

**REFOCUSING PREVENTION PRACTICES: FROM RISK-BASED TOWARDS
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTAL MEASURES.**

By

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ABSTRACT

In exploring current responses to crime, particularly youth involvement in gangs, this thesis examines two approaches: Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) and risk-based prevention. The former is associated with the provision of socially-designed measures to address and eliminate the risk factor associated with persistent offending. The latter, however, refers to the implementation of risk management and statistical assessment to manage the risk factor associated with persistent offending. In light of these two approaches, this thesis examines a debate which purported that crime prevention practices has wholly shifted away from an emphasis on CPSD towards risk-based prevention. This thesis also examines the opposing debate which explains that CPSD and risk-based prevention have emerged into a balanced approach. Taking into account 19 youth gang prevention projects in Canada, the above debates are investigated. Drawing from the analysed project, this thesis concludes that, the crime prevention practices of the analyzed projects significantly rely on risk-based prevention. As a result, the approaches of CPSD still exist in rhetoric and in practice however, its influence on crime prevention initiatives is very limited. Hence, current approaches neither reflect a total shift away from CPSD nor a balanced approach.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last century, significant attention has been directed towards the development of effective approaches in response to issues of delinquency, especially those perpetrated by youth involved in gangs. In furthering this course, significant resources, both in levels of criminology and sociology have been committed to discovering the root causes of juvenile delinquency with hopes of engineering appropriate interventions and mechanisms to curb the growing phenomenon of youth delinquency. In general, research has concluded that the causes of crime originate from a variety of social influences (also known as risk factors) such as unemployment, homelessness, drug addiction, welfare dependency, economic deprivation, gender inequality, racism, discrimination etc. (Farrington 2000:15; Public Safety Canada, 2002; O'Malley and Palmer 1996:139). In response to this, Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) emerged. This approach specifically focuses on investigating social causes of delinquency and implementing appropriate social measures, which sought to eliminate risk factors of delinquency. Using a simplified and general explanation, in an effort to address crime, CPSD employs practices where social problems such as economic deprivation, homelessness, a history of parental abuse and other known precursors of crime were addressed by improving areas such as health, parental support, education, recreation and community. In addition, prevention practices focus on employing social engineering methods, social security, social work and social benefits in preventive initiatives. The prominence of the CPSD approach is reflected by the support given to its effectiveness through studies such as the Canadian Council on Children and Youth 1989; the Canadian Council on Social Development 1985: Canadian

Criminal Justice Association 1989; Farrington 1989; Waller 1989, 1990, 1991; Waller and Weiler 1985; Hastings 1998; Leblanc 1979, 1983; and Nuttall 1989.

In addition to the significant support for CPSD, Canada, through the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), adopted this approach in its first National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS, also known as the Strategy) in 1998. With the focus on CPSD as an approach, the NCPC's mandate under the Strategy was to promote, advance, and fund community projects and initiatives incorporating the CPSD model in their response to crime. Most of the funded projects were designed to improve and elevate the social and psychological risk factor, which increase the chances of engaging in criminality. Specifically, the criteria for receiving funding hinged on the ability for projects to “tackle risk factors, which contribute to crime and victimization, that are amenable to change” (Public Safety Canada, 2002:1). In addition, NCPC was involved in creating resource guides to help community projects address the root problems of crime.

Despite support for CPSD, the increasing focus on risk and risk management practices within contemporary society has altered the nature and scope of crime prevention practices. As a result, the realm of crime prevention has been infiltrated with risk-oriented approaches and methods designed to manage risk factors rather than address and eliminate them. These approaches have come to be called Risk-Based Crime Prevention. Risk-based prevention is particularly characterised by the increasing focus on managing crime, particularly the risk factors and criminal individuals, through actuarial justice, scientific measures and risk management principles.

Within the field of criminology and sociology, scholars who have examined developments in the area of crime prevention approaches have documented a debate

regarding the perceived transition or shift in crime prevention methods as a result of the emergence of the risk-based approach. On one hand, scholars such as Pat O'Malley (1992, 2000), Rose (1996, 2000), Feeley and Simon (1992, 1994), and Donzelot (1991), have argued that social forms of prevention are receding in the face of risk-based prevention. Pat O'Malley (2000) regards this shift as "the death of the social" and "the ascendance of the risk society". The former is associated with the reduced emphasis on socially-oriented measures aimed at tackling social risk factors associated with crime. The latter refers to the rise in actuarial logic and risk management approaches aimed at managing criminal risk factors and the logic through which crime prevention itself has been configured to increasingly reflect and implement risk-based technologies in multiple ways. This shift, Walter (2000) also argues, which is geared towards the decline of collective social services towards the rise of individualized risk management approaches, is based on numerous critiques including conceptions that social crime prevention approaches engendered problems of state and economic overload and limited individual responsibility (154).

An opposing debate arising from scholars such as Rigakos and Hadden (2001) and Hatt (1999) have pointed to the hybridized co-existence of risk management approach and social prevention approach and contend that the alleged "death of the social" is rhetorical rather than practical. In agreement, Stenson (1993) have also argued that the modalities of crime prevention should be viewed as fluid and interpenetrating rather than as distinct entities that displace one another (386). Stenson also argues that crime prevention can currently be characterised as a balanced approach in which social approaches and risk-based practices are woven together in a mutually reinforcing way

(ibid). Moreover, while Stenson and Watts (1999) acknowledge that risk management have permeated the field of crime prevention and social developmental an approach has reduced, they suggest that emphasis on social approaches significantly remains and are not wholly displaced (191).

In light of the debate within crime prevention, it must be noted that the leading agency on crime prevention in Canada, NCPC's underwent an ideological transition in prevention practices in 2005/2006. Following the renewal of the Strategy, NCPC's reported its renewed mandate to implement evidence-based prevention and risk management methods in attempts of controlling the known risk causes of crime. This new direction placed emphasis on expanding the knowledge base of risk factors associated with the likelihood of offending and identifying individuals who exhibited these risk factors (Public Safety Canada, 2009:3). In support of the new direction, the Minister of Public Safety announced in 2007 a new "Blueprint for Effective Crime Prevention" (Public Safety Canada, n.d.c; Johnson & Fraser, 2007). The blueprint emphasized evidence-based interventions which are: "integrated with the activities of other programs and services, built on the knowledge of risk and protective factors and use evidence based practices, focused on specific priorities, and should produce measurable results" (Public Safety Canada, 2007:1).

In shedding more light on the debate regarding the alleged shift or balanced approach between social approaches to risk-based practices, this thesis intends on exploring and examining the extent of the aforementioned debates in Canadian crime prevention initiatives as administered by the NCPC. It will also consider the impact of the transition in 2005/2006 on NCPC's prevention initiatives. It is important to note that

although this thesis does not adopt a particular perspective or position, it however presents a detailed overview of the debate surrounding the alleged displacement of CPSD, as well as debates that suggests a balanced approach. While engaging with the debates concerning the “death of the social”, this thesis will present discussions that support a shift in prevention practices. These discussions problematize the shift on the grounds that utilizing statistical risk categories and actuarial logic to address social phenomenon is plagued with a number of limitations. Also presented are arguments which suggests that by employing risk-based prevention, the notion of improving and elevating social conditions that leads to crime has been replaced with the notion of governing individuals in order to empower them to manage their own risk. More so, discussions indicating that preventative focus have indeed shifted to statistically calculating and assessing risk rather than engineering social measures to address social phenomenon will be presented.

While engaging in the argument that posits that social forms of prevention still remains alongside risk-based prevention, I present various arguments which point to the fact that social approaches and risk-based approaches are heavily entwined in the practices of current crime prevention initiative. Presented within this section are arguments which challenge the direction of the alleged shift.

In order to better ground my analysis on crime prevention, I explore the characteristics of Canadian gang prevention initiatives sponsored by the NCPC, in an attempt to empirically assess the extent to which these initiatives are framed either by risk-based measures or the integrated model of risk and social approaches. This thesis analysed gang preventive initiatives for several reasons. First, youth gangs and violence

have been a longstanding priority in Canada and remains a renewed site of government investments and activity. Secondly, there is a heightened awareness of the potential benefit of the need to develop integrated gang prevention measures across different levels of government so as to more effectively respond to the gang issue. Federally implemented measures in Canada include the Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF) to financially support gang prevention measures and the Youth Justice Fund: Guns, Gangs and Drugs to support gang exit strategies and reduction initiatives. To name a few, provincial and municipal implemented measures include the Alberta Gang Reduction Strategy, Manitoba's Project Restore, Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy, Durham Youth Gang Strategy, Quebec Gang Strategy, the Gang Strategy of Saskatoon and the Comprehensive and Coordinated Provincial Action Plan to Prevent Youth Gang Violence in British Columbia. These horizontal initiatives seek to understand the causes of youth involvement in gangs and develop promising practices for addressing them.

In order to effectively theorize the issues of youth gangs, a working definition of what constitutes a 'youth gang' is required. Unfortunately, despite the numerous studies conducted on youth gangs, there is little or no consensus on the definition of a gang either in the fields of criminology or sociology (Esbensen et al 2001:2). Various researchers have offered different explanations in an attempt to provide a working definition of a youth gang; however, these definitions are highly inconsistent and continue to be disputed. The dispute concerning the formulation of a universal gang definition can be pinpointed to the disagreement between experts on gang research on what attributes should be included and excluded from the definition of gangs or of involvement. What constitutes a youth gang has varied with time and place, political and economic

conditions, community tolerance, level and nature of police and citizen concern, cultural and sub cultural traditions and mores, and with media-generated sensationalism or indifference to law-violating youth groups (Goldstein, 1991:3). Horowitz (1990) agrees with Goldstein's argument and proposes that the definition of gangs must be applicable to any given society; thus, "a firm definition may not be helpful (Horowitz, 1990:43). On the other hand, other gang researchers argue that some element or component of the definition must remain constant because the reason behind gang membership is consistent regardless of the peculiarities of any society.

For the purpose of this thesis, the operational definition of a youth gang is the definition provided by Klemp-North (2007), which states that, a youth gang is:

Any denotable group of youngsters who are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighbourhood, recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name) and have been involved in sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighbourhood residents and/or law enforcement. (Klemp-North, 2007, pg. 428)

This definition was chosen mainly for the reason that it distinguishes youth who are involved in gangs from other youth who merely engage in delinquency. Specifically, it points to the fact that for a gang to be recognized as one, its members must identify themselves as part of a gang and are perceived by others as members of a gang. Such recognition, I believe, carries more weight than a group of delinquent youth who are labeled as part of a gang by others.

The objective of this thesis is to explore the emergence of risk-based prevention and to explore whether the gang-oriented initiatives of NCPC reflect the alleged decline of social approaches or the integrated model of risk and social measures. In addition, this

thesis will critically assess the alleged marginalization of socially-focused preventative strategies and the reported implications that have ensued as a result of this shift in the preventive approach. I pursue this inquiry in light of the gang prevention initiatives funded by the Canadian National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC). It should be noted however, that the focus of this thesis is not on evaluating the effectiveness of the NCPC funded gang prevention initiatives, but rather on the gang prevention initiatives as empirical evidence of how risk management has infiltrated the sphere of social crime prevention, to the potential detriment of social forms of prevention.

In reference to youth gangs, violence and youth who are involved in gang activities, I use the terms “criminality”; “crime”; delinquent”; “delinquency” and “offender” interchangeably. It should be noted that I understand that there are nuanced distinctions among these terms, however I occasionally use these terms interchangeably throughout this thesis to avoid repetition.

Social scientists emphasize the importance of first formulating a research question prior to any undertaking of social research (Palys, 1992). The questions this thesis intends on exploring is: **In the case of the gang prevention initiatives sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), can these initiatives be characterized as a mutuality of risk and social prevention measures? Or are these initiatives solely reliant on risk-based approaches?**

Outline of the Thesis

In order to effectively capture the complexity of the subject matter, analysis will be conducted on two levels. The first will present the academic and political context

underlining the shift in prevention practices, whilst the second will present substantive evidence of the preventive approaches underlying current federally directed crime prevention initiatives within the Canadian context. The emphasis will be placed on the exploring the documented limitations that arise from displacing socially-oriented prevention measures and addressing youth gang involvement with risk management strategies.

Following this introduction, this thesis will be organized into four chapters. Chapter one engages in a review of literature and a discussion of the analytical framework of the debates over gang prevention. This chapter presents Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD); an approach that implements strategies of social welfare as a response to addressing the social and psychological risk factors that give rise to delinquency. It also provides an analysis of risk-based approach to crime prevention and the development of risk factors and protective factors that have emerged to compete with CPSD. I also reflect on academic criticisms and critical concerns associated with risk-based crime prevention. In doing so, I examine the dilemmas associated with applying statistical measures to social and structural problems and the deficit in preventive effectiveness that has ensued as a result of such appropriation.

Chapter two presents the methodology used to gather the data used for this thesis. This chapter also presents a sample of the information gathered. Chapter three engages in an in-depth analysis of youth gang interventions in Canada to answer the research question. In conclusion, chapter four reiterates key threads that have been presented throughout this thesis. Recommendations and discussion of research limitations are also outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD)

Contemporary crime prevention describes a set of alternative strategies and measures that seek to intervene on and modify the identified causes of crime before the initial occurrence or re-occurrence of crime (Bratingham et al., 2005:4-5). This form of crime prevention strategy drew inspiration from the sense that traditional criminal justice responses lacked the efficacy and effectiveness to prevent crime and maintain social order (Dershem, 1990: 1). This perception was further reinforced by conclusions drawn from sociological and criminological studies on correctional approaches and programs. For example, in 1974, Robert Martinson published his celebrated assessment of the effectiveness of correctional treatment, “What Works? Questions and Answers About Prison Reform”. Martinson’s study concluded that “the rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have had no appreciable effect on recidivism” (Martinson, 1974: 25). He further concluded that when evaluating rehabilitative approaches under the criminal justice system and their effectiveness in preventing and reducing crime, ‘nothing works’ (Martinson, 1974: 48). Gottfredson’s (1979) investigation of traditional approaches to crime noted that “the conventional wisdom in criminology is that rehabilitation has been found to be ineffective” (Gottfredson, 1979:39). This view has become widespread and agreed upon by criminologists. Hence, the “nothing works” doctrine became the slogan used to criticize traditional justice systems and a criminological wisdom drawn upon to develop new initiatives and strategies to prevent crime.

Beyond the “nothing works” idea, numerous studies have also argued against the punitive crime control strategies. Critics such as Lewis and Salem (1981) have noted that, “crime prevention for the first three-quarters of the twentieth century was premised on a set of principles that changed very little” (Lewis and Salem, 1981:405). Lewis and Salem noted that these principles were formulated on the idea that preventing crime should focus on modifying the inclination of offenders to commit illegal acts (Lewis and Salem, 1981:405). In essence, they believed that the doctrine driving the criminal justice system focused on correcting the criminal motivations of the offenders in order to prevent them from engaging in future criminality. Moreover, Lewis and Salem (1981) believed that the doctrine placed more emphasis on the individual as pathology and little attention on the individual’s environment and the opportunities that gave rise to their criminal engagement. Hence, they concluded that an understanding of the causes of crime would better assist in developing mechanisms which would address these causes and prevent crime (Lewis D., and Salem G., 1981:405). This shortcoming was also noted by Tonry and Farrington (1995) in their findings that,

(T)he primary initiatives launched in the name of crime prevention have consisted of changes in criminal law, enforcement techniques, and sentencing policy. These are all an appropriate part of a government crime prevention effort but they neglect many factors known to influence crime delinquency, which if addressed, promises to have important preventive efforts. (Tonry and Farrington, 1995b:2)

Additional criticism stemmed from the fact that the traditional justice system often only responds reactively to the aftermath of criminality. Such arguments advanced the need to develop and implement measures that interfered with the root causes of crime before it led to the initial occurrence of crime. This kind of preventive interventions

gained more ground based on the argument that:

The most promising and most important method of dealing with crime is by preventing it--by ameliorating the conditions of life that drive people to commit crimes and that undermine the restraining rules and restrictions erected by society against antisocial conduct... the influence to do the most good must come before the youth has become involved in the formal criminal justice system. (Hawkins and Weis, 1985:3)

Such criticisms did give rise to the development of alternative prevention measures. Researchers such as Bottoms and Wiles (1996) have claimed that during the previous 20 to 30 years in many Western societies, there has been a general movement, academically and politically, for the development of an organized set of activities under the general heading of the contemporary crime prevention (Bottoms and Wiles, 1996:1). More importantly, according to Sutton (1994), “the major promise for criminologists is that [crime prevention] offers ‘renewed relevance’ versus the ‘nothing works’ pessimism after the ‘nothing works doctrine’” (Sutton, 1994:6). Sutton further notes that crime prevention initiatives may offer the opportunity to move away from punitive, divisive and exclusionary models of social control to forms of inclusionary and integrative models (Sutton, 1994:6). In essence, the growth of interest in crime prevention sparked a shift which disconnected crime prevention measures from an over-reliance on the traditional punitive and enforcement approach to crime. Subsequently, this approach came to be widely accepted by government agencies and public practitioners. Hastings (1991) notes that at the time “it seems to be one of the few responses to crime which almost all types of participants in the criminal justice system are ready to accept and encourage” (85). As a result of these developments, crime prevention occupied a prominent place in public policy, government law and order and public practice.

