings."* (7)

The disdain in which the Nomads hold the media is clear, attributing the adverse publicity they receive as the responsibility of the media,

>*"Media give a false impression of the guys, what they're really like."* (1)

>*"Reckon they go a bit far, reckon that the media are the ones that create the problem."* (3)

"Give me some examples?", (R)

(e.g.)   *"Wairarapa Nomads,*
That's coming from a policeman not them - media takes one side of the story - that's their own side they made up." (3)

>*"It's all blown well out of proportion."* (4)

>*"Tell a lot of bullshit really eh."* (5)

The Nomads' discourse has similarities when they talk about their media coverage which indicate that the negative feelings expressed by one are common to the rest.

The accuracy of the media is also in question according to those interviewed, although the degree of accuracy varied slightly between members.

For example:

> *"Around about 30% accurate.*
> *A lot of the stories are so bad it's funny, we have a laugh about it."* (1)

> *"I don't really believe anything they say.*
> *Could be true, could be false, it's just a story to them."* (2)

> *"Load of shit, 90% of what the media say and what the cops feed to*
> *the media is a load of crap. Only things they seem to get right are your*
> *name, age, and address, the rest they make up."* (3)

> *"Be lucky to be 50% accurate in some cases."* (4)

> *"None of it, to an extent they try to regurgitate it and add a couple of bits*
> *in."* (5)

> *"Depending on what the police feed them, sometimes it's true other*
> *times it's not."* (7)

There is at times a point where the 'sins' of the media and the 'sins' of the police, as seen by the members, seem to be interchangeable. Certainly they are viewed as working together as far as the flow of information pertaining to the gang is made public.

The relationship of members of the gang, to the media is a persistent unwillingness to talk to reporters.

> *"Don't talk to the media, what you suggest gets twisted around. They*
> *talk about me in the paper, but it's not coming from me."* (3)

> *"Don't talk to them at all."* (4)

"Try to stay right away from them.." (5)

Despite this prevailing attitude when the need is felt to get a message across, and with the knowledge that he is sure to be misquoted and mis-represented, some will still speak out.

> *"Spoke to them once, when they were saying it was us that had done*
> *Dr T, had to speak to them then to let them know that it wasn't us.*
> *The guy that killed the Doctor and raped the old lady he was just a*
> *glue sniffer",* (4)

"Do you think that you were believed?", (R)

> *"No, not really."* (4)

> *"It's not really the media themselves, it's the police, the information*
> *they feed them."* (7)

"Do you talk to the media?" (R)

> *"No, I did once a couple of years ago - shouldn't have done that."* (7)

"Why, was it misquoted?" (R)

> *"That was the time the T murder went down."* (7)

The pride and solidarity of the Nomads is obvious. There is no expressed rationale for their unity, yet the idea of choosing membership of this gang is assumed to be obvious.

Asking those sampled

22) "What makes the Nomads different from other gangs?" (R)

elicits a variety of answers such as

> *"Cause over the years we've earned a name.*
> *We earned a lot of respect from other gangs, that's the world we live*
> *in, the laws we understand.*
> *All different gangs have different rules. When you join a rugby club ,*
> *they've all got their own rules."* (2)

> *"What do you mean?",* (3)

"Why do you choose to be a member of the Nomads rather than another gang?", (R)

> *"Nomads started before the other gangs. They started later",* (3)

"and the Nomads were founded in 1977? " (R)

> *"Earlier than that."* (3)

> *"Our reputation, I s'pose",* (5)

"What is your reputation? " (R)

> *"We got a good belief and we stick together, it doesn't matter what."* (5)

"Why did you decide to join the Nomads? " (R)

> *"I thought they were the only gang that was going anywhere. They had*
> *a lot of respect. Family reasons were part of it."* (5)

> *"You're the best."* (7)

"Why?," (R)

"Cause we are, I know we are." (7)

Those spoken to perceive a difference in treatment in the legal system, dependent on membership of a gang, illustrated in the example of one member who said,

"Three years ago I allegedly pinched some pot. 18 months later I was charged. The guy whose 'pot' it was didn't get charged. It's been 9 years since I was in jail. Strict bail conditions for the last 15 months:
>   *Non-association with the boys*
>   *Curfew, started with 7pm - 7am, now it's 9pm - 7am*
>   *Still reporting in 3 times a week*
Someone who did an aggravated robbery didn't get anything like that." (2)

"Oh, two sorts of rules I think." (5)

"Give me an example? " (R)

"If you were a gang member going up on attempted murder,
- no bail;
- write up in the news;
- on the TV

Not a gang member,
- get bail;
- couple of lines on the back page;
- Two sets of rules I think, one for gang members, one for straight people." (5)

The supposed stigma of being a gang member is felt to be a major factor in the justice process. Being labelled as a gang member precedes stricter bail conditions

or no bail and remand in custody for an offence for which a non-gang member would be released into the community to await a trial date.

> *"A lot of time for the judges as soon as they know you're a gang member you've had it. . . Talking to a group of guys in the street the other day, about four of us, and we're told to move on. I said to him you can't tell us to do that, we haven't done anything wrong."* (1)

Talking about the different treatment that can be expected if you are identified as a member of a gang is a topic that seems to bring with it a degree of indignation and righteous anger that goes beyond the police to the politicians. Indeed, some of those talked to saw themselves as a political issue.

> *"Identified as a gang member, treated different, not counted by your name. Always going to be prejudiced, depending on what gang you belong to. Passed a Bill through Government to tighten up on gangs."* (2)

> *"I reckon that this particular gang is a political issue."* (3)

Operation Damon, the police initiative targeting the Horowhenua Nomads, is a topic that the members talk about with bitterness and some degree of resentment mixed with pride. As they are found not guilty on each charge it almost seems that there is a competition between the police and members.

> *"Depends on what you're charged with, they do their proper job and it gets done."* (4)

For example? (R)

> *"If someone was done for drink driving and failing to stop when he does get done, it's fair. Operation Damon - was up on 22 charges - came down to 14 - every charge I've been up on I've beaten."* (4)

"I'd say that they attack us as more prejudicially than anybody on the
outside. People that step across the line and go back don't get
caught." (6)

"Do you reckon if you are a gang member you are more likely to be caught? " (R)

"Yeh." (6)

Further to this observation, and perhaps surprisingly in relation to the discourse of
the members of the Horowhenua public, the majority of the Nomads talked to saw
no difference between how Maori and Pakeha were treated by New Zealand
Justice,

"Not different between race. Not really into those." (2)

"Just the same as anybody else, that's my opinion. There'd be a lot
of people who'd say different. There are a lot of white guys doing long
lags. The majority are Maori but I'd say that would be the way they
were bought up. My opinion Pakeha and Maori if they do the crime
they get charged the same." (4)

"I don't really get into the politics of all that type of stuff. I think it
doesn't matter whether you're Maori, Pakeha or whatever." (5)

"Just the same as anybody else that breaks the law." (6)

CHAPTER 12

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA

The headlines that front the news articles on gangs in New Zealand are designed to catch the eye of the reader. Producing a snippet of the story to follow in less than half a dozen words, to entice the consumer to buy and read the newspaper, is not an easy task.

The following section illustrates the general portrayal of gangs by the print media.

The 'overall portrayal' of gangs is of interest in the analysis of a selection of articles. The variation of the excerpts, chosen by the researcher, may be similar to the selection procedure that occurs by the newspaper reader.

It is intended that these excerpts be explained by providing an illustration of the type of message that is given to newspaper readers.

"A City takes on its Gangs" (Ansley, 1992), "Man on the warpath against Gang Violence" (Bain, 1995), "The lone man who stood up to gang bullies" (Fogarty, 1995), all have the effect of conveying the message that gangs are undesirable. "Foxton fights back" (Meyer, 1993), "Tiny gangland with a big reputation" (Hunt, 1994), "Pukekohe: divided community" (Chapple, 1982), "Keeping the peace in Waipukurau" (Harding, 1989) offer the message to readers that gangs are a community problem, and as such, are of interest to all members of that community.

The contents of newspaper articles focus almost entirely on violent confrontations, and gangs are seen as being different from the law abiding citizens who are the mainstay of New Zealand communities.

The predominant theme in this discourse is anti-gangs, and individuals who have been affected by gang violence are portrayed to illustrate intimidation by gangs.