Crime prevention as a theoretical concept is very difficult to define both conceptually and empirically, given that there is a plethora of activities and initiatives associated with the term. Sutton argues that “crime prevention is a diffuse set of theories and practices” (Sutton, 1994: 7) and this has forestalled efforts to establish a consistent definition for crime prevention. Reinforcing his argument, Hughes notes that (1998), despite attempts made to conceptualize the term, academics, politicians, policy makers, and practitioners have achieved little success in establishing a definition that is readily accepted (Hughes, 1998: 18). Instead, there are multiple strategies under the purview of crime prevention. These include: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), community crime prevention and CPSD to name a few. It should be noted that this thesis does not explore CPTED.

CPSD as an approach of crime control emerged in the Canadian criminal justice policy in the mid 1980’s through the work of Irvin Waller, Dick Weiler, and the Canadian Council on Social Development. The approach is based on the theoretical premise that complex elements in the social, economic, political, and environmental processes are the root causes of criminality (Public Safety Canada, 2005a:15). In essence, CPSD is anchored upon the perspective that offending is part of a larger matrix of social conditions. In support of this perspective, Garland emphatically argues that crime can be “conceived as a social problem, with social causes” (Garland, 2001:47). Hence, the focus of prevention should be directed at elevating social and structural ills that lead to criminality as well as on the individual.

The practical framework underlining CPSD can be divided into two parts. The first comprises of the idea that crime prevention requires an in-depth understanding of the

risk factors that contribute to persistent offending. CPSD furthered the perspective that intended preventative solutions and initiatives must identify the range of risk factors and correlate them with social conditions. More so, prevention should understand the aetiology of crime and implement interventions that effectively address risk factors (Garland, 2001:42). In agreement, Hawkins and Weis (1985), theorize that delinquency prevention should not only be responsive to the "causes" of delinquency, but also to the manner in which etiological factors interact in the process of social development (Hawkins and Weis, 1985:6). This implies that corresponding social measures should be linked specifically to addressing crime.

To further advance knowledge pertaining to the “root causes” of crime, the explanation of crime as a social phenomenon focuses on two causal levels: distal and proximal levels (Campbell & Muncer, 1990:412). Distal variables are understood to be embedded within deeper social and structural contexts such as poor socio-economic status, social inequality, unemployment, illiteracy, criminal history, parental, mental and health problems, a history of childhood abuse, poverty etc. Proximal variables, however, are directly linked with/and originate from the presence of distal variables. These variables include poor parental behaviour, family violence, drug addiction, negative peer association, low-self esteem, low school aspirations etc (Campbell & Muncer, 1990:412). Hence, CPSD employs the perspective that responses to crime should be designed to address both the distal and proximal causes concurrently. Such approach resembles interventions designed to address the root causes of crime (distal) and any corresponding effects (proximal) that exist so as to promote the total wellbeing of the individual and effectively uproot the causes of crime.

Secondly, relatively less attention is focused on punitive and incarceration measures. CPSD advocates for the implementation of social and community development strategies that foster long-term and sustained change in the health and safety of communities as well as in the individual's situational conditions and physical environment. These social and community development strategies include the provision of housing, income security, employment, education, health care, and other social services. Ultimately, CPSD sought to comprehensively address and elevate the social, psychological and economic problems that led to criminality. As noted by the John Howard Society of Alberta, CPSD aims to improve the quality of life of those most vulnerable to delinquency, so interventions are designed to meet the changing needs that emerge in a person's life over a number of years (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2005:21).

Through research on risk factors, CPSD has identified the following risk factors as being associated with persistent offending:

- Inadequate living conditions, such as poor housing and unstable situations;
- Family factors, such as poverty, family size, poor or inadequate parenting, parental criminality, and parental substance abuse;
- Individual personality and behavioural factors, such as “cognitive deficits” including a lack of problem-solving skills, self-control, critical reasoning, judgment and failure to consider the consequences of behavior, low intelligence, hyperactivity, as well as the early onset of aggressive behavior;
- Peer association, such as relationships with friends who follow a delinquent/criminal lifestyle;

- School-related factors, such as poor educational achievement and truancy, as well as deficient school environments, and exclusionary policies; and
- Employment opportunities, such as a lack of training and employment.

With the focus on addressing complex social, economic, and cultural factors that contribute to crime, CPSD geared interventions bring together an array of policies, programs, and services such as social housing, education, health, income security and social services to address complex risk factors associated with persistent criminality. Such connections ensure that the proposed interventions work with individuals, families and communities to provide them with the appropriate resources, knowledge and support to deal with the risk factors associated with persistent criminality (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2005). As mentioned, the aim of these interventions is to foster long-term and sustained change in the wellbeing of individuals and cities prone to crime. Such interventions include the following:

- Social Services: a range of personal, social and physical-support services offered to individuals and families;
- Housing: Social – subsidized – housing provided through various government – sponsored tax subsidies and loan initiatives, which are generally directed to assist low income families;
- Income security: programs which provide direct financial support to individuals/families experiencing economic deprivation;
- Education: programs providing individualized educational opportunities, enrichment programs and social/psychological support for disadvantaged children and youth;
- Employment: Programs offering employment opportunities, job preparation, training

and placement to disadvantaged youth and their families; and

- Health care: Programs involved in public and community health services geared towards in the identification of difficulties, prevention of illness and promotion of health.

It is important to note that the theoretical underpinnings of CPSD do not imply that crime and gangs are specific to individuals of low socio-economic status. Neither do they seek to offer a general explanation for all sorts of delinquency. The approach of CPSD mainly focuses on a young segment of the population and how complex biographical elements interact to impact their engagement in delinquency.

The effectiveness of CPSD programs has been researched by longitudinal research studies conducted in various parts of the world, including New Zealand, England, the United States, Canada, and Sweden (ICPC, 1999: pp. 20-22). Some of the best and well-known CPSD programs implement various forms of intervention and involve children and their parents. Longitudinal studies have provided solid evidence on the ways in which social development programs targeted at individuals, families, and communities help in reducing criminality. In Canada, studies such as the Montreal Longitudinal and Experimental Study, conducted in the mid-1980s and the Early Years Study have brought insight into the ways social, economic, and home environments affect family life and the lives of children (ICPC, 1999: pp. 20-29). The study engaged youth and their families in a multi-faceted intervention for a period of two years. A control group and a focus group were created. The intervention sought to target distal individual or interactional levels of risk factors – family abuse and family negligence, with a proximal cause of crime – anti-social behaviour and aggression. An assessment method

was used to identify youth and parents who portrayed these attributes. The intervention delivered activities which helped parents foster healthier relationships with their children along with activities designed to assist youth build social skills. The results from this study indicated that youth in the focus group desisted from disruptive behaviour while youth in the control group continued to exhibit disruptive behaviour at the end of the study (Parliamentary Research Branch, 1995). The study concluded that “delivering intensive social development and crime prevention to children who are identified early on to be anti-social (i.e., troubled, aggressive and hyperactive) is demonstrably more effective” (Parliamentary Research Branch, 1995).

A typical CPSD program uses a combination of three main types of strategy: individual-level, family-oriented and community-level. A prototype of CPSD is the Head Start program. Head Start is a program that offers comprehensive educational, nutritional, health care and social services to economically and socially disadvantaged children. Specifically, the health component of the program includes health check-ups and dental check-ups, prenatal care, improved diet and nutritional supplements, while educational component includes preschool and intellectual stimulation program. The social services component provides works with parents and assists them in accessing community resources for low-income families ((John Howard Society of Alberta, 2005:13). It is evident that such a program is concerned with the personal development of participating youth and their families. Moreover, focus is mainly on eliminating the risk factors associated with offending and improving the social, economic and educational conditions of youth and their families.

Development of Risk Factors

The intellectual contributions of CPSD to crime prevention knowledge and practices paved the way for further development of approaches designed to discover and address youth involvement in gangs. Ross Hastings (1991) describes this process in his argument that contemporary research on crime prevention approaches “has provided a rallying point in the war against crime, and a guide for the design and implementation of initiatives aimed at reducing crime and improving our communities” (Hastings, 1991: 85). This rallying point has been instrumental in the emergence of the levels of risk factor to further enhance CPSD.

The risk factor explanation was imported into CPSD from the prevention theory of the medical field. Prevention theory as adopted in the health care field and its approach to diagnosis and treatment of diseases is based on the assumption that disease does not distribute randomly in the human population, but instead develops in response to exposure to certain agents or risks (Sharpe, 2002:36). Findings into this interaction show that adverse outcomes result from multiple and often overlapping risk factors and thus the accumulation of risk is strongly related to adverse and negative outcomes (Sharpe, 2002:36). For instance, medical research shows that a combination of risk agents such as age, race, family history, poor diet, stress, high alcohol intake, and an inactive physical lifestyle can lead to the increased possibility of hypertension and heart diseases (Farrington 2000:2). Further research into this theory of risk factors categorized them into different spheres of influence so as to develop approaches to address these risk factors. Additional research introduced the explanation that neutralizing agents could counter the effects of risk factors. For instance, introducing a healthy diet, regular exercise, and

medication could counter, reduce and prevent the occurrence or re-occurrence of hypertension and heart disease.

Social scientists have applied the model of risk factors to re-examine their conceptualization of the causes of crime and prevention responses. The knowledge of risk factors as it pertains to youth gangs has developed over the years. Major contributions to this body of knowledge include four longitudinal studies: the Denver Youth Study, the Rochester Youth Development, the Pittsburgh Youth Study and Seattle Social Development Project (Howell & Egley, 2005:334). These four research studies examined youth gangs in order to understand the interplay between risk factors and gang membership. Results from these studies reveal a link between various risk factor domains to the propensity for youth gang membership. For instance, the Denver study reported that youth with higher levels of commitment to delinquent peers, lower commitment to positive peers, higher levels of normlessness in the family, peer group and school context, more negative labelling by teachers, and higher tolerance for criminal activity on the part of their peers were more likely to engage in gang activity (Hill et al, 1999:304). Similarly, the Rochester Youth Development found that experiencing risk factors such as low school attachment, delinquent peers, and early sexual activity were a significant predictor of gang membership in youth in Rochester (Hill et al, 1999:302-302). The Pittsburgh Youth Study reported that violence, anti-social behaviour, defiance, serious offending, physical fighting, minor covert behaviour are all antecedents to gang membership (Howell, 2003:51). The Seattle Social Development Project concluded that, “youth join gangs as a result of [risk factors such as] antisocial influences in neighbourhoods, antisocial tendencies in families and peers, failure to perform well in

school, and early initiation of individuals problem behaviour” (Hill et al, 2001:3). This suggests that the determining factors for gang memberships lie in the youth’s family, peers, environmental and educational dynamic.

As it pertains to delinquency and criminality, risk factors are broadly defined as “those characteristics, variables or hazards that, if present for a given individual, make it more likely that this individual will develop a disorder [or a problematic behaviour]” (Pollard, Hawkins, & Arthur, 1999:145). These risk factors are categorized into five domains: community, family, school, peer, and individual. This categorization was inspired by developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) conceptualization of the different spheres of influence and socialization that affect a child’s behaviour (cited in Howell, 2008:103-104). Subsequent research and literature into these categorizations agree that these five domains of risk factors impact gang and criminal lifestyle (Howell and Egley, 2005:336). The ideology underpinning the risk models of delinquency and criminality assume that individuals in society are bound to certain pro-social attributes such as a particular set of standards, social norms, social relationships, lifestyle and attachment which function to divert individuals from delinquency and gang involvement (Vigil, 1988:429). Thus, pro-social attributes are believed to prevent delinquency and deviance from ever occurring. For instance, it is believed that if a youth has strong ties to his/her community, family and school, he/she is less likely to demonstrate anti-social behaviour (Vigil, 1988:429). However, in the situation whereby these pro-social attributes are lacking or non-existent, or when the youth is unable to gain equal access to resources that provide and instil these pro-social attributes, the areas of deficit become risk factors which then contribute to gang involvement. In essence, each

risk factor is comprised of a deficit or deprivation in the areas of the five domains; if unmet or not countered with positive reinforcements, it can lead to the possibility for youth to engage in gang activities and become involved in the Justice system. For example, if family risk factors are characterized by negative attributes such as poverty or single parent families, research suggest that youth are at a greater risk of becoming involved in gangs (Howell and Egley, 2005:339).

To further the knowledge on risk factors, researchers argue that the presence of these risk factors increase the possibility for gang involvement even before the youth reaches the typical age for joining a gang or engaging in delinquency (Howell and Egley, 2005:336). A study conducted on gang membership indicates that a stepping-stone pattern for gang membership begins as early as ages 3 – 4 years with the emergence of conduct problems, followed by elementary school failure at ages 6 – 12, delinquency onset by age 12, gang joining around age 13 – 15 and serious, violent and chronic delinquency from mid-adolescence onward (Hill et all, 1999:308).

As mentioned, risk factors span over five different domains: community, family, school, peer and individual risk factors. The first domain of risk factors is the community or neighbourhood risk factor. As stated by Howell and Egley, “as children grow older, they are more and more affected by their environment” (Howell and Egley, 2005:343). Howell and Egley suggest that social interaction is key to influencing the behaviour of youth. Positive or negative peers can influence one’s behaviour. The kind of influence experienced by youth often depends on the type of neighbourhood or community in which the youth is immersed. As shown through research, communities and neighbourhoods that exhibit risk factors that contribute to youth gang membership often

portray characteristics such as the availability of drugs, high drug use, the availability of firearms, high rates of deviance and arrest, neighbourhood disorganization, social degradation, etc (Howell & Egley, 2005:339). Communities such as these are often seen as criminogenic neighbourhoods and lack the necessary collective efficacy (informal control and social cohesion) which could contest the negative effects of concentrated disadvantage, thus leading to a situation where the youth become exposed to delinquency. According to Sharpe (2002), individuals who reside in socially disorganized low-income communities are more likely to become gang members, particularly if a gang exists in the neighbourhood and if incidences of violence and crime are high (Sharpe, 2002:37). Evidence on the effects of criminogenic neighbourhoods are supported in the Pittsburgh Youth Study, which examined neighbourhood differences and the prevalence of violent offenses. The study found that “boys living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods tended to advance further onto the pathway than boys living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods” (Howell, 2003:113). This further supports the notion that criminogenic neighbourhoods are a major risk factor for delinquency and gang membership.

The second domain focuses on risk factors arising from the family. The family structure plays an important role in the life of youth as it functions as an agent of socialization that impacts the life experiences, choices and social interactions of youth beginning from an early age. In addition, the family bears the responsibility of providing role models and moral directives for youth to follow. Once the family fails to exercise these responsibilities, youth are placed at a disadvantage and are vulnerable to all sorts of influences – particularly those of a deviant nature - in their immediate environment (Howell & Egley, 2005:339). Research suggests that families that display characteristics

such as poverty, single parent families, sibling deviance, child abuse, low parental education levels, parents with pro-violent attitudes, low parental supervision etc. provide a conducive environment for youth gang membership. Consequently, serious family problems greatly increase the risk of serious and violent delinquent involvement among adolescents (Howell, 2003:113). According to Sharpe (2002), when families lack organization or cohesiveness, or are unable to provide for the needs and emotional development of the individual, gangs become a surrogate family and fulfills the needs not being met by the family, such as activities, affection, loyalty, and a sense of belonging (Sharpe, 2002:37). Evidence of the effects of family risk factors is supported by findings from in the Rochester Youth Development Study. The Rochester Youth Development Study examined the impact of three major categories of family problems in relation to youth delinquency: highly dysfunctional families, child abuse, and family violence in relation to youth delinquency. Findings revealed that “the prevalence of serious and violent behaviour is three times higher among children experiencing five or more family-related risk factors than among children who experience none of the risk” (Howell, 2003:113). Continued findings revealed that “a history of childhood maltreatment [in the family] significantly increases the likelihood of self-reported juvenile involvement in moderately serious, serious and violent delinquency” (Howell, 2003:113). In relation to family violence, results from the study showed that “children who experience multiple forms of family violence in the home (child abuse, spousal abuse, and family conflict) were twice as likely to commit violent acts themselves” (Howell, 2003:114).

The third domain pertains to school risk factors. Aside from the family, another important agent of socialization is the school, given its capacity to influence social

conformity and morality. When the school system is not perceived as an educator, youth are often propelled to abandon school and are sometimes lured into the social activities dominant in their surroundings, which in most cases are gang and violent activities. Examples of school risk factors include poor performance or interest, low academic aspiration, low attachment to teachers, low degree of commitment to school, and, negative labelling by teachers (Howell & Egley, 2005:344). Several researchers have reviewed the connection between lack of attachment or commitment to school and delinquency. Maguin and Loeber in 1996 performed a longitudinal and experimental study on school and youth delinquency and found that poor academic performance is related to the prevalence and onset of delinquency and better academic standing is related to desistance from offending (Maguin & Loeber, 1996:246 – 247). They also concluded that the “odds of delinquent involvement are about twice as high among students with low academic performance as they are among those with high academic performance” (Maguin & Loeber, 1996:246 – 247; Howell, 2003:114).