For example,

> "A 20 year old Auckland man with a history of psychiatric problems
> and childhood neglect was used by the Nomads to carry out the June
> 13 attack" (Bain, 1995, p. 25).

This article on Mr T's house burning in Masterton, reported as a retaliation attack by members of the Nomads, provided a platform for anti-gang residents and police to air grievances about gangs. The article contains no evidence that Nomads members were involved in the arson, nor were any members of the Nomads charged in relation to this crime. However, following the fight between Nomads and Mr T, which occurred after Nomads were "having a chat in the middle of the road", which Mr T took exception to, several Nomads, but not Mr T were charged. The article alleged that the arson was a result of this fight.

The article continues, saying that children as young as nine or 10 want to become Nomads, and

> "Though the schools will deny it, children the same age are already
> involved with drugs" (Torea, 1995, Bain, 1995, p. 25).

Following a statement like this, subsequent denial of a drug problem is likely to be pointless. Any denials that school officials may wish to make have already been acknowledged and pre-empted by Mr T.

The message that gangs are intimidating is further communicated in *The Chronicle's* article where support for victims of gang crime was sought by police.

> "Not every crime is committed by the Nomads but where we have a
> situation where any gang is involved, the victim has to be supported"
> ("Public support", 1994, p. 1).

While acknowledging that Nomads are not responsible for all crime, the article communicates the message that those victims of crime committed by gangs are particularly likely to require support.

A further topic that is conspicuous in the discourse of the newspapers is the emphasis on Maori gang members.

For example,

> "He deplores their malign influence on young Maori (Tapsell, 1988, cited in Welch, 1988, p. 15).

> "For many white New Zealanders, gangs with names like the Mongrel Mob and Black Power are the dark side of a Maori renaissance" (Allison, 1989, p. 23).

and

> "Police concerns about the presence of gang members during a Maori occupation" ("Police claim", 1995, p. 3).

There is a predominant portrayal of Maori gang members throughout the print media, which fosters the impression that gangs are almost wholly a Maori concern. This is illustrated by the fact that those articles that are accompanied by photographs (Hunt, 1994; Love, 1989; Stirling, 1990; "Wairarapa Nomads", 1996), tend to depict gang members as Maori.

Although it could be argued that the media report only what is topical at the time, and that current news stories are dictated to the media by the day's events, deciding what is topical is the function of the reporters. An event is not automatically considered newsworthy, only when it is selected to be included in the news report does it become news.

In common with the public respondents, 'Community' themes are relevant to the discourse that is present in the newspaper reports on gangs. However the discourse reflects an adversarial approach with the community opposed to gangs. Interestingly, with few exceptions, the community view is expressed by community officials or the police speaking for the community.

For example

> "Mr Lyons (Horowhenua District Commander) said that like Ruatoria locals, those in Foxton had had a 'gutsful', were getting their confidence back and ringing police more with information on the gang's activities" (Norris, 1994, p. 5).

In comparison, when the views of residents are reported, their reaction to gangs seems to contrast with the official view as illustrated by the proprietor of the Foxton Hotel who was reported to have said,

> "Many of the Nomads members. . . . were well behaved and were there to help out if there was any trouble" (cited in Bartlett, 1994, p. 1)

As reflected by the media police are amazed at the public attitudes to gangs, and express, rather scathing, comments to those members of the public who do not adopt the 'police perspective' and see gangs in the way police see them.

> "People are foolish enough to think that because a gang member has walked past them in the street and not thrown them to the ground and stood on their neck the guys are not so bad after all. What they forget is that if they were drunk and it was 2am they probably would get their necks stood on" (Lammas, 1996, cited in Ferguson, 1996, p. 13).

Tolerance as a theme is not obvious in the news discourse of gangs, moreover there seems to be a lack of impetus to report any gang perspective. Possibly this is due to unwillingness on the part of the gang members to express their viewpoint.

However, also worthy of consideration, is the fact that a radical, less balanced, perspective makes far more interesting reading.

Media accuracy and the drive to capture the attention of the news media is not observed in the news discourse, nevertheless police do believe that there is a public relations drive by gangs to reveal a more public friendly side.

> "They build a fence for a local school, have a sausage sizzle, that kind of thing, to show they're really good hearted types. But the reality is that gangs have moved from a once very visible street type of offending to a much higher level of crime which is predominantly drug dealing" (Lammas, 1996, cited in Ferguson, 1996, p. 13).

From the majority of news reports on gangs, for example, "Four shot, one dead in gunfight" ("Four shot", 1988), "Gang Land" (Ferguson, 1996), "A City takes on its gangs" (Ansley 1992), "Town gang mentality" (Barton, 1994), "Maori prospects blamed for crime spate" (Bell, 1991), "Gangs 'mega violence' cracks skull," (Wakefield, 1991) and "Gang war gunfire shatters the night" (Bingham, 1992), it could be argued that visibility is still the major crime of gangs.

In order for gang intimidation to appear at its worst, articles which have a defenceless victim evoke more public sympathy and outrage.
For example,

> "The crimes all involved vulnerable complainants who were overpowered by two or more of the accused at the same time"(Vanderkolk, 1996, cited in "Gang preyed", 1996, p. 1).

evokes images of innocent victims being forcibly overtaken by violent gang members. The fact that those 'innocent victims' all had prior involvement with drugs and were of interest to the Nomads because of this, seems to be, for the most part, ignored.

The opening paragraph of the *Evening Standard,*

> "Three men suffered an hour of terror at the hands of Nomad gang
> members, the High Court at Palmerston North was told yesterday"
> ("Nomads Terrorised", 1996, p. 1).

would evoke less sympathy from the average member of the public, if it were phrased in a manner more in context with the actual crime.
For example

> Three 'drug dealers' suffered an hour of terror at the hands of Nomad
> gang members.

Perhaps this would be seen as 'getting ones just desserts'.

The comments by the public when they are reported seem to underemphasise the threat of gang intimidation and violence as continually upheld by the police through the media.

> "They (Hells Angels) are fairly friendly. I'd just tell them to put the
> mufflers on their motorbikes" ("Police happy", 1996, p. 4).

In fact, in this article police received more criticism than the gang,

> "I think certain groups become the target for the whole public anxiety
> about crime in society" ("Police happy", 1996, p. 4).

CHAPTER 13

DISCUSSION

This study sought to compare the responses of a sample of public respondents, resident in the Horowhenua, on their perception of gangs, with the responses made by gang members and 'associates' of the Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads.

The researcher hypothesised that there would be a wide disparity between what the public perceive about gangs and the 'reality' from the gangs perspective, and; that in part the New Zealand media were responsible for this difference by portraying a negative image of gang members.

The degree of knowledge of New Zealand gangs was found to be dependent on demographic variables, such as, gender, ethnicity and employment status of respondents. Reliance upon an alternative source of learning about gangs, other than the media, was found to be dependent on whether the respondent had previously met a gang member. There was less reliance on the media as a source of learning, if the respondent had previously met a gang member.

There were significant differences found in the respondent estimates of gang numbers in New Zealand based on gender and employment status. Female respondents were significantly more likely to state that they did not know how many people were involved in gangs, whilst male respondents were more likely to overestimate the numbers involved. Employed respondents were significantly more likely to overestimate the numbers involved in gangs in New Zealand while unemployed respondents were less likely to overestimate the numbers involved.

Having previously met a gang member resulted in a tentative relationship, between contact and the perceived accuracy of the media. Those respondents who had previously met a gang member attributed less accuracy to the media than those respondent who had never met a gang member. A difference was also observed in

the feeling of having a gang resident in your neighbourhood in relation to ethnicity. Maori respondents were less likely to be opposed to the idea of having a gang reside in their neighbourhood than European respondents.

The employment status of the respondents was also observed to influence their perception of the accuracy of the media. Employed respondents viewed the media as more accurate in comparison to unemployed respondents who viewed the media as inaccurate or only partially accurate in their portrayal of gangs. These findings are likely to be clarified by increasing the sample size.

Before further discussion of the results, some explanation should be made as to why the findings should be regarded with caution.

Firstly, as reported by Meek (1992), there is a serious deficit of academic research in the area of New Zealand gangs, and there is no objective body of data pertaining to gangs in this country. Therefore, it was necessary to make use of overseas research in the present study.

Although most of the literature available on gangs comes from the United States, the same concerns on the lack of accurate information have been voiced there (Hagedorn, 1988, 1990, cited in Meek, 1992).

Therefore, this study should be looked on as an exploratory work. It is, however, hoped that research findings may encourage further research into New Zealand gangs.

Another factor to be considered is the respondent samples in the present study. Although it may first appear that there was a high proportion of unemployed respondents in the sample, this is explained by the large proportion of unemployed in the Horowhenua district. The Horowhenua district has the highest rate of non-labour force (47.5 %) in New Zealand (Searle, 1994), with 6.2% of the population unemployed and seeking work.

Overall the demographic characteristics of the public respondent sample in the present study are representative of the wider Horowhenua community when compared with the census population (Department of Statistics, 1992).

Interviews were carried out at varying times to ensure that the sample was random.

The sample size for the gang respondents, consisting of six members of the Horowhenua Nomads and one 'associate', was much lower than expected. This can be explained, in part, by the actions of the leader of the Nomads who selected respondents to participate in the research. There was a reluctance, by him, to supply the names of further members who would consent to an interview with the researcher.

Reasons for this reluctance are covered in Chapter 8 of this study and included a possible lack of understanding as to the purpose of the study, and the desire to portray a particular image of the gang which only certain members of the gang could be relied upon to depict. Whilst the purpose of the study was thoroughly explained, there may have been a misinterpretation of the role of the interviewer, similar to the overall gang distrust of the media. As the target of the police initiative 'Operation Damon', as well as intense media interest in recent years, these factors may have resulted in the gang preferring to keep a low profile.

Another explanation for the lack of Nomad respondents stems from the inability to interview 'associates' of the Nomads. It was assumed that further contacts would be suggested by the members of the gang as to the identity of Nomad 'associates' and, that they too, would reflect a gang response that could be compared to the public respondents' perceptions of the gangs. This, however, was not the case.

All of the gang members interviewed questioned the definition of the term 'associate'. This terminology seemed to be perceived by members as a tool of the police for attributing blame for crimes to the gang with the pretext that whilst the

offences were not committed by members of the Nomads they were instead committed by Nomad 'associates', and as such were still linked to the gang.

The resulting small sample size for the gang respondents has made it impossible to conduct any quantitative analysis on this group, and thus, between the two groups. Instead, the researcher had to rely on comparisons of the quantitative data from the public respondents. This was complemented by the discourse analysis section on the two respondent samples.

Although, by reading the court transcript of defendent charges, the researcher did not observe any variation between those gang members who were interviewed and those members who were not (as viewed at the combined trial of the Nomads on March 25th, 1996), in terms of crime seriousness, ethnicity, age and occupation, it can not be claimed, with any degree of certainty, that there was no difference.

Discourse analysis is a relatively new alternative to existing traditional research techniques in Psychology. By employing both methods of analysis it was hoped that the research findings would be strengthened. In view of the small sample size of gang respondents, discourse analysis, not being dependent on sample size, provided an alternative to quantitative measures.

The degree of impact of the media in influencing the public's perceptions of gangs was not measured in the present study. Indeed, it would be difficult to quantify owing to confounding variables such as personal experience and word of mouth also influencing peoples' perceptions.

Smith (1987), found that the association of public evaluation with newspaper coverage and public concerns was not strong. Smith (1987) suggested that other factors such as direct experience and interpersonal communication also have an influence.

THE PRESENT STUDY

In October 1994 *Insight* aired on National Radio, police claimed that some residents of Foxton were in fear of their lives owing to the terrorism displayed by Nomad gang members. However, other residents apparently were unaware of the presence of the Nomads prior to Operation Damon and were upset over the labelling of Foxton as a gang town (Harrington, 1994).

When public respondents were asked what they knew of the Nomads almost half of those sampled described the Nomads only as a gang from the Horowhenua district. Approximately equal numbers of respondents described the gang as a group that were associated with criminal behaviour, and offered a description of the Nomads using derogatory and scathing terminology.

The contempt and anger in the public discourse that elicits the use of scathing comments to describe gangs is not new. Kelsey and Young (1981) describe the public reaction of anger that at times verged on hysteria in their study of 1979, 'The year of the gangs'.

Public anger and contempt toward gangs can be more readily understood by considering gangs' overall portrayal by the media. When only made aware of violence and crimes committed by gang members, it is hard to imagine an alternative, and perhaps more balanced view, of the positive function that gangs may serve.

That positive function of gang membership was described by the majority of the gang respondents who equated belonging to the gang as being part of a family. The Report of the Committee on Gangs (1981) stated that gangs fulfilled strong emotional needs on the part of the members and that this, and other factors, outweighed the negative effects of the sometimes vicious gang discipline.

A gender difference with more female respondents associating the gang with criminal acts than males is not surprising. Women have been found to be five times

more likely than men to fear being victims of crime (Calder, 1994). If gangs are generally perceived as being a rich source of criminal activity (in 1989 police estimated that 40% of the total reported crime was thought to be gang related (Rae, 1989)), then overestimating gang numbers is likely to be a reaction to this.

Whilst nearly all of those public respondents sampled had at least some knowledge of who the Nomads were, the majority of respondents did not know how many Nomads there were in the Horowhenua. Of those who gave an answer over half overestimated the number of members involved in the gang. Media reports that one year after Operation Damon was launched there had been 116 search warrants issued and 86 arrests made (Harrington, 1994), have the effect of communicating the involvement of a much greater number of persons than is actually the case.

When the actual number of 14 patched members of the Horowhenua chapter of the Nomads is put in perspective alongside the media and police reports, for example, "Foxton fights back" (Meyer, 1993), then reports such as "Gang members up 20%" (Grafton, 1989), no longer seem to have the same impact or significance.

The majority of public respondents described the Horowhenua Nomads as either a Maori or predominantly Maori gang. Although the gang respondents said that the Nomads were made up of both Maori and European members, and that there was no intention to be an ethnically based gang, there are at least four European members. The majority of Nomad members are Maori.

The primarily Maori membership of the gang is likely to be a result of the relatedness factor between members of the gang; 70% of the Nomads are in some way related to each other (Harrington, 1994).

An alternative explanation for the Maori or predominantly Maori membership of the Nomads as perceived by the public respondents, may be the overwhelming portrayal of gangs members as Maori by the media (Chapple, 1988; Stirling, 1990).

The New Zealand mainstream media often accentuates conflict, focusing on 'bad news' and defining Maori people in 'problem terms' (McGregor, 1991).

The introduction of a Kaumatua to the Horowhenua Nomads, ostensibly as a result of the deaths in recent years of members of the gang, with no-one to speak for them on the Marae, would seem to reflect a return to the values of traditional Maoridom. This indicates an acceptance, at least, of the Maori influence in the gang.

Public reaction to the idea of having a gang in their neighbourhood was unexpected. The question was included in the interviews with the understanding that there already was a gang resident in the neighbourhood. In replying to this question, respondents answered as if this was a hypothetical question and did not acknowledge that a gang was already resident in the neighbourhood.

Over half of the respondents were averse to the idea of a gang residing in their neighbourhood and a further quarter said that it would be dependent on circumstances.

Respondents' fears of having a gang in their neighbourhood, presumably because they feared for their own or their families' safety, would seem to be without foundation. The vast majority of crime that the Nomads are charged with involves individuals whose activities mean that they themselves are at risk of prosecution. This is illustrated in the combined trial of the Nomads where all of the charges were connected with cannabis plant material or other drugs. According to the Crown Prosecutor the four complainants were all vulnerable because of their own illegal activities, being reluctant to go to the police for fear of facing charges themselves (B. Vanderkolk, personal communication, March 26, 1996) (see Appendix G).

(The researcher in no way wishes to play down the traumatic effects on individuals who are victims of crime, in particular the Nomad connection to the tragedy of Dr

T's death and the assault on his sister which resulted in verdicts of guilty for manslaughter and rape charges).

However, in reality, having a gang resident in the neighbourhood is unlikely to alter the status quo of the community and will impinge little on non-criminal residents.

A difference was observed between European and non-European respondents' discourse in portraying a negative image of gangs residing in the neighbourhood. European respondents seemed more likely to be averse to the idea of having a gang reside in their neighbourhood while a large proportion of the Maori respondents would not be concerned having a gang living in their neighbourhood. This may relate to the perception that gangs are composed largely of Maori members.