The fourth domain involves peer group risk factors. In adolescent stages, studies have shown that peer interaction and acceptance is significant in shaping the adolescent’s sense of identity, sense of belonging, and personal interest (Howell & Egley, 2005:345). At this stage of social formation, intimate interaction and association with delinquent peers, especially peers who are gang members, is a strong predictor of future gang membership. In relating peer groups to delinquency, Howell (2003) states that “one of the most tabled and well-established findings in delinquency research is that the delinquent behaviour of an individual is positively related to the actual or perceived delinquent behaviour of that individual’s friend” (Howell, 2003:116). Essentially, youth who

associate with peers that engage in delinquency or other problematic behaviour are often engaged in delinquency as a form of peer pressure (Thornberry, 1998:105). Although the connection between delinquent peers and an individual's delinquency is grounded in empirical research, there is disagreement as to whether delinquent youth seek delinquent peers like themselves or whether youth become delinquent because they interact with delinquent peers. Findings into this dilemma indicate that both processes are at work. According to Thornberry et al (1994), "associating with delinquent peer's increases delinquency; in turn, involvement in delinquency leads to more frequent association with delinquent peers" (Thornberry et al, 1994:28). Similarly, Elliot and Menard (1996) concluded from a study that "the onset of exposure to delinquent friends typically precedes the onset of one's illegal behaviour" (Elliot & Menard, 1996:28). They describe the typical progression of how non-delinquent youth become delinquent as they engage with delinquent peers. The process initially starts with slight association with delinquent peers, which then triggers the onset of minor delinquency. It then follows with an increased association with more delinquent peers who engage in more serious delinquency and then the individual begins to adopt and internalize the group mentality, which leads to a more increased display of delinquency (Elliot & Menard, 1996:25-26). To reaffirm the sequential process Elliot and Menard describe, the study they conducted on this process yielded the report that a majority of the participants in the study self-reported that exposure to delinquent peers preceded their delinquency (Elliot & Menard, 1996:48). It is imperative to note that the process does not indicate that all youth who associate with delinquent peers will become delinquent. In fact, research shows that "aggressive children and aggressive youth are often central members of delinquency"

(Howell, 2003:116). Responses from youth in further research indicate that delinquent youth perceived their participation in gangs or deviant behaviour as a result of negative and anti-social influences (Howell, 2003:116).

The fifth domain focuses on individual risk factors. Studies have identified more risk factors for gang membership in the individual domain than in any other domain (Howell & Egley, 2005:344). This implies that, although the risk factors in other domains often lead to gang membership, it is the lifestyle of the youth that plays a major role in propelling them into gangs. According to Esbensen et al (2009), those individuals holding favourable beliefs or attitudes towards deviant behaviour are more likely to engage in delinquency (Esbensen et al, 2009:311-312). Furthermore, they conclude that individuals who have a prior record of delinquency and an offending history are most at risk of delinquency and gang membership (Esbensen et al, 2009:312). Other risk factors associated with the individual could include drug use, early involvement in delinquency, disorderly conduct, and rejection of conventional beliefs (Howell & Egley 2005:445). In addition, other research indicates that “students are impulsive, are weakly attached to their school, have little commitment to achieving educational goals, and whose moral beliefs in the validity of conventional rules for behaviour are weak are more likely to engage in crime than those who do not possess these characteristics” (Welsh & Farrington, 2007c: 133; Gottfredson, et al, 2002:149).

Studies into the link or association between the risk factors and delinquency do not contend that risk factors are the only determinant for delinquency. Social scientists widely recognize that most problem behaviour have multiple determinants, meaning that most problems originate from various causal factors (Howell, 2003:104). There can be

many explanations to delinquency and the risk factor explanation only contribute a different dimension to the understanding of delinquency because no explanation offers an absolute or complete picture of why delinquency occurs. According to Durlak (1998), “rather than searching for a single explanation for a particular negative outcome, it is deemed more helpful to identify multiple factors influencing adjustment and understand the different negative trajectories that can occur” (Durlak, 1998:512).

Another important argument is that the mere presence of a couple of risk factors does not indicate the automatic involvement of youth in gangs. The culminations of these factors have been studied and documented by past research efforts in order to explain youth gang membership. Research conducted by Esbensen et al (2009) suggests that “the exposure to multiple risk factors and risks in multiple domains may increase the chances of an individual participating in delinquent behaviour beyond that of an isolated risk factor” (Esbensen et al, 2009:311-312). Similarly, the numbers of risk factors to which youth are exposed is strongly associated with a greater likelihood of decreased intellectual and social competence which leads to delinquency (Howell & Egley, 2005:336). In other words, risk factors have a cumulative effect and the greater the evidence of multiple risk factors in multiple domains experienced by the youth, the more the likelihood for gang involvement (Howell & Egley, 2005:336). For example, Howell and Egley (2005) found that, “youth in Seattle possessing seven or more risk factors were 13 times more likely to join a gang than were children with no risk factor indicators or only one risk factor indicator” (Howell & Egley, 2005:336). Furthermore, extant research indicates that “cumulative risk factors are not only related to the number of factors present, but also to the number of risk factors in each domain, as well as the number of

domains in which risk factors exist” (Esbensen et al, 2009:313). Whether there is a tipping point at which the number of risk factors results in certain kinds of delinquency, however is unclear (Esbensen et al, 2009:313).

With the extensive knowledge on the risk factors that influence youth participation in gangs, it was imperative to identify and implement positive influences to counter the effects and reduce the impact of risk factors on the life experiences of youth. Research into risk factors has also identified protective factors. Protective factors according to Pollard et al (1999) “are those factors that mediate or moderate the effect of exposure to risk factors, resulting in reduced incidents of the problem behaviour” (Pollard et al, 1999:145). In essence, they are a counterbalance to the effect of risk factors.

According to Pollard et al (1999), “protective factors might contribute to resilience either by exerting positive effects in direct opposition to negative effects of risk factors or by buffering individuals against the negative effects” (Pollard et al, 1999:147).

Interestingly, like risk factors, protective factors have a cumulative effect in the sense that the more a youth is exposed to protective factors in each domain, the less likely they are to engage in gang activities and delinquency. In relating protective factors to risk factors, there is a general consensus that protective factors may interact with risk factors to change or moderate the predictive relationship between risk factors and outcomes (Pollard et al, 1999:146). Furthermore, research demonstrates that problem behaviour is likely to occur when individuals experience a preponderance of risk factors over protective factors in major developmental domains (Howell & Egley, 2005:335).

Kirby and Fraser (1997) further conceptualize protective factors in three ways. First, protective factors serve to buffer risk factors, providing a cushion against negative

effects (cited in Howell, 2003:105-106). This category is often achieved through the implementation of social support systems such as drug treatment interventions, therapy, counselling etc. Second, protective factors serve to interrupt the causal processes through which risk factors operate. For example, “an intervention that reduces family conflict may interrupt a chain of risk connecting the family environment with negative peer afflictions and drug use” (Howell, 2003:05-106). Third, protective factors may operate by preventing the initial occurrence of a risk factor such as child abuse, association with delinquent peers, substance abuse, gang membership etc (Howell, 2003:105-106). Interventions utilizing this method will focus on encouraging positive temperamental characteristics such as school engagement, engagement in pro-social activities etc.

Protective factors have been identified in similar domains as risk factors – community, family, school, peer and domain. The community protective factors include an: increase in community ties and bonds, and reduction in the opportunities for antisocial activities in the neighbourhood. Family domain is characterized by adequate parental practice, stronger family ties, positive support within the family, family stability, and consistent disciplinary methods. The school protective factors include the increased commitment to school, availability of extra curricular activities, positive and constructive feedback from teachers and peers. The peer protective factors include association with pro-social peers, etc. The individual factor consists of social skills, responsiveness, emotional stability, positive sense of self, problem solving skills, resilience etc (Hill et al, 1999:314).

Although research on protective factors is limited, researchers suggest that the understanding of protective factors aids in developing and implementing effective

strategies to reduce the negative effects associated with risk factors. Most important is the understanding that protective factors will assist youth in forming resiliency and methods to achieve pro-social standards against risk factors.

Parameters of Risk Society

With the expanding knowledge on risk factors and the possibility of analytically engaging in dimensions of prevention, many policy makers, researchers and practitioners have embraced the CPSD explanations of delinquency. However, alongside CPSD, the risk-based prevention response has also emerged. As previously mentioned, this approach is associated with methods designed to manage and control risk factors rather than eliminating them. Particularly, it engages in the use of statistical and scientific correlations in the management of risk factors and criminal individuals. Over the last 15 years, this managerial approach to risk factors has increasingly become the dominant discourse in prevention and has exerted powerful influence over policy and preventive practices over the last century (O'Mahony 2009:1). The attraction to this approach undoubtedly gained significant ground partially as a result of the new form of risk governmentality and the emergence of a "risk society" that has plagued the twenty-first century.

The idea of a "risk society" can be conceptualized as a phenomenon of the 21st century and is comprised of a climate of risk whereby social entities are very sensitive to the cluster of perceived risk originating from the self, others and the broader culture (Elliot, 2002:293). This emerging society of increased risk consciousness reflective of the reality that risk in the 21st century is marked with a heightened perception and

management of risk, particularly in western societies. Elliot (2002) notes that “the contemporary risk climate is one of proliferation, multiplication, specialism, counterfactual guess-work, and, above all, anxiety (Elloit, 2002: 294). Beck, a major contributor to the understanding of the sociological analysis of risk, argues that contemporary western society is characterised by deep anxiety over the perceived omnipresence of risk (Beck, 1992: 52). In agreement, Giddens (1991) argues that in late modernity, thinking in terms of risk and risk assessment is more or less an ever-present exercise (Giddens, 1991:124). In essence, the idea of risk has increasingly become central to the way the society and its entities are organized.

The rise of risk society, Beck argues, is bound up with the new electronic global economy – a world in which we live on the edge of high technological innovation and scientific development, but where no one fully understands the potential global risks and dangers we face (Beck as cited in Elliot, 2002:294). In addition, Anderson and Brown argue that the increasing rise of risk in the 21st century is as a result of the fixation on uncertainty that pervades contemporary social life. It is also a result of the possibility to conceptualize and apply risk to a broad range of sociological issues (Anderson and Brown, 2010: 544). Additionally, Elliot argues that “modernity is a world that introduces global risk parameters that previous generations have not had to face” (Elliot, 2000:295).

According to Ekberg (2007), contemporary risk can be conceptualized into six unique parameters. It is to be noted that these parameters are not presented to engage in a comprehensive and extensive discussion of the nature of the risk society as this is beyond the purview of this thesis; they are however presented to provide a framework through which the risk phenomena can be examined in a concise manner. The first parameter

includes the omnipresence of risk and the emergence of a collective consciousness. This parameter is characterized by the increased awareness of risk, perceived uncertainties, contingency and insecurity and an increased attempt to colonize and control the near and the distant future that has plagued the social realm (Ekberg, 2007:345). Such awareness of risk has in turn engendered connectivity between various spheres of the social in such a way that “risk is the new collective bond holding communities together as imaginary risk communities” (Ekberg, 2007: 346).

The second parameter is the changing understanding of risk. As mentioned previously, the nature of risk as recognized today varies significantly from risk as perceived in the past. Risk theorists conceptualize this distinction as one between the realist and social constructivist epistemologies of risk; the natural risk of pre-modernity and the manufactured risk of post-modernity. Risk in the pre-modernity era is configured as actual risk arising from various spheres in the social realm such as disease epidemics, flood, famine etc (Benton, 2003:36). As such, thoughts on risk or risk aversive strategies were not employed until an actual occurrence of risk. In contrast, risk as described in the post modernity era is characterized by fabricated and anticipated risk that may or may not occur (Benton, 2003:36-37). The changing understanding of risk is conceptualized as:

(T)he shift in emphasis from natural to technological risk, the shift from a realist to a social constructivist perspective of risk, the progression from invisible to visible to virtual risk and finally the change in the spatial, temporal and demographic distribution of risk, giving rise to a new category of borderless risk (Ekberg, 2007: 347).

The proliferation of risk definitions is the third parameter through which the emergence of risk in contemporary society can be understood. Risk according to Ekberg is an elusive concept to define because risk is often categorized into varying elements

which sometimes differ from one another (Ekberg, 2007: 347). As a result, there is a lack of agreement on what can be constituted as risk. Hence, risk has been subjected to multiple interpretations and competing definitions. Risk is regarded more often than not in relation to the prediction of future adverse and undesirable occurrences (Ekberg, 2007: 354).

Ekberg's fourth conceptualization is the reflexive orientation to risk. The idea of reflexivity is particular to modern society and is contrasted with the rigidity of traditional societies. Reflexivity according to Giddens (1990) is defined as the "constant appropriation of new knowledge as the basis for social organization and self-identity" (Giddens, 1990: 88). This implies that in the modern state, individuals, institutions and corporations are marked by a level of liquidity and flexibility, and can easily adapt to changes. Pertaining to the emerging knowledge of risk, such malleability has led to a situation where adjustments have been made to various areas of society to adopt knowledge of risk and risk-based practices.

The fifth parameter emphasizes that the monopoly over knowledge and practices has disappeared. This disappearance stems from the mistrust of traditional expert and institutions. Beck especially argues that "contemporary western societies are characterized by a distrust of modern institutions' and experts' ability to manage risk" (Beck, 1992:19). Like Beck, Giddens argues that "the image of science as omniscient and infallible has been shaken and science has lost a good deal of the aura of authority it once had" (Giddens, 1996:42). In addition, Ekberg asserts that the risk society has engendered a situation "whereby the opinion of experts is no longer considered the only legitimate pathway to knowledge and truth, and whereby the lack of consensus among experts

results in a more sceptical attitude towards truth claims” (Ekberg, 2007: 357). As a result of this mistrust, society has experienced the formation of various actors: local, global private and public, oriented around the issue of risk; each of whom conceptualize varying aspects of risk society and promote an awareness of risk.

The last parameter is the politics of risk. In the face of manufactured and perceived risk, the political arena has become a place for debating or implementing policies and strategies oriented towards the prevention or resolution of risk. Giddens labels the nature of contemporary politics as ‘life politics’. He asserts that we have moved from an emancipatory politics to a life politics. By life politics, he means “a politics of lifestyle which concerns how, both as individuals and collectively, we live in a world where what used to be fixed either by nature or tradition is now subject to human decisions” (Giddens, 1994:15).

The pervasiveness of risk has resulted in four major assumptions: (1) risks are socially unlimited in scope - everyone potentially is at risk; (2) risk may be minimized, but not eliminated; (3) risk has to be measured in terms of probability; and (4) risks are irreversible (Benton, 2003:37). These assumptions have resulted in constant preoccupations geared towards a need to discipline and control risk in such a way that it does not threaten the safety of social life. As a result, risk management is viewed as the most effective way to minimize and contain risk. From a sociological perspective, risk management is an approach used to “examine the relation between a person’s social experiences, biography, identity and their conception of risk” (Taylor-Gooby and Zinn, 2006: 3) so as to provide a reliable compass for the prevention of future risk. Elloit (2002) argues that “risk-managing and risk-monitoring increasingly influences both the

constitution and calculation of social action (Elloit, 2002:299). Essentially, risk management is the method employed to advance the possibility of predicting, evaluating and controlling the consequences of risk. The governance of risk involves the processes of risk screening, risk assessment, risk profiling, regulation of risk and the reduction of risk. These processes serve the purpose of ensuring that risk is contained in such a manner that society remains safe and the source or agents of the risk become minimized.

Nature of Risk-Based Prevention

Within the practices of the risk-based prevention, it is important to note that significant attention is focused on the aforementioned risk factors; however, developmental responses are configured into practices that manage risk. More importantly, risk-based prevention significantly manages risk through self-governance, that is targeting individuals in attempts to control crime rather than engaging the broader social and structural risk factors associated with persistent offending. Hence, more focus is particularly centered on the behavioural characteristics (proximal causes) rather than on socially ingrained problems (distal causes). For instance, risk-based prevention focuses on anti-social behaviour as a target of gang prevention and neglects the history of perpetual parental abuse in preventative efforts on the city or structural factors.

Within the risk-prevention approach, crime has been re-problematized and reconfigured. Crime is conceptualized as “a risk posed by the individuals themselves when they cannot adequately manage their life within the community, and the risk these individuals pose to the community on account of their failure to govern themselves” (Rose, 1996:349). Offenders or delinquents are therefore portrayed as those who require

entrepreneurial skills to actualize themselves in a competitive society (Rose, 2000: 322). By implication, crime and those who engage in criminal activities are increasingly perceived as a risk to be calculated and managed (O'Malley, 1996:190). Hence, the means to crime control is significantly associated with the governance or control of individuals in order to minimize the harm and losses generated rather than eliminating harm or enabling social reforms as exercised by CPSD.