The gang respondents, for the most part, were aware of the negative feelings that members of the public have toward them. Although two of the respondents claimed not to know how the public felt, it was unlikely that they could remain completely unaware. One member said that he did not care what they (the public) thought, and that what they did in their spare time was their business, the reciprocal belief presumably being that the public should not be concerned about what the Nomads did. There seemed to be a measure of defiance in some of the answers given by the gang respondents, perhaps in response to 'rubbing salt in old wounds'.

There is difficulty in establishing an agreed reliable estimate of the number of people involved in gangs. This can be effectively illustrated by looking at the gang number estimates that have been quoted by different sources over the last five years.

For example:

1)   According to the latest Police Criminal Intelligence Services
        figures there is an estimated 4 000 patched gang members.

Police estimate a total between 8 000 and 10 000 gang members, 'prospects' and 'associates' ("Mob blame", 1996).

2)   Moore and Goff said that New Zealand appeared to have more gang members than Australia, giving police estimates of between 10 000 and 15 000 gang members, 'associates' and 'prospects' ("MPs talk", 1996).

3)   Minister of Police, John Banks, says that 'associates' may number up to 20 for every gang member (Ansley, 1992).

For the purpose of this research the most current police estimate was used. This estimated numbers of patched members as 4 000, and a total number of between 8 000 and 10 000 patched members, 'associates', and 'prospects' ("Mob blame", 1996).

Whilst the researcher is not comfortable utilising an estimate on the number of 'associates', public respondents are assumed to have included 'associates' and 'prospects' in their estimates of the number of people involved in gangs throughout New Zealand. For a comparison to be made in this study accurate numbers must be accessible.

When estimating the number of people involved with gangs in New Zealand the largest catergory of respondents said that there were more than 10 000 people involved with gangs. This is a greater number than is actually the case. However, in view of the confusion in the media it is not altogether surprising. For example, Mike Moore and Phil Goff gave police estimates of gangs in New Zealand of between 10 000 and 15 000 ("MPs talk", 1996) and Minister of Police, John Banks, said that 'associates' may number up to 20 for each gang member (Ansley, 1992).

There was a significant difference between genders in respondents' estimates of the numbers involved with gangs. Male respondents were more likely to overestimate the numbers involved in gangs in contrast to female respondents, whilst female respondents were more likely to state that they did not know how many people in New Zealand were involved with gangs compared to male respondents.

In view of the finding that women were more likely than men to fear crime, particularly violent crime (Calder, 1994), and New Zealanders ranked gangs as number six in their view of the top seven social problems (Gold & Webster, 1990), it would seem more likely for female respondents, possibly more fearful of crime, to overestimate numbers involved with gangs. However, in contrast to other New Zealand gangs, such as the Black Power, for example "Inside Black Power" (Jenkin, 1990), and Mongrel Mob, for example "The Present" (Du Chateau & Roger, 1987), "Life and Death in Mob Rule" (Drent, 1994), the Horowhenua Nomads have not been associated with crimes generally specific to women, such as, rape. (In the case of the publicised rape of Dr T's sister, the researcher was told by members of the Nomads that the individual convicted of this crime, was not a member or 'associate' of the gang).

If the Nomads are perceived as less of a threat by female respondents, possibly as a result of the lack of publicity on crimes specific to women, this may result in fewer overestimates on the number of people involved with the Nomads. This may in turn be generalised to other gangs. It is possible that this results in less fear, and thus, a more realistic response to questions.

Those respondents who were unemployed were more accurate in estimating gang numbers in New Zealand than were the employed respondents, who tended to overestimate the numbers involved.

"Gangs tend to be almost entirely a lower socioeconomic class phenomenon. . ." (Committee on Gangs, 1981, p. 10). It may be assumed that unemployed respondents are also in the lower socioeconomic category.

The finding that unemployed respondents (who in terms of occupation generally have more in common with the Nomads), were more accurate than their employed co-respondents in estimating gang numbers, suggests that the further apart the class difference, the less knowledge the members of the public have about gangs.

Rosenbaum (1986) has suggested that further to similarity fostering liking, that dissimilarity may foster dislike. Thus, there may be an exaggeration of the numbers associated with gangs.

Gang activities reported in the news media generally follow clashes between rival gangs, or gangs and the police, and focus solely on the criminal aspects of gangs. As the headlines indicate gangs are clearly portrayed as the instigator of violence. For Example: "Man on the warpath against gang violence" (Bain, 1995), "Gang's police victim still suffering after four years" (Bell, 1990), "Maori gang prospects blamed for crime spate" (Bell, 1991), "Gang war gunfire shatters the night" (Bingham, 1992), "Four shot, one dead in gunfight" ("Four shot", 1988) and "The lone man who stood up to gang bullies" (Fogarty, 1995).

A number of the submissions made to the Committee on Gangs expressed concern over the attention focused on gang activities, particularly those involving violence, by the police, politicians and the news media,   This attention had negative results, serving to reinforce and glamourise the gangs' staunch image (Committee on Gangs, 1981).

When describing the activities of gangs over half of the respondents reported only negative behaviour. This ignores the positive aspect of belonging to a gang, which to many members, including those spoken to by the researcher in the present study, provides emotional support which may be lacking in the family (Vigil, 1988).

All but one of the gang members talked to described the gang as a familial base that engendered a sense of belonging and camaraderie between members. This supports the claims of the Report of the Committee on Gangs (1981) that membership of a gang provided companionship, protection and a shared sense of identity which fulfils strong emotional needs on the part of the gang members.

The media portrayal of gangs was felt by over half of the public respondents to be negative and sensationalist, yet only a fifth of the respondents thought that the media coverage was inaccurate. Whilst it seems to be recognised by the public that the aim of the print media, in particular, is to increase circulation and, to achieve this, events are likely be inflated to make them more interesting to readers, the fact that media accuracy may be compromised to achieve this, does not seem to be considered by the public respondents in the present study.

In the analysis of newspaper coverage of gangs, it was suggested that at times gangs are focused on as a high profile issue, and this has resulted in intense, yet poorly balanced, coverage of gang-related incidents (Committee on Gangs, 1981).

The gang respondents were unreserved in their condemnation of the media, classing them as inaccurate and in one case crediting them with being responsible for creating a problem (with gangs). Information was seen as being 'fed' to the media by the police, presumably to meet their own needs.

This was referred to by Cohen (1964) in his book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, which studied the fighting between the Mods and Rockers, as deviancy amplification. This is a process by which the media through exaggeration and distortion, actually created crime (Cohen, 1964, cited in Moore, 1993). Minor altercations between the Mods and the Rockers in 1964, at the coastal resort of Clacton in England resulted in 24 arrests.

The media at this time "found themselves short of hard 'news' material and exaggerated and distorted what had occurred" (Moore, 1993, p. 62). The resulting

coverage polarised British youth into aligning themselves either with the Mods or the Rockers. The speculation surrounding further altercations generated widespread public alarm which the police felt pressured to respond to. This reverberated through to the courts with those arrested facing sentence from magistrates who were "sensitised to the Mods and Rockers menace" ("Media and", 1977, p. 35).

The amount of media coverage assigned to gangs is out of proportion to the number of people involved. However, if as Chibnall (1979) claimed, the reporting of crime news provides an opportunity to appropriate the moral conscience of its readership, then coverage of gangs provides a prime opportunity for the majority of the public (with no involvement with gangs) to moralise over the minority in New Zealand who are involved.

There appeared to be a relationship between the employment status of the public respondents and how they perceived the accuracy of the media in reporting on gangs. Employed respondents were more likely to say that the media portrayal of gangs was mostly or completely accurate, in contrast to unemployed respondents who perceived the coverage of gangs to be inaccurate or only partially accurate. However, the small numbers involved meant that this difference was not found to be significant.

The public sample was asked how they learnt about gangs and their replies identified a variety of media sources, newspapers being the most commonly cited. Newspaper representations of crime and offenders are likely to be more influential on our thinking than the increasingly abbreviated sight and sound segments of television and radio broadcasts (Brown, 1993, cited in McGregor, 1993).

Previous contact with a member of a gang affected the perceived accuracy of media reporting on gangs. Respondents who had not met a gang member were more likely to view the reporting of gangs by the media as accurate compared to those respondents who had met a gang member, who had less confidence in the

accuracy of the media. Once more, the small numbers involved meant that this difference was not significant. Future research may investigate this variable with a larger sample size.

The data indicated a significant difference in how respondents learnt about gangs dependent on whether the respondent had previously met a gang member or not. Those respondents who had previous contact with a member of a gang were less likely to rely on the media as a source of learning about gangs. In contrast, public respondents who had not met a member of a gang were more reliant on the media for their information.

The degree to which the public respondent knew the gang member, if they indicated that they had previously met a member of gang, is not known. None of the public respondents classified themselves as a gang 'associate'.

The description of gang members by the public respondents was largely based on a physical portrait. Members of gangs were perceived as recognisable, although only some descriptions included the wearing of a gang patch as the mark of a gang member.

If there is an overconfidence in the labelling of gang members based solely on a perceived low standard of dress, rather than a discernible patch, it may explain the overestimation of people involved in gangs in New Zealand by the public respondents. Some of the gang respondents interviewed said that there was not a typical gang member rather they could be recognised by the patch on their back. The gang patch was the only conclusive means of identifying a member of a gang. As opposed to a physical description, the gang members were inclined to offer a description of attitude as a means of identification.

A large proportion of the respondents offered a derogatory description of gang members. However, this was limited to the European respondents. None of the Maori or Samoan respondents used derogatory terminology. There was, at times,

a defensiveness when Maori respondents were asked about gangs. Maori respondents were quick to point out that membership of gangs was not restricted to Maori, that there were European members too. The defensiveness observed may be a function of the ethnicity of the researcher.

Questions asked about gang members' activities elicited a wide range of responses from public respondents, including some respondents who said they did not know what gang members did. There was a disparity between what the public respondents said gang members did, and what the gang respondents said they did. This was evident when the gang respondents talked about their day to day activities, which had a predominantly family theme, compared to the public's perceptions of gang members which revolved around socialising, criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

Gang members were perceived by most of the public as Income Support beneficiaries.

The majority of the gang respondents who participated in this study were recipients of Income Support unemployment benefits. In the Horowhenua district 6.2% of the population are unemployed and receive assistance in the form of government benefits (Searle, 1994). Being recipients of Income Support benefits makes gang members no different to a significant proportion of the wider community.

The motivation of gang respondents to be completely honest in respect to their criminal activity is not likely to be strong. In view of the negative press gangs generally receive there is likely to be an emphasis by gang respondents on portraying a more positive persona which may have affected the manner in which they chose to express themselves in this study. There is no doubt that a large number of gang members commit crimes, as do a significant number of non-gang members.

The largest catergory of actions the public respondents attributed to gang members was indulging in criminal activities'. There is no question that gang crime does exist (Kelsey & Young, 1981), but whether it exists to the extent that it is reported in the news media is in doubt. The focus, in the majority of the media coverage on gangs, is on crime related issues. This appears to be at the expense of coverage on any beneficial contributions that gangs make.

The fact that gang members commit crime is not disputed, rather, what is of interest is whether membership of a gang provides any positive contribution to members. If there is a positive side to gang life, and literature such as the report by the New Zealand Committee on Gangs (1981) supports this claim, then there should be an attempt by the media to present balanced coverage on gang issues.

"There is a heavy focus on law enforcement related items, with very little explanations of the underlying reasons for the gang situation or coverage of the positive aspects of gang activities" (Committee on Gangs, 1981, p. 63).

Gang 'prospects' are an issue that no one, unless s/he is already involved with a gang, seems to know much about. Those who do have knowledge of gang 'prospects' are not forthcoming with information, presumably because there is a chance that they may implicate themselves in illegal activities. There are rumours that patches are earned by committing crimes for the gang, which would seem to be supported by one of the gang respondents who admitted that he would be lying if he said that he had not committed crimes to earn his patch.

Gang 'prospects' are often blamed by police for crimes, for example, "Maori gang prospects blamed for crime spate" (Bell, 1991). However, it could be argued that there is a similarity in police attitudes to *prospects* as well as *associates*. Both can be conveniently connected to a gang problem, although there is no substantiated evidence that individuals are indeed part of the gang network.

The label of a 'gang member' is one that is felt by gang respondents to be disadvantageous in a court situation once their membership becomes known. Certainly, in recent years a hard line is being implemented by politicians and police, to deal specifically with gangs. In particular, the proposed Harassment and Criminal Associations Bill, which should it become law, will have serious implications for gangs (Ministry of Justice, 1996).

This Bill introduced in August 1996 includes provisions for creating an offence punishable by two years imprisonment for the harassment of another person. It extends the police powers to employ the use of listening devices, powers of interception and reduces the number of people needed to be involved in criminal enterprise from six to three people before police may intercept (Ministry of Justice, 1996).

Perhaps the most serious implication of the Bill is that it allows the police to make warrantless searches of any vehicle which is believed to contain property that is stolen or unlawfully obtained. Names, address, and date of birth of suspects will also be required, and failure to comply with these regulations will result in arrest without the requirement of a warrant.

Further requirements of non-association orders make it likely that tensions between police and gangs will escalate in the near future should this Bill be passed into law. There would seem to be some merit to the comment by one gang respondent that there was two sets of rules, one for gangs and one for everyone else.

A further example of the gang's viewpoint is illustrated in the article on the Road Knight member who collected $20 for a breach of rights which the judge said was less than that which might be expected by a decent law abiding person ("Gang Member", 1996).

Six of the seven gang respondents in the study were Maori, the remaining member being European. Throughout press reports there are fears that gangs are becoming

an increasingly racial problem, for example, "Council urged to help Maori out of gangs" ("Council urged", 1996), "Gangs, dark side of Maori renaissance", (Allison, 1995). Maori officialdom, such as politicians and advisors, state that gangs are a reaction to the unfair treatment of Maori over the years, while police and politicians warn of growing racial disharmony in clashes between gangs.

It was expected that perceived racial discrepancies would be reflected in the gang respondent's discourse. However, in contrast to popular beliefs, this was not the case. With one exception, the gang respondents said that they perceived no difference between how New Zealand justice treated Maori and Pakeha, and that they were not interested in focusing on ethnic differences.

This seems at odds with the view of Maori officials such as Dennis O'Reilly of the Group Liaison Employment Scheme, who described society's fear of gangs as the colonial response to the Maori warrior calling for the rent (O'Reilly, 1988).

This lack of racial division was supported by the gang's stance on mixed membership of European and Maori members. Although they appear to be an ethnic gang, this was said not to be the intention, but rather the result of strong familial ties within the gang.

Overall, the observed prejudice toward a marginalised group, in this case a gang, is in line with previous research findings, "when people take note of ethnic neighbourhoods dominated by crime and poverty, the personal qualities of the residents are blamed for their problems" (Weiten, 1995, p. 676).

Other explanations such as situational factors, discrimination in job opportunities and inadequate policing tend to be ignored (Weiten, 1995).

The media when portraying violent, sexist and racist material, within which coverage of gangs is likey to be classified, has been found to have a greater influence on readers (Duck & Mullin, 1995).

Although there is a perception that the influence of the news media is likely to effect others judgement rather than themselves, this has been found to be largely a misjudgement (Gunther, 1991, cited in Duck & Mullin, 1995). Although at times the public respondents stated that the media portrayal of gangs was sensationalised, the media accuracy was not observed to be significantly affected.

The tentative relationship, that previous contact with a gang member decreased the perception of accuracy in the news media, found in the present study, may be related to Cook's (1984, cited in Weiten, 1995) research that intergroup contact can lead to reduced prejudice.

When people join together in groups, there is a tendency to separate the world into "us" and "them" or outgroups, a group that one neither belongs to or identifies with; and ingroups, a group that one belongs to and identifies with (Weiten, 1995).

Identification with ingroups may be on the basis of sharing the same ethnicity, age, creed or interests, to name a few.

Judd, Ryan and Park (1991) concluded that people overestimate when making judgments about outgroup members, supporting the conditional finding in the present study, that European respondents were more likely to stipulate that they would not like a gang to be resident in their neighbourhood. Maori respondents, on the other hand, were unperturbed by this suggestion. The gang was perceived as Maori or predominantly Maori by the majority of the respondents.