In addition, the use of socio-developmental measures to identify and address social causes of crime has been marginalized in the risk-based prevention. Rather, there is a significant focus on the use of scientific and statistical measures to identify and regulate risk factors. According to O'Malley, the emerging risk technique in crime control tends to understand risk factors through use of statistical methods to identify correlations between pre-existing risk conditions, criminal actions and control strategies (O'Malley, 2010:2). In agreement, Feely and Simon (1992) indicate that contemporary crime control is:

Markedly less concerned with responsibility, fault, moral sensibility, diagnosis, or intervention and treatment of the individual offender. Rather, it is concerned with techniques to identify, classify, and manage.. The task is managerial not transformative . . . It seeks to regulate levels of deviance, not intervene or respond to individual deviants or social malformations (Feely and Simon, 1992:452).

Essentially, they suggest that the character of the new crime prevention strategies is one which resembles managerial and regulatory science, and rather than a developmental approach which addressed social ills.

Furthermore, the risk factor prevention involves “the science of explaining social causes of crime through actuarial calculations in which potential offenders are refigured as clusters of risk factors” (McCallum & Laurence, 2007:413). In essence, the risk factor

prevention functions to establish a methodological calculation and assessment of risk to identify at-risk individuals. This is achieved through risk assessment and calculation. Risk assessment involves a diagnostic tool used to identify at-risk youth, measure potential risk, establish risk categories (low risk, medium risk and high risk), allocate youth into risk categories and legitimize appropriate risk prevention programs (McCallum & Laurence, 2007:413). Essentially, the assessment is designed to measure the level of risk an individual possesses in order to determine the type of interventions appropriate to curtail further risk. This practice involves utilizing quantitative and positivistic methods similar to those of the natural sciences. Often, these assessments are formatted with the Likert-scale (closed) response, or surveys (Haines & Case, 2008:7). Typically, each youth is scored according to the number of risk factors they possess and interventions are targeted at youth whose risk scores exceed a certain criterion value (Farrington, 2000: 10). According to Case (2007), risk assessment is applauded for providing detailed, structured, and reliable information to guide interventions and justify professional decision-making (Case, 2007: 95). Interestingly, through such methods, prevention initiatives utilizing the risk factor calculation have become preoccupied with only addressing youth who pose the greatest level of risk on the scale.

Within the risk-based prevention, civil society has increasingly become an important site for crime control. This renders the opportunity to govern the lives of individuals at every stage and facet of life in the community. Moreover, it pushes the onus away from centralized and traditional agents of crime control and bestows responsibility on social and community agents to govern individuals and crime in their surroundings. In this regard, the roles of experts have been re-formulated in terms of risk

and risk management. Experts have been allocated accountability not so much for ensuring wellbeing and reform of social conditions causing crime, but rather, for risk minimization through risk identification, risk assessment, and risk management. In addition, the responsibility of professional practitioners is now centered on the calculation of risk in a manner that would enable them to “engage, monitor and manage the risk of their clients in light of the imperative need to reduce the risk they may pose to others” (Rose, 1996:349).

As mentioned, the increased emphasis on risk factors has ushered a new prevention paradigm which predominately focuses on managing causes of crime rather than eliminating them. The nature of the current prevention method is one that manages risk in the various domains and implements interventions and programs to empower individuals to manage their own risk. By implication, universal provisions for social services have been undermined in favour of more narrowly targeted interventions aimed at individuals, families and communities (Stenson and Watt, 1999:190; O’Malley 1999b: 184). In agreement, Case (2007) argues that risk-focused crime prevention offers an alternative to more social responses to youth offense by re-orientating youth justice and crime prevention towards a focus on risk management (Case, 2007: 92). This is exemplified in the nature and design of prevention interventions. For example, individual-based preventive programs have been developed to target risk factors that are specific to individuals. These programs deliver various forms of intellectual enrichment and child skills training to teach at-risk children social and emotional competence, cognitive skills, anger management, effective problem-solving skills, etc (Welsh & Farrington, 2007:7).

At the family level, interventions have been designed to target risks arising from the family, such as poor parental supervision, inconsistent and/or harsh discipline, poor child rearing, delinquent parents or siblings etc. Family-based interventions are sometimes delivered in two streams: psychological interventions and public health interventions. Psychological interventions consist of programs such as parent management training, functional family therapy and family preservation (Welsh & Farrington 2007:130). These programs are designed to offer child-rearing skills and methods to parents in order to equip them with the skills needed to alter and positively shape their child's behaviour at home. Public health interventions mainly provide general parent education, which is designed to provide advice and guidance to parents on proper parenting skills and child rearing techniques. Evidence supporting this intervention style indicates that general parent education and parent management training are effective in preventing delinquency and later criminal offending (Welsh & Farrington, 2007:130).

The environmental-level intervention is a mix between peer, school, and community programs. The peer-based approach presently lacks rigorous evidence because few evaluations have been conducted in this area. However, after school and community-based programs are believed to hold promise as an effective approach in preventing delinquency (Welsh & Farrington, 2007:8). Evidence-based reviews into prevention programs in schools identify four programs that are effective in preventing delinquency: school and discipline management, classroom or instructional management, reorganization of grades or classes and self-control or social competency program. Each program helps increase academic aspiration and commitment (Welsh & Farrington,

2007:130; Gottfredson, Wilson & Najaka, 2002:149). In addition, after-school initiatives such as recreational clubs, homework clubs, and tutoring services, are viewed as effective in providing ways of controlling school risk factors because these initiatives preoccupy youth and leaves no room for idleness (Welsh & Farrington 2007:134).

Community-based interventions are “defined as actions intended to change the social conditions that are believed to sustain crime in residential communities” (Welsh & Farrington, 2007:134). Local social institutions such as youth clubs, churches, community centres, and rotary clubs are at the forefront of delivering community-based interventions. Reviews on the effectiveness of these interventions indicate that community-based mentoring programs are promising models for reducing criminal engagement in high-risk youth and in high crime communities (Welsh & Farrington, 2007:134). Professional and non-professional adults who spend time tutoring, coaching, and being exemplary role models for youth who are at risk usually deliver community-based mentoring. Their role contributes towards reducing incidences of delinquent behaviour, dropping out of school, victimization, family violence, peer pressure or other social problems.

In sum, while CPSD engages in socio-developmental rehabilitation and reform, risk-based prevention engages in risk management (Braithwaite, 2000:222; Rose, 2000: 324). Risk as a contemporary tool for crime prevention offers a practical mechanism through which individuals and their social reality can be governed and controlled in order to minimize potential risk.

Rise and Rational of Risk-Based Prevention

As previously mentioned, the emergence of risk society and risk management has influenced recent crime prevention research and analysis and has resulted in increased attention to risk-based prevention. The contemporaneous expansion of the risk-focused and managerial approach to youth gang prevention can be attributed to various factors.

The first justification stems from the pressure to effectively and accurately identifies sections of the population most at-risk of offending, and/or leading a criminal lifestyle or becoming long-term or career criminals. The knowledge about long-term or career criminals emerged in the 1970's and 1980's during the period of developmental criminology, an approach which sought to examine human experiences and the progression to criminality throughout their life span. This perspective conceptualizes social experiences as a life course structured by a web of interlocking trajectories. These trajectories are understood in a way that positive social experience leads to resiliency while negative social experiences dictate future and perpetual delinquency (Farrington, 2000:2). As a result of such knowledge, organized attempts to accurately predict and identify those at-risk of offending or leading a criminal lifestyle gained heightened recognition thereby justifying the methodology of the risk-based prevention. Through the risk-based approach, there appears to be a greater possibility of utilizing scientific and statistical mechanisms to adequately identify, record, and effectively manage negative social trajectories that lead to criminality. As explained by Farrington (2000), the knowledge on career criminals encouraged scholars and practitioners to search for risk and protective factors that could be changed by interventions, and hence encouraged the adoption of risk-based prevention (Farrington, 2000:2-3).

One of the defining features of contemporary youth justice is its emphasis upon ‘evidence’ in the sense that crime prevention practices must be ‘evidence based’ and policies must be ‘evidence-led’ (Bateman and Pitts, 2005: 248). This relentless quest for evidence-led approaches provides another justification for the expansion of the risk approach to crime prevention. Risk-based crime prevention is premised on the assumption that the approach is hinged on evidence compiled from cross-national research and practice in several different countries, and as such carries significant relevance. Moreover, in the global sphere of criminology, there exist a robust body of empirical research emphasizing risk management as the new strategy to crime prevention. Multivariate statistical techniques and multiple cohorts’ longitudinal research conducted internationally have also preached the validity of the risk approach. As Haines and Case enthuse that:

A plethora of (typically quantitative) empirical research studies in the Western world have identified a range of risk factors for youth offending. Identified risk factors from UK longitudinal studies of delinquency have been consistent with longitudinal surveys in North America, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand as well as with British cross-sectional surveys (Haines and Case, 2008:6).

In agreement, Farrington alludes to the globalization of risk knowledge, which he describes as the increasing interest in cross-national comparative studies and the cross-fertilization between scholars from different countries, in particular western industrialized countries about risk-based approaches (Farrington, 2000:3). These countries include Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden and the Netherlands (Farrington, 2000:3). Such strong academic and global backing appears to give significant confidence and validity to the approach. The enthusiasm with which this approach has been embraced globally has

prompted policy makers, social researchers, and practitioners to accept it as a promising and effective solution to the problem of youth gangs and other social ills.

The risk-based prevention approach has become increasingly influential in public policy and prevention practices due to the shift in ideologies. The ideological shift is characterized by the perception that preventive approaches should focus on instilling responsibility in the lives of young people in the face of uncontrollable internal and external influences that lead to criminality (Case 2006: 172-173). The shift is characterized by the assumption that youth are rational and fully responsible for their action. Through this lens, the perception that young delinquents engage in criminality as a result of social needs has been replaced by the concept that young delinquents are unwilling to cope and manage risk conditions that arise from their social needs (Muncie et al, 2002: 3). Moreover, the public is presented as the most vulnerable and at risk both from young people's rational and calculating choices to offend and their inability to resist those influences that predetermine their offending (Case, 2006:173). Such rationales have justified the implementation of risk-based interventions designed to ensure that individuals, not the state or external entities, are responsible for governing their own risk.

The obsession with surveillance and the governance of potential threats in risk society provides another support for risk-based intervention. The practice of constant surveillance is what Tickner et al (2005) term as "the precautionary principle". This principle justifies the administration of risk intervention on the bases of the "potential" of criminal engagement rather than an actual possibility of criminal engagement (Tickner et al 2005: 2). Moreover, it allows for the constant need to develop intelligence on potential

risk. In relating this principle to crime prevention, risk-based prevention represents a surveillance mechanism through which potential threats can be identified and managed. Goldson (2000) notes that surveillance in the risk approach is achieved by assessing and stigmatizing a section of youth population as failing, helpless, hopeless and capable of engaging in deviance in the near future if not managed. This is followed by qualifying them for interventions regardless of whether they have ever actually offended, hence subverting due process and the tenet of applying intervention where there is a real need (Goldson, 2000).

Another justification is that the risk-based prevention is cost-effective in comparison to the tremendous sums of money previously spent on social prevention approaches. Research into this perspective have concluded that the identification and management of risk factors affords the government a practical, cost-effective and common sense means of tackling adolescent problem behaviour that can be simultaneously presented as welfare-oriented and responsive to public concern (Case 2006: 174).

Abandonment of CPSD

It is undeniable that the emergence of a risk society and risk-based methodologies has influenced criminological undertakings in relation to crime prevention. Some academics, practitioners and politicians have become fixated on the possibility of risk-based prevention as a suitable method to addressing risk factors. In turn, scholars such as Rose 1996; O'Malley 1992; Feeley and Simon 1992, 1994; Donzelot 1991) have purported that this has led to a situation where the socio-developmental approaches of

CPSD have declined in prevention practices. As illustrated by McCallum and Laurence (2007), there is evidence that risk management, involving programs addressing criminogenic needs or risk factors have led to a reduction of investments in interventions designed to change the life course of vulnerable groups (McCallum & Laurence, 2007:413). Moreover, it is stipulated that the reduced emphasis on CPSD has become increasingly popular because “it is believed that risk-based penal administration increases the efficacy of crime prevention because changing people is difficult and expensive” (McCallum & Laurence, 2007:413). Rose (2000) also argues that “current control practices manifest ... the abandonment of some old themes, the maintenance of others, the introduction of some new elements, and a shift in the role and functioning of others” (Rose, 2000: 322).

A series of explanations has emerged to rationalize the seeming marginalization of social development and the acceptance of risk-based prevention. One rationale is based on the perspective that CPSD is counterproductive – creating dependency among its recipients and discouraging self-reliance and individual enterprise and responsibility (O’Malley, 2010: 23). This critique originates from the reality that crime prevention interventions proposed by CPSD are geared towards the provisions of collective social services and remedies, which places an onus on the government and not the individual. As a result, interventions were perceived to be located within the confines of centralized states and the economic system. Critics argued that interventions underpinned by CPSD create significant stress on the economy and the government. Moreover, it was perceived that this onus engendered problems of state overload and overreach, and by implication, fosters a dependency that thwarts an individual’s responsibilities to their government and

social economy (Rose, 1996:51; O'Malley, 1999:184; Walter, 2000:154). Through such critiques arose many prevention strategies geared towards holding individuals, and not the state, responsible for their shortcomings and criminal tendencies.

Additional critique for the social development model largely stemmed from the difficulties associated with measuring whether this form of crime prevention has had any effect on police-reported crime rates over a period of time. For the most part, this is due to fact that benefits of CPSD require a long span of time (Public Safety Canada, 2002:1). Moreover, there has been very little evaluation research published on the effectiveness of CPSD programs in Canada and little could be derived to ensure political accountability to the public. More so, it is claimed that evaluation of CPSD interventions rarely produced the kinds of effects demanded (O'Malley, 2000:159). Therefore, due to the lack of convincing evidence on the effectiveness of CPSD programs, it was however more conceivable that increased spending on crime prevention programs which implement the risk factor prevention may produce scientific and measureable results which could be realized in a short time span.

Another criticism stems from the political agenda to implement measures that will facilitate the governance and surveillance of "risky" individuals. On one hand, CPSD increasing focuses on eliminating the risk factors associate with persistent offending and assisting criminal individuals in becoming law-abiding citizens. Whereas, risk-based prevention legitimates continued intervention and monitoring of risk since its focus on managing at-risk populations or the "dangerous class" is pursued with the understanding that risks are irreversible. As supported by Haines and Case (2008), "risk may be

understood as a governmental strategy of regulatory power” (Haines and Case, 2008:12) where the emphasis is on controlling individuals.

Finally, it is noted that the emerging demands for increased community participation and decentralization is believed to have fueled the decline of CPSD. Such demands sought solutions which changed the governance of prevention to reflect market-like conditions and processes including privatization of the state sector, marketization of criminal justice systems, and devolution of responsibility for self governing to individuals, families and the local level (O’Malley 2000, 159; Rose 1996:327). These changes resulted in a situation where CPSD became significantly downgraded to be no more than one of a number of subordinate practices given that new social entities did not have the organizational capability to deliver CPSD interventions.

The climate of these criticisms is understood to have paved the way for the shift from social forms of prevention to risk management prevention measures. This alleged shift has been portrayed to include in the following changes in prevention practices:

- A. A move from socially-oriented and collectively-based measures aimed at addressing risk factors to methods of risk management and actuarial measures aimed at managing risk factors;
- B. A redefinition in the understanding of crime which is characterized by the shift from crime as social problems and pathologies that require social intervention that includes various forms of social services, social insurance and social security to a perspective that crime is a risk posed by the rational actors who do not adequately manage or govern their life within the community, and thus need to be governed through risk management;
- C. The nature of interventions have shifted from a centralized social form of prevention and socialized techniques to a decentralized and disciplinary form, which inculcate responsibility on individuals;

- D. Although focus remains on the risk factors associated with persistent offending, the focus however differs. The focus has shifted from eliminating risk factors and the broader social and structural influences related to criminality to managing risk factor and narrowly targeting and blaming the individual; and
- E. The language of prevention has also diverted from social development discuss such as “enhance”, “improve”, “eliminate” to discourse about “prudence”, “responsibility”, and “entrepreneurism”.