Irrespective of the way ones' perception of stereotyping is measured, Judd et al. (1991) found that outgroups were judged to be more stereotypical than they in fact were, thus people would see what they expected to see. Individuals were found to display a more extreme pattern of reactions to an outgroup, evaluating outgroup members less favourably in comparison with ingroup members.

People tend to become friends with those that they come into regular contact with. People from marginalised groups who are, for the large part, excluded by mainstream society members are thus unlikely to have intergroup contact. Rosenbaum (1986) has proposed a "repulsion hypotheses" where dissimilarity causes disdain, as one explanation of prejudice and discrimination.

There is a tendency to overestimate the likelihood of dramatic, vivid events, although they occur on an infrequent basis, owing to the amount of media coverage they receive (Slovic, Fischoff & Lichtenstein, 1982, cited in Weiten, 1995). The overestimation of gang numbers in New Zealand coupled with the negative reaction to the idea of having a gang resident in one's neighbourhood may be a response to the perceived threat of gangs. Previous incidents of gang violence are readily accessible in one's memory owing to the inordinate amount of publicity they receive. This leads to the tendency to exaggerate the actual risk of such an event recurring.

The findings of Adoni and Mane (1984) that perceptions of remote social conflicts were influenced more by television news portrayals than perceptions of conflicts more accessible through direct experience, was reflected by some Horowhenua residents. *Insight* reported that some residents were unaware of Nomads in Horowhenua prior to the publicity surrounding Operation Damon (Harrington, 1994).

The negative portrayal of the Nomads is likely to negatively influence public beliefs, about the Nomads, where previously there may have been no firm opinion (Hertog & Fan, 1995)

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

In this research there are a number of methodological problems which may adversely affect the findings. First and foremost is the small sample size of the gang respondents. The results for the gang respondents were based on a total of seven participants, six gang members and one 'associate'. Although this would seem to be too small a sample on which to base any findings, it should be remembered that the Horowhenua Nomad chapter is one of the smallest in the country with only 14 members, the majority of whom when interviewed were on remand in Linton Prison awaiting trial. The sample of six gang members actually represents over 40% of the total population.

At the time the researcher intended to talk to the Nomads and their 'associates' there was a combined trial of 10 members of the Nomads expected to take place in November 1996 (it did not actually take place until February 1997) at the Palmerston North High Court. There was a rejected appeal against all members being tried in a combined trial (see Appendix G), a proceeding that is usually associated with Mafia related trials in the United States. It is expected that some individuals may have been under stress and pressure because of this. This may have been reflected in the resulting small number willing to participate in the study.

Media interest in the Nomads at this time was high; with the trial approaching, as well as renewed interest in the Masterton chapter of the Nomads with police reports of burning of patches by some members (Coughlin, 1996; "Wairarapa Nomads", 1996). At this time the leader of the Nomads, broke his silence from Linton Prison and rebutted these claims ("Gang chapter", 1996).

Consistent throughout the interviews was a wariness and resentment toward the media reporting of gangs. A reluctance to talk to the media was spoken of on more than one occasion, owing to the mis-representation and misquotations that it was believed would follow.

The Kaumatua of the Nomads was the initial contact the researcher had with the gang. Further communication was made by the Kaumatua, on behalf of the researcher, to gain permission for the study. At this time, and throughout, the Kaumatua was aware of the need for a large sample size and encouraging in his assurance that this would not present a problem.

Protocol dictated that gang members be approached for an interview by the researcher first talking to the Nomads' founding member and leader, and obtaining his permission to talk to other Nomad members. This meant that there may have been some bias in the gang members interviewed, as the only Nomad respondents were the members who were permitted to talk to the researcher. Another perspective may have been gained from talking to other members who were not nominated for an interview with the researcher. The implications of the power and control of DH was not perceived by the researcher at the outset of the study.

Possible reasons for DH not wanting other members to talk to the researcher may include:

1)   A bitterness on the part of the gang member who is serving or facing a sentence of a long duration. This is likely to include GT who is currently serving a 10 year sentence for the burglary and manslaughter of Dr T in Foxton in 1993.

2)   Some members may not support the gang and as such, could not be relied upon to speak in the best interests of the gang as a whole.

3)   Some information may have been sensitive, and those who could not be trusted to monitor what they said may not have been selected for the interview.

The members the researcher talked to were for the most part family men - perhaps that was the intention.

The researcher acknowledges that the selection of the newspaper articles, over a nine year period, for inclusion in this research was a personal choice and, as such, may be subject to a sampling bias. Selection was made through CD Rom News Index and Index New Zealand. The reporting of court trials involving Nomad gang members were also of interest.

Whether another researcher would find a differring theme to the overall negative portrayal of gangs, by the media, that was observed in the present study is debatable.

The research does not take into account any contribution from a female perspective of life in a gang. There is some indication that the partners of gang members considered themselves to be at least 'associates' of the gang, although they declined to take part in the interviews for this research.

Contrary to current literature in which there is a tendency to see women connected with gangs as 'downtrodden second class citizens', those to whom the researcher talked informally appeared to be very strong women, more than capable of speaking for themselves when they wanted to.

It was implied that their lack of input and reluctance to take part in the present study, or be portrayed by the media, reflected an attitude that this stand was completely their own choice rather than a preventative measure enforced on them by a gang member/partner.

These women were often caring for children alone, while their partners were in prison, often for long periods of time, yet remained staunchly loyal to the gang and partner alike. Support from other members and their partners was evident.

Four of the seven gang respondent interviews were conducted in the prison environment. Two of the three interviewed in private residences were on strict bail conditions, including non-association orders. This may not have been conducive to

a relaxed and open chat about the present state of affairs as seen from the perspective of the gang.

The researcher may have been regarded with a measure of distrust and suspicion. While the majority of the interviews took place quite amicably with no hesitancy on the part of the interviewee once it was explained what the researcher was doing and that the interview was confidential, in one case the participant was clearly uncomfortable with the interviewer, with the interview lasting only 20 minutes compared with the usual one to two hours duration.

A male researcher may have been viewed differently by the gang respondents. As a female, aged mid 20's there was no challenge to the gang respondents to prove oneself 'staunch', as perhaps there may have been had the interviewer been male.

The analysis of the discourse of public and gang respondents in the present study is not without flaws. In order for the discourse analysis to be in its purest form the interviews would need to be transcribed. The regular inaccuracies and utterances that are observed in everyday discourse is of interest in pure analysis.

Transcription of the interviews was not possible, owing to ethical concerns of the Massey University Ethics Committee (see p. 76).

Despite the limitations placed on gathering pure discourse from the respondents, the researcher feels that the sections included on the discourse of a sample of public respondents, the gang respondents and the news print media have a contribution to make in the study. This illustration of discourse was intended to express the views of the respondents in a manner that would be lost should analysis be confined to quantitative data.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Several implications are suggested by the present findings.

* In order to conduct further research on the subject of gangs in New Zealand, there needs to be a workable definition of what constitutes a gang 'associate'. This definition needs to be agreed on by politicians, police and gangs if it is to be accepted by all parties.

* Media coverage focuses predominantly on the negative aspects of gangs. The present study found that the largest category of public respondents when asked what gangs do, associated gangs with criminal activities. The Report of the Committee of Gangs (1981) raised the possibility that news media coverage of gangs upon which the public are dependent for information fosters more consistently negative images of gangs than may be justified.

* As opposed to focusing solely on the negative aspect of the function of gangs there needs to be a more consistent style of reporting by the media. The media have a duty to be balanced in news reporting and a duty to investigate issues and question accepted views, no matter how unpopular they are, as opposed to furthering an existing stereotype (Behrens, 1992, cited in Comrie & McGregor, 1992, p. 228).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There was an under representation of ethnicities other than European and Maori in the research. Although the sample was random, the demographics of the Horowhenua in relation to race, indicate that there should have been a stronger representation of ethnic minorities. Increasing the sample size is likely to ensure that there is a true representation of all ethnic groups.

Future research in the area of gangs would need to include a larger sample size of gang respondents, perhaps to encompass the gang on a national scale, or a North Island study, as opposed to focusing on only one small chapter.