Critique/Limitations of Risk-Based Prevention

Researches revealing the alleged decline in social approaches to crime prevention increasingly indicate that risk-based interventions are in many ways an obstacle to a fuller understanding of, and more effective response to, youth crime (O’Mahony 2009:

1). In agreement, Haines and Case (2008), describe the risk factor model as:

Limited due to a plethora of issues concerning, for example, the definition and measurement of ‘risk’, interpretation of causality, implementation of risk-focused programmes and evaluation of ‘what works’ in youth crime prevention. In other words, a raft of Government initiatives and programmes has been explicitly predicated on the RFPP [risk factor prevention paradigm] but, as yet, the evidence of their effectiveness is both limited and controversial. (Haines & Case, 2008:6-7)

The first area of limitation as noted by Haines and Case (2008), concerns the portrayal of risk and protective factors. Proponents of the risk-based prevention portray risk and protective factors as mutually exclusive. This implies that risk-based prevention, because of its actuarial nature, describes various protective factors as the opposite of particular risk factors. This depiction has prompted many criticisms. Research on this phenomenon highlights that protective factors may in practice have non-linear relationships (Haines & Case, 2008:7). For example, high income is not necessarily a

protective factor against low income or employment. There are possibilities that access to affordable housing or subsidized education might serve as a significant protective factor against low income. Hence, given that risk-based interventions are often structured to see risk and protective factors as dichotomous, these interventions often lack the capacity to effectively address the social causes of crime in an effective manner.

An additional limitation of the risk factor paradigm is related to the measurement of risk. As mentioned, risk-based prevention is underpinned by the perspective that social phenomena such as the causes of risk can be measured and assessed using quantitative and scientific methods. Haines & Case (2008) explain that these methods are inherently problematic because the factors leading to criminality are complicated social entities that are difficult to identify and measure, (8). Moreover, the linkage of risk factors to social trajectories is empirically difficult. Such criticisms purports that statistical calculations of risk lead to the transformation of diverse psychological, emotional, social, structural factors into statistical values. Ultimately, statistical approaches oversimplify and undermine complex social processes that result in delinquency by reducing them to simple processes identifiable by quantitative indicators. In agreement, other critics have indicated that risk-based prevention raises serious issues, mainly due to its overwhelming reliance on quantitative, 'objective' measures of risk in the ultimate (positivist) pursuit of 'causes' and 'predictors' of youth crime, at the expense of qualitative measures elicited from young people themselves (Presdee, 2004: 275).

Another critique indicates that risk prevention approaches appear to stigmatize individuals who experience risk as future criminals. The underlining framework of the risk-based prevention is that "where risk cluster together, there is a probability of later

offending and thus intervention is needed to contain the risk (France and Utting, 2005:78). By administering crime preventive interventions to youth based on the probability of their offending and before they engage in crime stigmatizes them as “potential criminals” to be feared and excluded from the society. According to O’Malley (2004), by centralizing insecurity and threat, the governmental grid of risk is seen to work through negation: certain persons are defined primarily in terms of their purely negative and dangerous status as threats to others (victims), and accordingly are merely neutralized and segregated in new gulags of incapacitation (O’Malley, 2004: 143). In essence, risk-based interventions are exclusionary. Moreover, others critics have commented that the most worrisome developments with interventions targeting youth delinquency based on statistical ‘objective’ measures of risk are their obsessions with categorizing and stigmatizing individuals with no criminal record as ‘at-risk’ groups or ‘potential criminals’ (Case, 2006: 172-173). In essence practices of stigmatizing and labelling individuals can result in perpetuating criminality through self-fulfilling prophecies. Also, it can serve to legitimize continued and unwarranted control of individuals who might never offend.

Although there is a perception that the technique of risk assessment may be wholly appropriate for assessing current social needs that might pose a risk, research shows that such an approach is fraught with statistical and ethical difficulties (France and Utting, 2005:81). The difficulty with risk assessment stems from the fact that it employs a collective measurement for different individuals. Such techniques create room for errors to the extent that some individuals can get ‘lost in the statistical shuffle’. Essentially, this implies that as a result of the one-size-fits-all measure of risk assessment, it is possible

that some individuals may slip through the net as a ‘false negative’ - not considered to be at-risk when they actually are. In contrast, ‘false positive’ can also be produced in the sense that some individuals may be identified as at-risk and may qualify for interventions when in actual fact they are not at risk (Farrington, 2000:11; Kemshall, 2003). This flaw leads to a situation where some individuals are denied appropriate interventions because of the margin of error. In sum, Haines & Case (2008) conclude that the positivist methodologies employed by risk assessments are inappropriate, invalid and an overly rigid means of investigating social behaviour by human beings (Haines & Case, 2008:7).

Pertaining to crime reduction, a pivotal criticism is that through its management practice, risk-based prevention measures do not seek to eliminate the broader social and structural causes of risk. Farrington (2007) highlights this criticism in his comment that as a result of the increased focus on risk, little attempt has been made to broaden the traditional focus on biological, individual, familiar, peer, school, neighbourhood and situational factors with deeper consideration of micro, structural and political factors (Farrington, 2007). Supporting this perspective are other studies which suggest that universal provisions of social services as an essential element of crime prevention have been undermined in favour of more narrowly targeted interventions (Stenson and Watt, 1999:190; O’Malley 1999:184). Moreover, “more holistic approaches to youth crime prevention are being undermined by short-term political imperatives, such that too much attention and resources are focused on reinventing the ‘rickety wheels of causality’, rather than addressing more profound and costly (economical, political) issues” (Haines & Case, 2008:9). In addition, Annison (2005) cautions that “while risk assessment tools have provided a structured approach to risk assessment of young people who offend, the

wider social, cultural and political context also needs to be considered” (Annison, 2005: 119). Drawing upon these perspectives, it is appropriate to imply that risk-based prevention practices have significantly neglected social and structural influences and as a result, fail to adequately address them. In a more practical illustration, informing youth how to cope with anger management does little to solve a longstanding issue of parental neglect or family abuse. Subsequently, youth participating in risk-informed interventions might be equipped to deal with proximal causes of delinquency, but ill-equipped with cope to distal causes. It can be argued therefore, that the measures employed by risk management only bandage the causes of crime rather than eliminating them.

Mutuality of Social and Risk-based Approaches

In response to the alleged decline in social approaches to crime as administered by CPSD, researchers including Garland 1999; Rigakos and Hadden 2001; and Hatt 1999, have challenged the profundity of this debate and have pointed to the potentiality of a hybridized integration of socially-oriented and risk-based approaches. These scholars particularly argue that risk-based approach have advanced alongside social developmental approach and have not replaced it. This debate acknowledges that social developmental measures have been re-casted on some level in the context of greater emphasis on risk management and control of delinquent individual; however, it argues that this has not lead to but rather a complex interplay between risk and socially based approaches (O’Malley 1996:202). Moreover, it assumes that the two approaches should not be presumed as competing contradictions, they should be conceived as approaches which are deployed simultaneously in a supportive manner.

To demonstrate the mutuality of social developmental measures and risk-based approaches, Stenson and Watt (1999) argue that social approaches persistently shapes current risk-based prevention strategies (197). For example, many crime prevention programs, although arrived at through risk-based technologies, are conditioned upon the provision of supportive social services such as life skills training, employment services, housing and recreational activities, in attempts to affect risk factors associate with persistent offending (ibid). In agreement, O'Malley (1996) explicitly recognize that the nature of current crime prevention initiatives resembles one in which "risk-based techniques may be allied to political programmes of a socialized nature" (202). By implication, the mandate to responsible the individual is conceivably dependent on the provision of distinct social resources. Seen through the above lenses, the two approaches perpetuate each other in a complimentary way.

Crime Prevention Initiatives in Canada

In light of the debate concerning the shift from social developmental approaches to risk-based prevention, this thesis situates this shift within Canadian crime prevention initiatives as administered by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC). As previously mentioned, an account of the alleged shift is evident within NCPC and its administration of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS or the Strategy). Prior to 2005/2006, the policy framework of the Strategy was presented to rely on CPSD model in their response to crime. Post 2005/2006, NCPC witnessed a transition from CPSD to risk-based prevention and technologies. As previously stated, this new direction placed emphasis on evidence-based interventions which are: "integrated with the

activities of other programs and services, built on the knowledge of risk and protective factors and use evidence based practices, focused on specific priorities, and should produce measurable results" (Public Safety Canada, 2007:1). Despite the apparent transition, this thesis intends to investigate the nature of preventive initiatives to determine the extent of the alleged shift or mutuality between the two approaches.

While engaging in discussion about the Strategy, it should be noted that it is not intention of this thesis to provide a comprehensive discussion of the Strategy, but rather to provide a brief discussion of the change in prevention practices and more importantly, some background for the discussion of the nature of risk-based projects being examined in this thesis.

In order to situate the Strategy and its mandate, a historical evolution of the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) is required. NCPC was established following recommendations from a report entitled *Crime Prevention in Canada: Towards a National Strategy: The twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and The Solicitor General* (also known as The Horner Report, 1993). This report is considered to be instrumental towards the advancement of crime prevention practices in Canada. It was compiled to provide recommendations to enhance the government's commitment in developing and implementing crime prevention initiatives across Canada. The report specifically advocated for preventative approaches designed to proactively address crime. Moreover it recommended that the federal government should play an important role in the coordination of crime prevention initiatives.

The following the recommendations of the Horner Report, the federal government announced the development of "The National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime

Prevention” (also known as Phase 1 of the National Strategy) in 1994. An advisory body named the National Crime Prevention Council was also established in 1994 to serve as the agency responsible for providing advice to the Ministers and the federal government on short-term and long-term strategic direction in Canada in the area of community Safety and crime prevention. The agency was also responsible for the development of the National Strategy. The National Council consisted of twenty-five community practitioners and academics. A number of reports were produced by the Council including research generating enthusiasm and optimism towards crime prevention through social development. As an advisory body, the National Council challenged existing government practices and often provided recommendations towards the implementation phase of the National Strategy (Public Safety Canada 1998:2). Based on the recommendation of the Council, the federal government announced Phase 2 of the “The National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention” in 1998. This phase particularly focused on implementing the strategic advice of the National Council regarding crime prevention practices, particularly the social developmental version of it. This phase was announced with a \$32 million annual budget over a five-year commitment. To this end, the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) was established in 1998 to administer and coordinate the first federally directly crime prevention strategy across Canada. It was made up of individuals from a range of government departments. NCPC’s main mission was to develop, coordinate, and fund crime prevention initiatives in provinces and local communities.

As stated by the National Crime Prevention Centre, the Strategy represents an integral part of the Government of Canada's action plan to tackle crime in order to build

stronger and healthier communities. This blueprint provides a policy framework for the implementation of crime prevention interventions, particularly social development initiatives, in Canada (Public Safety Canada, 2009:1). The Strategy is administered in a collaborative effort with Canadian provinces and territories. The commitments embedded within the Strategy hinged on research studies depicting the effectiveness of early interventions in reducing crime. Such research highlighted the inadequacies of reactive measures; apprehension, sentencing, incarceration, and rehabilitation of offenders, and indicated that these measures are not enough to prevent crime (Public Safety Canada, 2005b:6). Moreover, the Strategy is centered on the premise that crime can be proactively reduced and prevented by addressing the root causes of offending. The principle priority group of the Strategy were Children and Youth, Aboriginal People and Women.

According to Public Safety Canada, Phase Two of the Strategy was particularly “designed to promote a ‘balanced approach’ to reducing crime and victimization by focusing primarily on crime prevention through social development (CPSD) measures” (Public Safety Canada, 2002b:1). The NCPC viewed CPSD as: “an approach to preventing crime and victimization that recognizes the complex social, economic and cultural (environmental) processes that contribute to crime and victimization” (Public Safety Canada, 2002:1). It should be noted that this view was consistent with knowledge in the spheres of criminology and sociology.

With the focus on CPSD as an approach to crime prevention, the NCPC’s engaged in promoting, advancing, and funding community projects and initiatives incorporating the CPSD model. These initiatives attempted to improve and elevate the social and economic circumstances which increase the chances of an individual engaging

in criminality. NCPC assisted the implementation of these initiatives by operating various funding streams including the Community Mobilization Program and Crime Prevention Investment Fund to name a few. Interestingly, the criteria for funding support hinged on the ability for projects to “tackle factors, which contribute to crime and victimization, that are amenable to change” (Public Safety Canada, 2002:1).

In 2005/2006, the federal government announced the renewal of the Strategy. The renewal was undertaken in the climate of the critical examination of CPSD and risk-based prevention that permeated the field of crime prevention. At that time, CPSD was critiqued for being costly, difficult to evaluate its impact on crime, slow to generate social benefit and burdensome on social and economic resources. At the same time, the domain of criminological research globally focused on the popularity of risk knowledge, risk management practices and risk-based prevention. This discourses, along with political pressure to adopt risk manage crime and it perpetrators, is believed to have influence the renewal of the Strategy. The ideological framework of the Strategy was therefore redirected to reflect the debates surrounding risk-based prevention. This new direction placed emphasis on expanding the knowledge base of risk factors associated with the likelihood of offending and identifying individuals who exhibited these risk factors (Public Safety Canada, 2009:3). Furthermore, it In support of the new direction, the Minister of Public Safety announced in 2007 a new "Blueprint for Effective Crime Prevention" (Public Safety Canada, n.d.c; Johnson & Fraser, 2007). The blueprint emphasized evidence-based interventions which are: "integrated with the activities of other programs and services, built on the knowledge of risk and protective factors and use

evidence based practices, focused on specific priorities, and should produce measurable results" (Public Safety Canada, 2007:1).

The renewed Strategy in part focused on youth delinquency, particularly youth gangs. The rationale behind such targeting originated from the perspective that youth gangs and gang-related criminal activities are increasingly becoming a social problem and a great concern in Canada. Over the past two decades, Canadian cities have experienced a rapid increase in gangs as well as youth involvement in gangs (Terrance et al, 2008:1). In 2002, the Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs estimated that Canada has approximately 434 youth gangs with roughly 7,071 members (Public Safety Canada, 2004). In particular, the survey indicated that Ontario had the highest number of youth gang members and youth gangs with 3,320 and 216 respectively. Saskatchewan was identified as having the second highest with 1,315 youth gang members and 28 youth gangs, followed by British Columbia with 1,027 members and 102 youth gangs (Public Safety Canada, 2004). Following this report, in 2006, the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC) released its annual report on criminal activities in Canada. In the report, CISC reported that more than 300 youth gangs existed, with more than 11,000 members throughout the country (Public Safety Canada, 2006). When comparing these two reports, it might look as though the number of youth gangs is steadily declining. However, a closer look at the number of youth gang members indicates that the number of youth engaged in gangs is increasing drastically.

Based on these patterns, the Strategy focused on the following priority groups: a) children aged 6–11 so as to prevent initiation to criminal activity from the point at which there are early signs of anti-social behaviour; b) young people aged 12–17, to reduce the

pressures brought about by known risk factors among those who are the most predisposed to criminal activity, including those who have been in trouble with the law; c) young adults aged 18–24, particularly those who have a history of offending; d) offenders who have completed their sentence and have been released into the community, to prevent or reduce recidivism (Public Safety Canada, 2009:3).

In response to the Strategy’s priorities, NCPC administers a specific funding initiative called the Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGFP), which began in fiscal year 2006/2007. The YGFP provides time-limited (up to five year) funding to support evidence-based community-driven projects designed to address known risk factors and implement protective factors in specific cities where there exist high incidences or emerging threats of gang violence. In accordance to the current prevention climate, the YGPF placed significant emphasis on funding projects employing risk-based measures. For example, eligible projects were assessed for funding eligibility based on their ability to “address the individual, family, school and community risk factors associated with youth violence and gang involvement (e.g. individual/family counselling, mentoring, problem solving and conflict resolution skills, socialization and recreational opportunities)” (Public Safety Canada, 2005c). More so, all projects are required to identify the main risk factors and/or protective factors related to youth violence and gang activities that the project will directly address (Public Safety Canada, 2005c)

Between fiscal year 2006/2007 – 2010/2011, approximately nineteen projects across Canada were funded. A list of the funded projects, organized by province is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Province	Project	Funding Recipient	City
Alberta	Youth at Risk Development (YARD)	Calgary Police Service	Calgary, AB
British Columbia	Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth	Vancouver Police Department	Vancouver, BC
British Columbia	Wraparound Surrey: A Youth Driven Comprehensive Plan For Gang Violence Prevention	Board of Education of School District #36	Surrey, BC
Manitoba	Just TV Pilot Project	Broadway Neighbourhood Community Centre	Winnipeg, MB
Manitoba	Project Oasis	New Directions	Winnipeg, MB
Manitoba	West Central Youth Outreach Project	Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc.	Winnipeg, MB
Manitoba	Circle of Courage	Ka Ni Kanichihk, Inc.	Winnipeg, MB
Manitoba	Turning the Tides	Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc.	Winnipeg, MB
Nova Scotia	Youth Advocate Program (YAP)	Halifax Regional Municipality	Halifax, NS
Nova Scotia	Seeds of Change: Youth Inclusion Program	Chebucto Communities Development Association	Halifax, NS
Ontario	Durham Youth Gang Strategy, (DYGS)	Durham Family Court Clinic	Oshawa, ON
Ontario	Gang Prevention Strategy Program (GPS)	Living Rock Ministries	Hamilton, ON
Ontario	Youth and Adult Anti-Gang Program (YOS)	Niagara Citizens Advisory Committee Inc.	St.Catharines, ON
Ontario	A Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG)	San Romanoway Revitalization Association	Toronto, ON
Ontario	Preventing Youth Gang Activity In Toronto	City Of Toronto - Community Safety Secretariat In Partnership With The University Of Toronto - Centre For Criminology	Toronto, ON
Quebec	P'tit Police	Black Community Resource Centre	Montréal, QC.
Quebec	Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal – Gangs de rue	Le Centre jeunesse de Montréal - Institut universitaire	Montreal, QC.