Alternatively a larger gang chapter could be used, such as the Wellington chapter of the Mongrel Mob which, as one of the largest chapters in New Zealand, would presumably yield a significantly greater number of subjects, although for the reasons given above it may always be difficult to obtain a large random sample of gang members.

In the present research there is some evidence to support the idea that a lack of racial identity is prevalent in the Nomads. It would be interesting to see whether this attitude was particular to the Nomads or whether it was a predominant feeling amongst other ethnic based gangs, particularly the Black Power as the Nomads are a splinter group of this gang.

There do not seem to be any membership barriers to ethnicity expressed by the Nomads in their discourse with the researcher and although the cultural make-up of the gang was predominantly Maori this seemed to be by accident rather than design. Although there was some evidence to support a return to traditional Maori values with the commissioning of a Kaumatua for the Nomads by DH the discourse of the gang members seemed to be at odds with this, declining the opportunity to talk about any ethnic concerns. Whether gangs are a growing ethnic concern, in reaction to unfair treatment of Maori over the years, as stated by Maori

officialdom, or whether there is an alternative explanation for their growth provides an opportunity for investigation in future research.

The strong familial bonds within the Nomads (the relatedness between members is over 70%) made them a cohesive group. Most members the researcher talked to had children and a de-facto wife. Despite, often lengthy prison terms served by Nomad members' their partners continued to play a major part in their life. Most members of the Nomads had entered the gang as teenagers either because social support was available within a gang situation or they had relatives who had been in the gang. Further research may involve looking at the family structure surrounding individuals at the time they joined a gang.

Indications by the press, politicians, and police are that gang members' are responsible for a large proportion of crime. Future research may involve analysis of Department of Justice statistics looking at whether gang membership is indicative of disproportionate levels of criminal activity, and whether particular types of crime are attributed to members of gangs. This research depends on a workable definition of what constitutes a gang member an 'associate'.

Discourse Analysis

The discourse analysis section, in order to provide 'pure' data, needs to be recorded to enable transcription (see p. 78). This not only places the researcher in a position where s/he may be privy to sensitive, potentially incriminating information. This, as well as the possible intimidatory influence of the tape recorder on the respondent, needs to be thoroughly addressed prior to the start of the research.

New Zealand Research

The majority of literature is based on research from overseas setting, such as gangs in the United States. More research is now being conducted on East Asian gangs, such as the Triads. The degree to which information garnered from these settings

can be related to a New Zealand point of view is still in question and thus must be interpreted with caution.

There is very little independent information available as to the gang situation in New Zealand. Accounts are provided by media, police and politicians with a less than objective slant. There is a need for more empirical research on New Zealand gangs before membership of a gang can be understood by the general public, police and politicians.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the main findings in the present study was the tendency of the respondents to overestimate the numbers involved with gangs in New Zealand. This overestimation was significantly more likely to be the perception of male respondents and those respondents who were currently employed.

Reliance upon an alternative source of learning about gangs, other than the media, was found to be dependent on whether the respondent had previously met a gang member.

The present study focused on the interview responses from a sample of residents from the Horowhenua relation to a local gang, contrasted with the responses from members of the gang; and sought to explain any differences between the two groups as a consequence of the media informing and mis-informing the public on gangs. The study is an exploratory study, rather than replicating any existing research.

As a result of the small sample size of gang respondents it was impossible to statistically compare the two groups. Analysing the respondents' discourse reveals some differences between the two groups, and a predominantly negative perception of the gang by the public respondents. There is a tendency to overestimate the numbers involved in the Horowhenua gang as well as gang numbers throughout New Zealand.

As a result of the findings in the present study it is feasible to suggest, that for future research with a larger sample, the degree of knowledge of gangs may be found to be dependent on demographic variables such as, gender, ethnicity and employment status of respondents. In the present study, public reactions on having a gang resident in their neighbourhood, perceptions of the accuracy of the media dependent on whether the respondent had previously met a gang member and

perception of the accuracy of the media in reporting about gangs, dependent on employment status, were found to be related to respondent demographics.

The media discourse (Chapter 12) illustrates the negativity in which gangs are portrayed by the New Zealand media. Any positive contribution gangs make, in providing support and loyalty for their members is lost when reporting the violence of gang disputes. Articles on gangs and the community emphasise a wide divide between gang members and non-gang respondents.

The present findings can only be taken as tentative, owing to the methodological problems discussed. They do merit further investigation with a larger sample size. Gangs in New Zealand are an understudied sector of the community. The publicity they receive is out of proportion to the numbers involved.

Conducting research in this area presents ethical and practical problems. In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, there needs to be further research on gangs in New Zealand to gain an understanding of the 'reality' of the gang member.

There is a need for further objective study in this area, focusing on the reasons why people join gangs, rather than the negative aspects of gang criminality. The present study is a small step toward advancing the present state of knowledge about gangs in New Zealand.

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COVER LETTER - PUBLIC RESPONDENTS

DATE

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Alexandra Green and I am a student at Massey University. I am doing research in the Horowhenua county looking at what the public say about members of gangs and comparing it to feedback from a local Horowhenua gang, the Nomads.

Taking part in this research will take no more than 30 minutes of your time in an informal interview. All of our discussion will be in the strictest confidence (Your name will not be used in any part of the study) and it will not be possible to tell who you are from my final report. I am mostly interested in common topics of conversation that occur throughout the interviews.

You have the right to refuse to answer any questions, or to withdraw from the study at any time.

This research is carried out under the supervision of Ms Joan Barnes, a lecturer at Massey. `` This research has been approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

Thank-you for taking part in my research. If you would like to be sent a feedback sheet at the end of my research please feel free to tell me.

Thank-you for your time.

Alexandra Green
Researcher

COVER LETTER - GANG RESPONDENTS

DATE

Dear Sir

My name is Alexandra Green and I am a student at Massey University. I am currently doing research in the Horowhenua county looking at:

STAGE 1: How the public see gang members.

STAGE 2: How the Nomads see themselves.

Stage 1 of this research has already been carried out. I now wish to talk to members, of the Horowhenua Nomads, for Stage 2 of my study.

Taking part in this research will take no more than 30 minutes of your time. All of our discussion will be in the strictest confidence (Your name will not be used in any part of the study) and it will not be possible to tell who you are from my final report.

You have the right to refuse to answer any questions, and to withdraw from the study at any time.

This research is carried out under the supervision of Ms Joan Barnes, a lecturer at Massey. This research has been approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

Thank-you for taking part in my research. If you would like to be sent a feedback sheet at the end of my research please feel free to tell me.

Thank-you for your time.

**Alexandra Green
Researcher**

APPENDIX C

COUNSELLING SERVICES

* **Sexual Abuse Centre**
  6 Lincoln Place
  Levin

  Phone: (06) 368 2233

* **Palmerston North Women's Refuge Trust Inc**
  PO Box 573
  Palmerston North

  Phone: (06) 356 5585
  (06) 355 3769

* **Rape Crisis Centre**
  53 Waldergrave Street
  Palmerston North

  Phone: (06) 356 5868
  Fax: (06) 355 9088

* **Manline**
  Square Edge
  Church Street
  Palmerston North

  Phone: (06) 358 1211

* **Samaritans**
  15 Amesbury Street
  Palmerston North

  Phone: (06) 358 2442

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW FORMAT - PUBLIC RESPONDENTS (PILOT)

* Do you consider yourself a member or associate of the Nomads?

* Can you briefly tell me what you know about the Nomads?

* How many are there?

* Are they an ethnic gang?

* Are they just from Foxton or throughout New Zealand?

* How do you feel about having a gang in your neighbourhood?

* Have you ever met any members of a gang?

* How many people in New Zealand are involved with gangs?

* What do gangs do?

* How do you feel the media portray gangs?

Is it fair?

* Can you give me a profile of a typical gang member?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW FORMAT - PUBLIC RESPONDENTS

1)   Age:

2)   Gender:

3)   Occupation:

4)   Ethnicity:

5)   Do you consider yourself a member or associate of the Nomads?

6)   Can you briefly tell me what you know about the Nomads?

       How many are the in Horowhenua?

       What race are they?

       Are they just in Horowhenua or throughout New Zealand?

       How do you feel about having a gang in your neighbourhood?

       Have you ever met any members of a gang?

7)   How many people in New Zealand are involved with gangs?

8)   What do gangs do?