Saskatchewan	Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence (YAAGV)	PA Outreach Program, Inc.	Prince Albert, SK
Saskatchewan	Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS)	North Central Community Association	Regina, SK

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Focus

This research is an exploratory study of whether NCPC's gang prevention initiatives relies solely on risk-based prevention or on an integrated model of risk and socially-oriented measures. In order to better ground my analysis, this thesis will assess elements of the initiatives while taking into account the aforementioned limitations associated with risk-based prevention.

Data Source

To accomplish the objective of this research, the source of information that was deemed relevant to this research was the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC). The NCPC was selected as the data source for several reasons. The NCPC is the government agency responsible for delivering Canada's crime prevention strategy across the country, for enhancing and disseminating knowledge on what works and does not work in crime prevention, and the agency responsible for administering government funding, grants and contributions to community organizations and stakeholders interested in implementing crime prevention initiatives across Canada. Moreover, the NCPC is a federally mandated agency responsible for propagating and operating with political and publicly accepted ideologies. As a funding agency, the NCPC is responsible for storing all records pertaining to a project given that these documents are subjected to Access to Information legislation. Since this research focuses on youth gangs, data gathered for this research is comprised of the 19 projects funded under the YGPF from 2006 to the present.

This thesis is aware that arriving at a conclusion from the analysis of 19 projects is fraught with limitations. The focus on these projects stems from the fact that the NCPC has only funded 19 projects under the Youth Gang Prevention Fund since the inception of the fund in 2006/2007. Prior to this, gang prevention projects were funded under a general fund that was used to sponsor projects targeting other crime issues. As a result, systems of documentations were not in place to concisely track projects and the crime issues they addressed. Also, although more projects could have been included in this analysis, those projects would have included general prevention projects and other crimes issues wider than the focus of this thesis.

Data Gathering

Many different procedures were used in gathering and collecting data. The starting point of the data collection began with accessing NCPC file numbers for each project. Each project is individually assigned a file number (such as 6375-F16) by NCPC once a funding application is received from the recipient (the organization seeking funding for the project). File numbers vary depending on the region the project application originates from. Assigning a file number to all projects assists in both the organization of information and management of projects throughout the lifespan of the project. Information retrieved from recipients is stored both electronically in a system called Records Documents and Information Management System (RDIMS) and in a physical folder. Once the files are in RDIMS, all employees, irrespective of region can access project files. Nevertheless, the management of the projects remains the responsibility of the regional staff.

The second procedure involved mining the documents that were most important to this thesis. In the process of developing and implementing a project, there are different phases, each requiring unique sets of information from funding recipients. These phases include the application, project review and screening (for eligibility and approval according to funding criteria), project developmental phase, project approval phase, implementation, project monitoring (including progress and impact reporting, financial reporting, and evaluation) and project close out. This thesis opted to focus on the information and documents generated during the project development phase for several reasons. First, recipients are often required to develop and accurately document the nature of the proposed intervention, the targeted crime issues to be addressed, the target groups, the core components of the project, and how it would be implemented. Second, the majority of documents prepared during this phase act as guiding principles for the operations and practices of the project throughout the implementation phases. Lastly, these documents contain vital information used by NCPC officers when providing approval and funding recommendations to senior management and the Minister of Public Safety Canada. It should be noted that all documents used in this research paper are subject to the *Access to Information Act* and do not contain confidential information that would otherwise not be released to the general public. The documents gathered and analyzed include:

- Project Application and Proposal: this contains a detailed explanation of the project objectives and how the recipient intends to accomplish their objectives. Recipients submit it during the initial stages of the project's application.

- Recommendation for Project Approval Form (RPAF): this contains a synopsis or overview of the project description, outcomes, and components to be delivered. This document is presented to the minister's office for approval of the project.
- Logic Model: A detailed plan of how the recipient intends to deliver the proposed project components and the necessary actions needed to achieve desired results.

The permission to use the above documents was granted to me by both the current National Program Manager of NCPC and the Director of Policy and Research.

Research Method

The method through which this data was examined was a content analysis. Content analysis “is a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings” (Berg, 2009:338). This form of analysis is performed on various forms of human communication and may include video, music, image, written documents, and other items that could be translated into textual data. Any use of content analysis typically engages in a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages (Berg, 2009:338).

There are many techniques for conducting a content analysis. Counting terms, themes, and words are but a few techniques that enable researchers to ascertain some of the variations and nuances of the ways parties in a communication create their social world (Berg, 2009:353). Content analysis also engages the examination of discourse by looking at patterns of language in order to understand both the social and cultural

contexts in which these discourses occur. (Berg, 2009:353). Furthermore, content analysis involves processes of “examining what a given communication exchange may be intended to do or mean in a given social cultural setting” (Berg, 2009:353).

In utilizing content analysis, the research processes began with identifying a research question. The research question identifies what the research is interested in explaining (Berg, 2009:363). Next, researchers retrieved data in relation to the research question and predetermined themes or analytical categories for organizing the data. After that, researchers must read related literature in order to determine recurring themes which serve as analytical categories through which the data can be organized (Berg, 2009:363). Once themes and analytical categories have been determined, researchers must begin to sort and locate chunks of data into these categories. The last stage of this process involves the detailed description and analysis of data in order to establish a pattern which can be considered in light of the research question. (Berg, 2009:363-364).

In conducting the analysis of NCPC funded gang prevention initiatives; this research utilizes the procedures necessary for conducting a content analysis. After the research questions were determined, the analysis began by reading gathered materials.

The use of content analysis is an appropriate method for this research for three reasons. First, although this research does not adopt the technique of counting themes, it employs content analysis to better enable this research to carefully and systematically identify, organize, retrieve, and analyze information which reveal the nature of gang prevention projects. Second, it allows for the use of an interpretative approach to analyze retrieved information in such a way that the data could be understood within the context originally intended by the author. Moreover, the analysis enabled this research to capture

the meaningful assumption and interest embedded within the text. Lastly, content analysis allows for the summarization of information into groups. This is known as coding. Coding involves the refinement and extension of concepts into distinct categories so as to highlight those aspects of a text that explicitly reveal the nature of the interventions analyzed and uncover either a unidirectional approach or an integrated model.

Coding and Data Analysis

According to O’Conner and McDermott (1997), “you gain knowledge through analysis ... and you gain understanding in synthesis (1997:11). Using this practice, thematic categories were identified to meaningfully analyze and synthesize extracted information. These categories include: targeted crime issues, project component, target group, language and methodology, intake assessment, and project outcomes. These categories were adopted from the documents analyzed as information provided by the recipient was organized along these categories. To better analyze projects, each category was defined using articulations and justification from CSPD and risk-based prevention so as to distinctively identify project elements belonging to each approach.

The definitions of the categories are as follows (Table 2):

Categories	Definitions	
	Social Development Approach	Risk-Based Prevention
Targeted crime issues	Main focus is on the five areas of risk factors and the broader social and structural conditions associated with persistent offending.	Main focus is on five areas of risk factors associated with persistent offending
Project component	Projects components are arrived at through social mapping, social engineering and involve the use	Projects components are arrived at through actuarial measures, risk assessment and risk

	of collective social resources.	calculations and are usually designed to responsabilize the individual.
Target Group	A holistic involvement of individuals, families, cities and communities	Main focus is on the individual.
Language and methodology	Language involves socially-oriented discourse such as assist, eliminate, improve and enhance	Language is centered on risk, acts of risk, risk management, riskiness and risky individuals.
Intake assessment	Individualized examination of at-risk youth	Collectively use of standardized assessment tools
Project expected outcomes	Enhance the wellbeing of at-risk individuals	Reduce the level of risk and results in making individuals better risk managers

CHAPTER THREE: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The questions this research thesis seeks to explore is: **In the case of the gang prevention initiatives sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), can these initiatives be characterized as a mutuality of risk and social prevention measures? Or are these initiatives solely reliant on risk-based approaches?**

As mentioned, the debate explored in this thesis concerns the alleged decline in social developmental approaches (CPSD) as a result of the emergence of risk management approaches. In contrasting these two approaches, CPSD is based on the perspective that delinquency originates from embedded individual, social and structural risk factors such as unemployment, homelessness, educational failure, drug addiction and welfare dependency, poverty, gender inequality, racism, and discrimination (Farrington 2000:15; Public Safety Canada, 2002:1). Hence, prevention practices consisted of interventions, which focus on addressing the broader social context that lead to criminality through social and developmental approaches, including social services and support systems. The main objectives are therefore structured around attempts to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable youths and address risk factors associated with persistent offending. Risk-based prevention involves the use of risk management strategies and actuarial technology to classify potential deviants as subjects to be controlled and governed. The main objective is therefore on managing risk factors and at risk individuals.

In light of the above debate, this thesis seeks to investigate gang prevention initiatives in Canada so as to demonstrate the validity of the alleged shift in prevention

practices from social to risk prevention measures or the balance approach between both approaches. More importantly, emphasis will be placed on examining whether projects focus solely on responsabilizing the individual or engaging the individual and the broader social and social conditions associated with persistent offending. This investigation is conducted through the lenses of the following categories: targeted crime issues, project component, target group, language and methodology, intake assessment, and project outcomes. It should be noted that the findings and conclusions to be presented below were arrived at based on the content analysis described in the previous chapter.

Targeted Crime Issues

Targeted crime issues refer to the risk factors the project intends on addressing in order to initiate a change in gang involved youth and foster resiliency against gang involvement. Table 3 shows the risk factors and broader social and structural conditions relating to each project. It should be noted that these targeted crime causes were identified by project coordinators as the main issues the projects intended on targeting and were derived from the project application and proposal.

Table 3

Project	Identified Risk Factors	Identified Social, cultural and Structural Causes
Youth at Risk Development (YARD)	Gang involvement, negative relationships, little to low community attachment, youth involvement with anti-social peers, poor parental supervision, alcohol, drug abuse, and poor educational.	Employment potential
Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (EASY)	Gang involvement, substance abuse, youth gangs and violent crimes, anti-social attitudes, prior and repeated delinquency, interaction with delinquent peers, interaction with family already involved in gangs, lack of adult and parental role models, and lack of	Treatment program and health concerns

	recreational activities	
Wraparound Surrey: A Youth Driven Comprehensive Plan For Gang Violence Prevention	Gang involvement, prior delinquency, anti-social attitudes, interaction with delinquent peers (those who use drugs or are gang members), low attachment to school and lack of positive adult and parental role models.	-
Just TV Pilot Project	Gang involvement, substance abuse, lack of positive social influences, positive role models, family histories of gang activity/involvement, low school success, and anti-social behaviour.	Lack of employment, income assistance and access to social services
Project Oasis	Gang violence, engagement in criminal activity, cultural shock, association with delinquent peers,	Lack of employment and access to social services
West Central Youth Outreach Project	Gang involvement, substance abuse, poor decision making skills and association with delinquent.	-
Circle of Courage	Gang involvement, substance abuse, poor decision making skills, association with delinquent, low attachment to school and community and anti-social behavior.	Lack of employment,
Turning the Tides	Gang involvement, youth gangs, drug-related crime, high-crime neighbourhood, low attachment to school, low school, achievement and association with negative peer groups.	Lack of employment,
Youth Advocate Program (YAP)	Gang membership and involvement, stress, poor coping skills, anti-social behavior, poor life skills and poor decision making skills.	Lack of access to social support services
Seeds of Change	Gang membership and involvement, youth crime, anti-social behaviour, drug abuse, high-risk neighbourhoods, poor school attachment and poor parenting skills.	Family cohesion
Durham Youth Gang Strategy, (DYGS)	Gang involvement, poor decision-making skills, association with delinquent peers, low social and cognitive skills; low self-esteem, lack of parental attachment/supervision and negative relationship with families.	Homelessness and lack of employment
Gang Prevention Strategy Program (GPS)	Lack of supervision and activity, and minimizing the time that youth at-risk have to engage in behaviors that can lead to gang affiliation.	-
Youth and Adult Anti-Gang Program (YOS)	Gang involvement, negative relationship with families, association with deviant peers, poor decision making skills and low school attachment.	Homelessness and lack of family cohesion
A Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG)	Violent crime/victimization, gang involvement, criminal engagement, unsafe community, drug use, early adolescent pregnancy, high school abandonment	Racism, gender roles, family violence -

	and other anti-social behaviours.	
Preventing Youth Gang Activity In Toronto	Negative influences in the youth’s life, limited attachment to the community, over-reliance on anti-social peers, poor parental supervision, alcohol and drug abuse, poor educational and a need for recognition and belonging.	Family support, lack of employment
P'tit Police	Youth low sense of accomplishment; the need for a sense of belonging and safety within a group, behavioural problems, and the incidence of a high rate of school dropout among high-risk youth.	Access to community resources.
Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal – Gangs de rue	Youth gang involvement, youth delinquency, anti-social behavior, delinquent peers, antisocial attitudes, aggression, poor adult or parental role models, and low educational and personal aspirations.	Referral to community resources including job training, pre-employability, and job search
Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence (YAAGV)	Gang engagement, gang recruitment, high-risk communities, poor life skills, low school attendance /achievement, low parental support, and low engagement in pro-social activities	Job training, and employment readiness
Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS)	Gang recruitment, living in gang households, involved in gang activity, association with deviant peers, over reliance on anti social peers, poor parental supervision, alcohol, poor educational and a need for recognition and belonging.	-

In the table presented above, it is evident that risk factors are seen to play an important part in shaping the kinds of issues targeted identified. Also, it is evident that some projects make little reference to the systematic social and structural conditions associate with persistent offending, particularly lack of employment. Interestingly, it is noted that projects often portray targeted risk factors in way that significantly reflect the ideological leaning towards the risk-based prevention. For instance:

The Gang Prevention Strategy Program clearly stated that the project will target “individual level risk and protective factors which include: decrease in drug use/abuse, and decrease in other anti-social behaviours which could lead to violence and crime while increasing social and cognitive skills; increased involvement in pro-social community

activities; increased conflict resolution skills; stronger self-identity and ability to make positive choices; education and youth employment. Family risk and protective factors include: increased positive relationship with families and greater family involvement with youth. Community risk and protective factors include: awareness of the impact of gang related crime on victims and increased community response to youth gang issues, including community initiatives that promote pro-societal behaviours in youth” [Project: Gang Prevention Strategy Program].

Other examples include articulations such as “the following risk and protective factors that the project will work on are: individual risk factors such as low sense of accomplishment; the need for a sense of belonging and safety within a group; behavioural problems. Educational risk factors such as high rate of school dropout among high-risk youth; family risk factors such as ineffective parenting skills. Community risk factors such as the presence in the neighbourhood of crime and violence (especially the existence of street gangs within the Borough of Côte-des-Neiges); a fear of victimization by the police due to tense police-community relations; and, a rise in violence in the Montreal Black community” [Project: P'tit Police].

Such articulations are reflective of how individual risk factors have been prioritized over systematic social and structural causes of crime. Between the two cited projects, the scale of focus is on heavily on proximal risk factors rather than on a balanced combination of proximal and distal risk factors. With the focus on proximal factors, it can be seen that these project are concerned with the individual rather than the combination of individual and the social/structural conditions that influence their delinquency. As mentioned above, the focus on proximal causes is problematic for the

reason proximal causes are very limited in scope as they dwell on the individualized aspects of peer, individual, family, school and situational factors while the wider social, cultural and structural context of these factors are given little consideration. This risks bandaging some of the risk factors of criminality while leaving the others unsolved.

Project Components

Project components encompass the range of interventions and activities to be delivered in response to the identified crime issues. All projects offer various forms of interventions through activities and services to participants; however these could be grouped into the following categories: 1) empowering youth; 2) encouraging them to engage in pro-social relationships; 3) teaching youth to recognize alternative solutions to gang membership; 4) school attachment program and educating youth on the realities of gang life; and 5) providing social assistance/support. It should be noted that most projects do not deliver an intervention solely based on one of these categories but rather administers a combination of two or more categories. Each project portrays its intervention and the combination of activities as a catalyst to addressing the risk factors leading to youth gang membership.

Personal and Life Skills Development (Focus: Responsiblizing the Individual)

Projects that seek to empower youth specifically provide workshops that assist in building competencies around personal and life skills development. The main focus of these workshops is to empower youth to develop their cognitive abilities such as decision-making skills and conflict resolution so as to make positive life choices;

improve their quality of life; and help themselves to reach their full potential. Projects offer various workshops in areas such as: training on goal setting, life planning, vocational training, and conflict resolutions.

For example, *Seeds for Change* offers a behaviour modification program which consists of life skills development, drug resistance and conflict resolution training; and a parent-training program with sessions designed to strengthen parenting skills and improve parent/child relationships and family communication [Project: Seeds for Change].

Additionally, *Circle of Courage* offers a Life Skill program designed to enhance the youth's ability to develop meaningful and attainable personal and educational goals and develop their confidence to succeed. Examples of training in this program include: problem solving, conflict resolution, anger management, managing change, communication skills, self-esteem, managing stress, goal setting, building healthy relationships and team building. Guest speakers from partner organizations will present on topics related to healthy lifestyle promotion and include addictions, nutrition and sexuality [Project: Circle of Courage].

Positive Relationships (Focus: Peer/Family Risk Factors associated with the individual)

Projects offering this component seek to teach youth how to build positive relationships with positive peer groups and adults through mentorship and tutoring. The understanding surrounding this component is that teaching youth how to build positive relationships and disassociate themselves from delinquent peers is a protective factor

against gang membership. Majority of projects place greater emphasis on this particular component. For example:

Peer mentors will work with project participants to improve their connection to positive peers groups, while ex-gang members will work with youth to make them more aware of the realities of gang involvement [Project: EASY]. Circle of Courage implemented a Helpers/Coaches (Mentors) Program. This program matched participants with young Aboriginal male adults who are living positive, healthy lifestyles. Matches were made based on areas such as mutual interest, gender, age, and availability [Project: Circle of Courage].

Pro-social Activities(Focus: Individual Risk Factors)

This category of interventions offers recreational programming that engages youth in recreational activities such as basketball, baseball, and soccer [Project: EASY]. For example, *Living Rock Ministries* engages youth in a choice of recreational activities that they usually experience obstacles accessing. The choice of activities includes team sports, fitness, outward-bound type experiences, art, music, and cultural activities [Project: Gang Prevention Strategy Program]. The rationale behind this component is that in some cases, gang activities act as a supplement for youth who are unable to engage or access constructive proactive activities during their spare times or in their community. Hence, offering accessible activities to youth has the potential of deterring them from gang activities.

This component also functions as a reward to youth who actively participate in other components of the project. For example: the EASY project indicated that pro-social

activities would be available to youth interested in sports related activities, with a main focus on basketball. It is anticipated that approximately 40 youth will be referred to this component, where a condition of participation will be that youth attend a series of workshops held weekly throughout the year [Project: EASY].

Education (Focus: School Risk Factors associated with the individual)

The educational component serves the purpose of educating youth on the consequences of gang involvement, the realities of being a gang member and strategies on how to exit a gang. As described by *Wraparound Surrey*, the educational program is offered to youth to educate them on the realities of gang involvement, develop their social and problem solving skills; equip them with the skills needed to resist joining a gang; and assist those seeking to disengage from a gang. [Project: Wraparound Surrey]

Other educational programs include activities designed to encourage participation and attendance at school. This includes the development of alternative classrooms and learning opportunities. For instance, Ka Ni Kanichihk worked to reconnect participants to a school (including off – campus) within the Winnipeg School Division (WSD). The Project entered into negotiations with the WSD to develop an alternative classroom for those program participants who have withdrawn from school and will also investigate e-learning opportunities and invest in technology to support the learning needs of participants [Project: Circle of Courage].

Help and Support: Broader Community and Family Risk Factors

This component is characterised by employment services, provision of social support, and the provision or referral to social services. Interestingly, this component is offered to youth but also extended to the youth's parents and siblings.

The social support component caters to the emotional/social wellbeing of youth. For example, through the *Circle of Courage* project, youth are engaged in community and traditional ceremonies which include healing circles, sharing circles, healing ceremonies and individual counselling so as to connect them to their communities [Project: Circle of Courage]. Also, the *Youth Advocate Program* engages youth in therapy, academic tutoring, group counselling and discussions as well as referrals for parents to parenting courses, support groups and formal services [Project: Youth Advocacy Program].

The social services component is also engaged in connecting youth and their parents to community resources that will provide for their survival needs. For example, *Project Oasis* offers a component called employment resources. This component assists youths and their families with finding jobs and providing training on employment skills and employment readiness [Project: Oasis]. Also as provided by *Youth Option for Success* project, youth are assisted with housing, food and income support needs [Project: Youth Option for Success].

A look at the above categories of project components reveal the extent to which the ideologies of risk-based prevention has been interwoven into crime prevention practices and the limited extent to which socially-oriented responses are employed. First, it is evident that there is a heightened focus on activities designed to manage risk. As

mentioned, risk management involves the process of examining relations between a person's social experiences, biography, identity and their conception of risk (Taylor-Gooby and Zinn, 2006: 3) so as to provide a compass for the prevention of potential and future risk. This practice is demonstrated in each project in the sense that components of the projects draw together the targeted crime issues, and various activities in attempt to manage risk and invariably prevent gang membership. Hence, with greater emphasis on risk management, this form of prevention has, by extension, diminished acknowledgement of social interventions.

Second, it is evident that all projects seek to train the individual as rational actor who need to develop appropriate skills, behaviour, cognitive abilities and character in project participants. This approach falls in line with the risk-based approach which posits that individuals with appropriate management skills to actualize themselves are unlikely to engage in delinquency (Rose, 2000: 322). Hence, the means to crime control takes the form of endowing various sets of skills in the individuals in order to make them better managers of their own risk to society. This practice is seen particularly in projects delivering various forms of workshops and training on problem solving, conflict resolution, anger management, managing change, communication skills, self-esteem, managing stress etc. For instance, the personal and life skills development component seeks to empower the rational actor who apparently chooses to engage in delinquency, to develop their cognitive abilities in order to make positive choices and desist from the life of crime.

The point of disagreement raised by this thesis is that responsabilizing youth in an attempt to prevent their engagement in gangs does not necessarily equip them with the

resources required to address the social and structural conditions that continuously influence their engagement in gangs. This form of prevention instead portrays gang-involved youth as a pathological entity and a centre of intervention. Unfortunately, this practice neglects the well-documented evidence that shows that to a number of social influences impacts criminal engagement, thus, prevention needs to undertake a holistic approach that engages those influences.

Third, the fundamental framework on which projects are based is consistent with the logic that introducing protective factors will assist in minimizing and countering the effects of risk factors. As mentioned, protective factors are portrayed as the opposite of risk factors. As such, projects function to offer protective factors so as to counter the risk factors exhibited by participating youth. For instance, encouraging youth to form and engage in positive relationships with pro-social individuals is offered to counter association with delinquent peers. Likewise, providing pro-social activities such as basketball or cultural activities etc appears to be the solution for engaging in anti-social activities. Additionally, this practice is problematic in the sense that the approach falls short of linking appropriate solutions to crime issues. For instance, associating with delinquent peers is indicative of a broader social issue rather than an inability or unwillingness to form positive relationships. It could be indicative of parental upbringing, parental neglect, lack of employment, criminally engaged siblings, environmental factors, lack of attachment to institutions such as school etc. Hence, providing youth with delinquent peers with a forum where they could build positive relationship does not necessary address the issue of associating with delinquent peers. Instead, it leads to a

situation where the social causes of delinquency remains unsolved because the solutions employed do not appropriately match the authentic problems.

Additionally, these components reflect the risk-based practice of inculcating responsibility upon the individual to actively partake in the regulation of potential risk and become better risk managers. As previously mentioned, crime within the risk-based prevention methods is conceptualized as “risk posed by the individuals when they cannot adequately manage their life within the community, and the risk the individuals pose to the community on account of their failure to govern themselves” (Rose, 1996:349).

Hence, crime prevention attempts to equip individuals with the means to manage and govern their own risk or to access other options. Through such means, the onus of crime prevention and addressing the elements that leads to crime rest on the individual and not on a support/social system. By implication, agencies involved in crime prevention are responsible for the management of the individual risk factors rather than assisting in elevating social or structural causes of crime.

Although it can be perceived that these components offer some sort of solution to youth in gangs, it can however be argued that this remedy might not have a lasting effect given that more emphasis is placed on addressing proximal causes of deviance rather than the root/distal causes which perpetuate gang membership and give rise to proximal causes. This is problematic in the sense that the continued presence of the poor social and structural conditions might perpetuate the reappearance of other proximal causes. In addition, given that the duration of each project is short-lived (minimum one year, maximum 5 years) and only address proximal causes, youth continue to encounter the unsolved distal causes, which might in turn lead to re-engagement in gangs and

criminality. Hence beyond the current practice to prevent youth involvement in gangs, there is still a great need to focus prevention interventions on the social causes of gang membership.

Lastly, social support services such as housing, employment, income assistance, food, counseling, and treatment appear to be offered to eradicate and reduce the effects of the risk of gang membership. Interestingly, projects addressing the above social and structural conditions appear to deliver a combination of social and risk-based prevention. However, these activities designed to address the broader social and structural associated with offending seem to function as a secondary intervention of the project. Evidence of this is seen in the project description and the project component in the sense that assessing, managing and countering the risk factors is at the fore front of all these interventions and providing social support is not central to the project and appears to be a very marginal aspect of the intervention. Moreover, social services or support are provided on an ad hoc and secondary an ad hoc basis, with exception of a few project such as Just TV Pilot Project, Youth Advocate Program, A positive Alternative to Youth Gangs and Project Oasis which offer social services as the core of its intervention.

Target Group

Given that the risk factors leading to youth gang involvement arises from various complex entities, it is imperative for prevention interventions to include these entities in a comprehensive manner. As previously mentioned, CPSD recognized that in efforts to effectively reduce gang involvement amongst youth, preventive approaches must deliver a comprehensive intervention which engages youth, their families and their environment.

These entities are portrayed as avenues for interventions which interact together to either build resiliency or a lifestyle conducive to gang involvement. Hence, prevention meant addressing youth and influences in their environment in order to affect their complete social wellbeing.

Although this logic is applicable to the risk factor prevention, the biographical and social elements of a youth are however translated as avenues that predict levels of risk rather than avenues for intervention. As such, the focus of intervention is solely on youth, in order to responsabilize them to manage their risk and those that originated from social entities (domains of risk) in their environment. Such approaches can therefore be construed as an individualistic approach that fails to accommodate and comprehensively address the societal and environmental influences associated with an individual's involvement in gangs.

The funded NCPC projects are consistent with the reality of the individualistic focus of risk-based approach given that the group targeted by all projects is youth. All of the gang prevention projects are targeted at youth ranging from ages 9 to 25 years. As shown in the chart (Table 4) below, each project specifically engages youth and young adults as their primary target group, hence engaging in the individualistic practice of holding youth responsible for managing their own risk rather than engaging in a holistic approach which targets you, their families and communities.

Project	Target Group (TG)
Youth at Risk Development (YARD)	Youth ages 10 – 17
Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (EASY)	Aboriginal youth age 12 - 23 yrs
Wraparound Surrey: A Youth Driven Comprehensive Plan For Gang Violence Prevention	Youth ages 11 – 17 yrs
Just TV Pilot Project	Youth ages 11 – 17 yrs

Project Oasis	Immigrant youth ages 12 - 19 yrs
West Central Youth Outreach Project	Youth ages 12 – 18 yrs
Circle of Courage	Aboriginal youth ages 12 - 17 yrs
Turning the Tides	Youth ages 15-19 yrs
Youth Advocate Program (YAP)	Youth ages 9 - 14 yrs
Seeds of Change	Youth ages 14 – 18 yrs
Durham Youth Gang Strategy, (DYGS)	Youth ages 12 – 18 yrs
Gang Prevention Strategy Program (GPS)	Youth ages 13 – 25 yrs
Youth and Adult Anti-Gang Program (YOS)	Youth ages 16 – 24 yrs
A Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG)	Youth (10-14 yrs)
Preventing Youth Gang Activity In Toronto	Youth aged 13 – 24
P'tit Police	Visible minorities youth ages 10 – 12 yrs
Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal – Gangs de rue	Youth ages 15 - 25 yrs
Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence (YAAGV)	Youth ages 12 – 19 yrs
Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS)	Youth ages 12 – 24 yrs

Interestingly, some projects engage a secondary group which includes parents/guardians and siblings of participating youth through activities such as parental training programs which are designed to strengthen parenting skills and improve parent/child relationships. Nevertheless, parents of youths remain shadow participants for several reasons. First, a majority of the project activities are not designed to engage parents. Second, activities involving parents are delivered on an ad hoc basis. Parents are usually solicited in providing feedback to project coordinators on the improvements of participants. Lastly, parents are not included in the recruitment strategies of the project.

Language and Methodology of Risk

It is noted that the linguistic description of projects does not convey a socially-minded practice. Rather, all projects engage in language that emphasizes risk. For

example ‘risky’, ‘being at risk’, ‘preventing risk’, ‘assessing risk’, and ‘high risk’ are some of the recurring discourses in documents analyzed. Furthermore, participants are described through risk discourses using terms such as ‘at-risk youth’ or ‘anti-social youth’ or ‘high risk youth’ or ‘gang-involved youth’. For example, YARDS states that a prevention project will be delivered to ‘anti-social youth’ who are ‘at risk’ of initiation into street gangs [Project: YARDS]. Continued evidence of this can be seen in the following examples: “This intervention program is designed to select a group of gang involved and ‘at-risk youth’ in the West Broadway area of Winnipeg” [Project: Just TV Pilot Project]. “The project works with gang-involved Aboriginal youth and young adults living in the North Central neighbourhood of Regina, Saskatchewan” [Project: Regina Anti-Gang Services: RAGS)].

In addition, projects engage in the science of risk calculation, the categorization of risk and the allocation of individuals into levels of dangerousness, all of which are embedded within the risk oriented. Through this scientific method, only youth with the ‘greatest level of risk’ participate in the project because they are perceived as most-at risk or at a higher risk of gang membership and most in need of crime prevention interventions due to the limited resources. As argued by Haines and Case (2008),

(T)he prioritization of risk as a guide to appropriate intervention has resulted in entitlement to services being drawn along negative lines, such that in order to ‘qualify’ for an intervention, young people must demonstrate some form of deficit ... The interventions is not means for all people, it is only those with the very very high risk factors. (Haines and Case, 2008:12)

This practice is exemplified by *Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG)*. In its project description, the project indicated that the original criteria for PAYG were very specific and narrow to avoid having youth not at high-risk of becoming involved in

gangs engaged in the project. As a result, staff recruited youth who demonstrated the highest level of risk.

These methods of preventing youth engagement in gangs are very problematic because they engage in the compartmentalization and stigmatization of youth as “at-risk”. The stigma of “at-risk” negatively portrays project participants as failing, helpless, hopeless and potential deviants to be managed. More so, it portrays participating youth as a threat to society and prone to criminality in compared to other youth. More importantly, this approach is worrisome because the risk label is not based on actual risk but on perceived and/or potential of risk. In turn, this could perpetuate criminality through self-fulfilling prophecies and acts as a constitutor of negative identity if risk labelling is internalized. Hence rather than socially enhancing the lives of youth and facilitating their successful integration, the risk-based prevention is an approach that segregates, labels and stigmatizes youth.

Risk Assessment/Calculation

A strong commonality among all projects is the assessment of risk upon enrolment in the project. Risk assessment functions as a tool used to assess the risk level of youth in order to rationalize engagement in the project and to inform project staff on the diversity of “risky” behaviours that individuals enrolled in the project exhibit. Typically, projects conduct an assessment through the use of a standardized assessment tool to identify key risk and protective factors particular to each participant following registration into the project. As stated by Youth Advocacy Program, “once a youth has been referred to the program and voluntarily accepts to participate, a needs assessment

will be conducted to identify the key individual risk factors and existing protective factors”. The YARDS project also states that, “the probation Officer / Social workers are then responsible for the initial assessment of the participant to determine their suitability to the program”. Other examples include: “the project’s first phase is assessment and intake. This phase identifies youth at-risk of involvement or affiliation with gangs, and will serve as the assessment of their individual risk factors and appropriate protective factors. The second phase of the project is case management and follow-up” [Project: Living Rock Ministries]. Positive Alternative to Youth Gang also indicate that, “once accepted into the project, detailed assessments of risk and protective factors for each youth are undertaken... The tools used to assess risk were refined to accommodate additional risk factors as they were identified” [Project: Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG)].

The results of these assessments feed into a ‘plan of care’ or an ‘action plan’ which details the required activities, or protective factors that are needed to counter the risk factors experienced by each individual. According to *Youth Advocacy Program*, “an action plan details the performance indicators developed to address the risk factors and establish the required protective factors” [Project: Youth Advocacy Program]. As described by *Wraparound Surrey*, the plan takes into consideration areas where youth fit in the spectrum of gang involvement – whether they are at risk, display gang associated behaviour, or are already involved in gangs – and integrates available community services that will assist in preventing gang membership [Project: Wraparound Surrey].

Furthermore, the risk assessment in combination with the action plan feeds into an evaluation tool that weighs the effects and impacts of the intervention on the ‘risky’

behaviour exhibited by youth. This evaluation assesses whether the risk of the youth has decreased as a result of participation in the project or more intervention is required to reduce risk.