9)   How do you learn about gangs?

       How do you think the media portray gangs?

       How accurate do you think it is?

10)   Can you describe a gang member?

       What do they do?

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW FORMAT - GANG RESPONDENTS

1) Age

2) Gender

3) Occupation

4) Ethnicity

5) Marital Status

6) Do you consider yourself a member or associate of the Nomads?

7) What does being a Nomad/Associate mean to you?

8) How many patched members are there in Horowhenua?

9) How many Associates are there in Horowhenua?

10) What race are the Nomads?

11) Do you consider yourselves an ethnic gang?

12) How do you think the members of the public in Horowhenua feel about you?

13) How many people in New Zealand are involved with gangs?

14) What do gangs do?

15) Why?

16) What's the purpose of being in a gang?

17) How do you feel the media portray gangs?

18) How accurate do you think it is?

19) What's your relationship with the media?

20) Can you describe a typical gang member?

21) What do you do on a daily basis?

22) What makes the Nomads different from other gangs?

23) Who is a likely prospect for the Nomads?

24) How do you get to be a patched member of the Nomads?

25) How do you think New Zealand justice treats gang members?
Examples:

26) How do you think New Zealand justice treats Maori?
Examples:

APPENDIX G

THE TRIALS

Trial 1

On February 12th 1996, DH, MH and KT jointly faced charges of both wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and attempted murder of a member of the Tyrants motorcycle club while at the Mountain Rock music festival in February 1994.

The trial originally set out for 5 days of the Palmerston North High Court it Judge Gallen said he expected it to be of an extended duration. The selection of the jury was finalized with six male and six female jurors, one of whom was Maori.

Those challenged by the defence were white males aged over 40 years, while those targeted by the prosecution were young, slightly untidy looking males and well presented women over 40 years. Owing to the expected extended duration of the trial a number of requests to be excused from jury service were allowed.

Amid high security, with bag searchers on each entry into the court throughout the day as well as an electronic metal detector body swipe, visitors to the public gallery were monitored and, when it was deemed by the police to be necessary, asked for identification.

The charges against the three, all patched members of the Nomads, were laid in September 1995, 19 months after the alleged attack took place. With the refusal of the victim to make any positive identification of his attackers the prosecution was reliant on the testimony of former Masterton Nomad leader RR and his de facto wife, RB. Both of these prosecution witnesses had previously been defence witnesses providing alibis for DH. Provided with police protection and name suppression they were the mainstay of the prosecution's case.

The evidence of RR and RB made very interesting listening, and the defence outlined a compelling case as to why the two were now appearing for the prosecution. Defence provided the information that both had been facing serious drug charges on the evidence of a listening device planted in their house by the police prior to their agreeing to take part in the trial. RB had been transported from Masterton to Palmerston North by police and provided with hotel accommodation at the expense of the police, in order for her to seek legal advice from a lawyer outside Masterton.

The trial was interrupted on numerous occasions, owing to the inadmissibility of the evidence provided by the listening device; counsel sought permission to speak with the Judge without the jury present, or in a closed court.

During the third day the judge declared a mis-trial and held the accused over for a trial at a later date.

After a second mis-trial later on in the year, a third trial of the three accused began at the end of October. This trial differed from the two others when on the fourth day of the proceedings a further witness, a photographer who was at Mountain Rock, was called by the Crown Prosecutor and supplied a photograph which placed the victim and one of his attackers close to the scene where the incident occurred. The headlines, "Photographer shocked by attack" preceded an article that reported the eyewitness's account of the incident. The photographer had come forward to Hastings police after television coverage of the Nomad trial, nearly two years after the incident at Mountain Rock took place ("Photographer shocked", 1996)

During the trial, charges against MH were dropped ("Hines guilty", 1996), and those against KT were reduced. At the culmination of the trial the judge spent 1 1/2 hours summing up, at which time he said that in regard to two of the three witnesses, now under police protection, "Did the Police buy them to give false evidence" ("Hines guilty", 1996, p. 2)

After 14 hours of deliberation the Jury acquitted KT of injuring with intent and DH of attempted murder. DH was found guilty of injuring with intent and was sentenced on November 22nd to six years in jail ("Nomads boss", 1996).

Trial 2

On the 25th March 1996 ten accused, 12 jurors, nine defence lawyers, two prosecution lawyers, two registrars, five members of the country's press, one court scribe and the Judge assembled in the Palmerston North High Court for what is believed to be the first ever combined trial in a New Zealand court of law.

Twenty two counts were read out in court and the subsequent plea's recorded.

From the 86 possible jurors, six of whom were excused for personal reasons there was a total of 50 challenges from the combined defence lawyers, nine challenges on the part of the crown, and five possible jurors who had previously been stood aside were asked to re-present themselves for the selection of the 12th juror.

The 12 members of the public who made up the jury were evenly divided by gender with one non-European member. The jurors tended to be mainly in their 20s and 30s.

Throughout the trial, which was set down for 10 days in the High Court, there was a high police presence with belongings searched and a metal detector scan before anyone was granted entry into the court room. The first day of the trial saw at least one police officer wearing a side arm and another with a long baton clearly visible.

Judge Heron spoke at length to the jury prior to the commencement of the trial reiterating that each charge was to be judged individually and that the decision from one charge should not be allowed to influence the jury's decision on another charge.

The combined trial of the Nomads on 22 charges gathered by police over a 2 year period proceeded only after an appeal by defence lawyers was rejected by the judge.

The Crown's opening speech explained the procedure the trial would follow and offered some illustrations of the defendants' 'arrogance' and 'intimidation'. The crown commended the witnesses in coming forward and said that they were subject to intimidation and violence and because of their illegal activities were vulnerable, being reluctant to go to the police for fear of facing charges themselves.

The crown prosecutor, said that the Nomad gang was not on trial, and that the charges had not come about due to any attempt to 'get' the gang as a whole, rather the accused were groups of people who were connected in some way.

The case against the ten accused was put together on the evidence from four complainants:

1)   the A complaint
2)   the S complaint
3)   the U complaint
4)   the C complaint

All of the charges evolved in some way from the four complaints and all had some connection to cannabis plant material or other drugs.

Despite evidence of illegal drug offences none of the complainants had been charged with any breach to the Crimes Act 1961.

The 38 witnesses called by the prosecution were made up of the police officers giving evidence of taking statements, and complainants, or friends and family of complainants.

On the third day of the trial two of the accused DH and MH, elected to change their pleas to guilty and were remanded until a later date for sentencing.

On the sixth day of the trial, summations were made by the prosecution and defence and a lengthy closing speech was delivered by Judge H in which he advised that each of the charges should be seen as independent of the others. He said that one person pleading guilty to a charge that others were also facing in no way affected the case against the other people charged.

After 14 hours of deliberation the jury returned on Wednesday 27th March, 1996 to deliver their verdicts. With the exception of one of the accused, who was found not guilty on the charge of robbery of a quantity of Temgesics and walked free from the court room to find his car had been wheel clamped for unpaid traffic fines, the remaining seven accused were found guilty on all the charges they faced.

On the day of sentencing, April 26, 1996, a different attitude could be felt in the court room, perhaps due to the reduced police presence, particularly noticeable owing to the lack of bag searches and metal detectors, or the increased number in the public gallery, which was filled to capacity with more people wanting to get in.

The gallery held mostly family members who had a vested interest in the outcome of the submissions and pre-sentence reports on the prisoners. Despite obvious sounds of distress when the length of sentence for each charge was read out by the Judge for MG, the youngest member awaiting sentence, and the first one of the nine to be facing more than one count, there was relief and smiles all around when the Judge said that the sentences were to run concurrently rather than cumulatively. This set the trend for the remainder of the sentences delivered and the highest sentence was five years imprisonment.

Sentenced were DH, 41, two years jail to be served cumulatively on an earlier two year term; BW, 23, five years; MG, 20, five years, JW, 31, 15 months; MN, 22, 15

months; CT, 25, six months; KH, 23, three and a half years; MH, 37, two years; RM, 24, three years ("Gang members", 1996, p. 2).

The prisoners as they were led away made signs of victory to their supporters in the public gallery in a gesture that would have failed to endear them to the police present. There was a delay before the gangs supporters made their way down the steps of the courthouse to gather around the corner out of the range of the cameras.