This practice largely mirrors the fundamental flaw of the risk factor model for several reasons. First of all, there is a great emphasis on the assessment, management and control of risk through a risk assessment tool. Secondly, the assessment of risk specifically assesses youth against the risk domains that have been narrowly and rigidly identified as the targeted issues to be addressed by the project. This is problematic because such approach engages in reductionist exercises where gang membership is measured against a menu of risk/protective factors. The assessment tool is rather plagued with the over-generalization of the heterogeneous categories of youth and youth involvement in gangs, given that risk factors are not based on solid empirical evidence that studies risk compositions among different group samples. Another flaw of risk assessment used by the projects is that it engages in the misconception that risk and protective factors have a linear relationship. By pairing the risk with protective factors in an action plan, the project takes for granted the argument that risk cannot be easily addressed by introducing the opposite of the risk. Also, by using the assessment of risk, the project also risk reducing complex social and structural conditions into quantifiable elements to be calculated, which is an attribute of the risk factor paradigm. Such approaches fail to realize that causes of criminality are very complex and statistically quantifying these social causes poses empirical issues. Additionally, with the emphasis on capturing, calculating and measuring risk, assessment tools are built to invariably neglect the social and structural causes of crime.

Lastly, projects employ the collective and standardized measurement consistent with risk-based models, in the sense that risk assessments utilized are rigid and do not take into account the differing experiences of each youth participating in the program. Instead, it applies the same standard of measure for each youth and it creates an assumption risk has an equalizing effect among those affected by them. As mentioned, such an approach is fraught with statistical and ethical difficulty. First, it creates room for errors to the extent that it generates ‘false negatives’ - not considered being at-risk when they actually are - and ‘false positive’ – considered being at-risk when they are not (Farrington, 2000:11; Kemshall, 2003). Finally, with respect to this, the risk menu does not leave room for engaging in an in-depth analysis to determine those influences that are significantly aggressive and need interventions in compared to those that are of less significance.

Moreover, the practice of case management through an action plan is inherently problematic because the emphasis on risk and control shifts attention away from addressing the distal causes onto blaming and managing the individual. As noted by Haines and Case (2008),

(t)he prescriptive identification and targeting of risk factors offers a simplistic crime management system that is politically inviting in that it eschews a focus on structural inequalities and the causes of crime, in favour of a policy of containment, intervention, surveillance, ‘responsibilization’ ‘remoralization’ and individual blame. (Haines and Case, 2008:12).

Essentially, risk assessment and case management obscures the view of the larger landscape of social and structural forces and validates the need to blame, control and manage individuals as a manufacturer of risk.

Outcome

The outcome all projects seek to attain in the long run is to ultimately increase in the number of youth desisting from gang membership. The short and medium term outcomes are however specific to the nature of the intervention. Examples of short term outcomes include: an increased number of youth involved in pro-social activities; increased number of families accessing appropriate community services; an increase in social and personal skills; an increased communal capacity to address youth gang issues; increased awareness among youth participants of the consequences of youth gang involvement; increased motivation among youth participants to improve their behaviour and lifestyle; increased motivation among youth participants engaged in gangs at the time of the project, to exit the gang; and an increased knowledge within the community regarding effective youth gang prevention strategies.

Examples of medium term outcome include: a decreased number of youth who become involved in gangs, an improved sense of identity, improved problem solving skills; improved anger management skills, improved school achievement, increased involvement in pro-social activities, decreased substance use, and increased employment.

These projected significantly lack a socially-minded outcome given the fact that they predominantly focus on proximal improvements rather than changes to the social/structural context of project participants. For instance, a stated outcome is the increased ability of youth to cognitively respond risks rather than a reduction in the social and structural crises that engenders the risk. More importantly, outcomes do not reference reduced poverty, reduced experiences of discrimination, increased socio-economic

standards and/or increased literacy rates as a desired outcome of projects. Moreover, the stated outcomes take for granted the complexities of gang prevention and fails to recognize that youth will be ill equipped with strategies to cope adequately respond to social and structural crises long after the project ends because they remain unsolved. Hence, through the risk management approach to crime, preventive interventions address the proximal causes of gang membership and fail to appropriately address the distal factors.

In sum, although the analyzed projects convey elements of CPSD, these elements are not significant enough to contribute to a balanced approach involving socially-oriented and risk-based measures. The practices of socially-oriented measures are passively evident in the 19 projects analyzed. On the other hand, while risk-based prevention predominantly dictates the nature and practices of the projects, elements of CPSD are involved in secondary manner with little weight attached to them. In addition, with exception of a few projects, these social elements are often delivered an ad hoc basis. Also, although there is significant emphases on risk factors associated with persistent offending, the means through this these factors are carried out places emphasis on individualized risk management consistent with risk-based prevention rather than on eliminating the social risk factors.

Hence it is evident that the analysed crime prevention initiatives do not reflect a balanced approach involving socially-oriented and risk-based measures. Also this thesis contends with abandonment of CPSD approaches. It purports that that CPSD approaches still exist in rhetoric and in practice however, its influence on crime prevention initiatives

is very limited. This thesis also agrees with the argument that current responses to youth involvement in gangs does little to approximately ameliorate the social conditions of life that drive youth into gangs as a result of the increased emphasis on proximal risk factors.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the questions: **In the case of the gang prevention initiatives sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), can these initiatives be characterized as a mutuality of risk and social prevention measures? Or are these initiatives solely reliant on risk-based approaches?**

Through the analysis of nineteen Canadian gang prevention projects, this thesis established that prevention practices does not reflect a balanced approach of CPSD and risk-based prevention, neither does it reflect the abandonment of CPSD and sole reliance on risk-based approaches. Drawing on the objectives and descriptions of these projects, this thesis arrived at the conclusion that prevention practices significantly rely on risk-based prevention with little focus on the elements of CPSD. This conclusion was arrived at based on the facts that the 19-gang prevention projects significantly focuses on governing individuals in order to empower them to manage their own risk while taking into consideration some of the broader social and structural conditions that required the provision of social services and resources. This thesis also agree with the claim that risk management methods lack the capability to address the social causes of youth involvement in gangs given that they require socially engineered measures.

The arguments of this thesis were presented in the following manner. It highlighted the origins of CPSD. CPSD, as an approach to crime prevention, emerged based on the theoretical assumption that the roots causes of criminality arise from social, and structural ills. These causes are further divided into distal and proximal causes. Distal causes are woven in the individual's social reality, such as poverty, discrimination, social

inequality, history of generational abuse, perpetual drug addiction, illiteracy, parental mental health problems etc. Proximal causes are attributes and attitudes that exist in association with distal variables, and include antisocial behaviour, association with delinquent peers, substance abuse, poor life skills etc. In responding to both causes, CPSD focused on employing social engineering methods, social security, social work and social benefits in preventive initiatives to elevate and improve these causes.

As mentioned, debates surrounding the development of crime prevention practices have indicated an alleged shift involving the death of the social” and “the ascendance of the risk-based prevention”. The debate purports that the advent of risk society and risk management practices have resulted in the disappearance of CPSD and the emergence of risk-based prevention. It is argued that the abandonment of CPSD is grounded on criticisms which contend that the approach is significantly onerous on the government and its social resources; lack the capacity to measure success or accumulate benefits within a short time span; lack the effective measures needed for the control and surveillance of “at-risk” individuals; is expensive; difficult; and less appealing to policy makers and practitioners. It is claimed that the risk-based prevention emerged as an alternative approach which has the capacity to increase the efficacy to crime prevention. Risk-based prevention, like CPSD, involves establishing key risk factors (causes embedded within the individual, family, peer, community and educational realities), however it produces interventions designed to manage and control risk rather than eliminating the risk factors leading to their criminality. Furthermore, this approach is ultimately designed to transfer the responsibility of crime prevention on the individual as

a manufacturer of risk. As such, individuals are offered various interventions which function to equip them with skills in order to manage their threat to society.

In contrast, another debate contends with the alleged shift in prevention practices and argues for the evolution of a balanced approach involving CPSD and risk-based prevention. It is argued that the modalities of crime prevention should be viewed as fluid and interpenetrating rather than as distinct entities that displace one another (Stenson 1993:386).

In an attempt to empirically assess the extent to which these initiatives are framed either by risk-based measures or the integrated model of risk and social approaches, this thesis examined 19 Canadian gang prevention projects, the limitations are presented along the following categories: 1) targeted crime issues; 2) project components; 3) target group; 4) language and methodology of risk; 5) risk assessment; and 6) project outcome.

This thesis arrived at the conclusion that socially-oriented measures have not been wholly displaced in crime prevention practices but have experienced reduced emphasis while risk-based prevention significantly dominates the realm of crime prevention. This conclusion was based on the fact that the targeted crime issues of the analysed projects were significantly focused on risk factors with the intention to manage and control them rather than eliminating them.

With regards to the project components, it is evident that crime prevention initiatives were designed to focus on endowing responsibility to the individuals and empowering them to be managers of the risk they pose to society. It was noted however that various projects administered activities that involved the provision of social services

such as employment training, housing, income assistance, and access/referral to community resources.

Within crime prevention, research shows that crime originates from the interplay between complex social entities which includes the individual, their family, community and other biographical entities. Hence, it is imperative for prevention interventions to include these entities in a comprehensive manner. Within the analyzed gang prevention projects, very little is done to engage the individual, their families and communities. Unfortunately, the social entities other than the individual are significantly downplayed and are barely included in preventive activities. This is problematic because by focusing on the individual, essential influences which impact delinquency are ignored and remain unaddressed.

The language of risk of the analysed projects involves the constant articulation of risk management rhetoric rather than a socially-minded discourse. As exemplified in the nineteen analysed projects, projects predominantly engage in language that convey risk focused discourse, for example, 'risky', 'being at risk', 'preventing risk', 'assessing risk', and 'high risk'. Although such articulations are used in CPSD, they however are used in a developmental way. The use of these discourses within risk-based prevention results in practices that segregates, labels and stigmatizes.

The practice of risk assessment as used within risk-based prevention is also inappropriate for addressing the social problems that leads to youth involvement in gangs. This assessment takes the forms of reducing complex social phenomenon into a checklist designed to label youth as high risk or low risk, depending on the number of boxes checked. This is problematic because it is a rigid method that is empirically biased,

neglects the social differences among participating youth, and based on the misconception that causes of delinquency can be simply addressed by introducing the opposite of the causes. These shortcomings are very evident in the analyzed projects

Finally, given that gang involvement is socially constructed, preventative efforts should result in the eradication of the social conditions that leads to gang involvement. Unfortunately, the outcomes of the analyzed projects do not seek to achieve this outcome. Rather, because they target proximal risk causes, their outcome falls short of improving the social/structural context of project participants. To this end, the question then remains, how then is gang involvement prevented when its causes are not addressed in preventive initiatives.

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APPENDIX 1

Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF)

2006 – 2011 Funded Projects

Organization: Calgary Police Service

Project: Youth Risk Development (YARD)

Type of Agency: Police Services

Target Group: Youth aged 10 to 17

Project Description:

Youth Risk Development (YARD) provides a prevention program to youth at risk of gang involvement and an intervention program to youth already involved in gang related activity. It provides youth with a coordinated and managed program that empowers them to make positive choices and recognize alternative solutions to gang membership and at-risk situations. The program focuses on risk factors such as negative influences in the young person's life, limited attachment to the community, youth involvement with anti-social peers, poor parental supervision, alcohol and drug abuse, poor education and employment potential, and the need for recognition and belonging.

The intervention and prevention programs consist of providing resources designed to address the specific needs and risk factors of each youth and provide ongoing support to youth and their families. The services include referrals to variety of community resources such as educational training, and employment programs, leadership programs, counselling services, and recreational activities.

Organization: Vancouver Police Department

Project: Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (EASY)

Type of Agency: Police Service

Target Group: Urban Aboriginal youth, aged 12 to 23

Project Description:

The Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (EASY) project is designed to prevent high risk Aboriginal youth in Vancouver from joining gangs. The project responds to well-documented crime issues in the Vancouver area, including substance abuse, youth gangs, and violent crimes. The risk factors addressed include: anti-social attitudes; prior and repeated delinquency; interaction with delinquent peers; interaction with family already involved in gangs; lack of adult and parental role models; lack of cultural and spiritual connection and knowledge; and lack of recreational activities.

The components of the project include recreational programming, late night resource and outreach programs, and mentoring. The recreational programming engages youth in recreational activity such as basketball in the winter, baseball and soccer in the summer, and health and wellness programs throughout the year. This component also includes a series of workshops designed build competencies around anger management, alternatives

to violence, decision making, and conflict resolution. The late night resource and outreach program provides advice to youth on services, treatment programs and access to help with food, clothing, education and health concerns. This program also involves workshops that cover a variety of life skills development. The mentoring encourages youth to build positive relationships so as to improve their connection to positive peer groups, develop their understanding about gang involvement and the consequences and realities of being members.

Organization: Board of Education of School District #36

Project: Wraparound Surrey: A youth Driven Comprehensive Plan for Gang Violence Prevention

Type of Agency: School Board

Target Group: Youth, aged 11 to 17

Project Description:

Wraparound Surrey provides pro-social alternatives for youth at-risk of gang involvement, youth displaying gang associated behaviours, and those currently involved in gangs. The program addresses the following risk factors: prior delinquency; anti-social attitudes; interaction with delinquent peers (those who use drugs or are gang members); low attachment to school; and lack of positive adult and parental role models.

Each participant undergoes an assessment process to ensure a wraparound plan is developed to address risk and protective factors specific to them. The plan takes into consideration the position of youth within the spectrum of gang involvement – whether they are at risk, displaying gang associated behaviour, or already involved in gangs – and integrates available community services that will assist in preventing gang membership. The project also delivers an educational program in the Surrey School District schools. The educational program aims towards creating awareness on the realities of gang involvement. In addition, it assists in the development of their social and problem solving skills by equipping at risk youth with the necessary skills required to undermine the appeal of gang involvement and sever existing ties to gangs.

Organization: Broadway Neighbourhood Community Centre

Project: Just TV Pilot Project

Type of Agency:

Target Group: Aboriginal youth aged 16-24

Project Description:

The Just TV project is an initiative for gang-involved Aboriginal youth and young adults living in Winnipeg. It provides participants with alternatives to gang activity through art-based programming. The project addresses multiple risk factors, ranging from substance abuse, lack of positive social influences and positive role models, family histories of gang activity/involvement, low school success, lack of employment, anti-social behaviour, and involvement in the justice system.

The Just TV approach combines outreach, support, and skill building activities. The outreach component involved the recruitment of youth in gangs, the assessment of risk and the identification of social support services that address the particular needs of youth. The support component is offered on a case to case basis wherein youth are assisted by

Social Workers for the purpose of finding affordable and clean housing; ensuring youth attendance to court dates, and provide help in applications for employment and income assistance initiatives. Skills building activities provide youth with workshops, exercises, and training in goal setting and life planning to encourage them to focus on their new-found self-confidence in education and vocational training. Youth were also taught how to channel creative ideas into activities that would yield positive outcomes and are encouraged to plan, write, shoot, and broadcast TV shows.

Organization: New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families

Project: Project Oasis

Type of Agency: Community Organization

Target Group: Immigrant youth ages 12 -19

Project Description:

Project O.A.S.I.S. offers a multi disciplinary approach to respond to youth gang violence originating from immigrant youth and newcomers. The project aims to decrease the likelihood of recidivism or entering into the criminal justice system and will ultimately enhance public safety. The project specifically targets males, Africans, refugee youth and their families.

Since majority of the target group have experiences of war-related trauma and loss, an intake assessment of youth's needs and risk is conducted upon registration to the project. This results in a network of culturally appropriate resources and service providers that strengthen protective factors and reduces the impact of the risk factors. Resources and services could include counselling and support services, psychiatry, music therapy, family therapy, and mental health services. In addition, opportunities to increase overall economic state, education level, and skills within the family are provided.

The project also provides employment resources that enhance prospects of job finding for youth and their families as well as providing training on employment skills and employment readiness. Recreational services are also provided to encourage youth engagement in pro-social activities.

Organization: Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc.

Origination: West central Youth Outreach Project

Type of Agency: Community organization

Target Group: Aboriginal youth age 12-18

Project Description:

The West Central Youth Outreach Project (WCYO) is designed to prevent at-risk youth from joining and engaging in gang activities in the West Central area of Winnipeg.

The project is built around three major components: mentoring, outreach, and support networks. Each youth is mentored and assisted by a Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) who conducts assessment plans be based on individual situations. Each plan includes intensive mentorship where in the YOW act as a mentor. The YOW is responsible for making arrangements and accompanying youth in the community, either at school, work, or at a

recreational event. In addition, the YOW will spend time with the families of youth and intervene in ways that provide support and strengthen their relationships.

The Outreach program will act as the liaison between youth and community resources. It will also include advocacy with systems that affect the survival needs of youth such as social assistance and housing. The support network provides a weekly support circle for female care givers of at risk youth so as to assist them in improving their parenting skills, which will in turn prevent youth from criminality.

Organization: Ka Ni Kanichihk, Inc.

Origination: Circle of Courage

Type of Agency: Community organization

Target Group: Aboriginal youth males age 12 - 17

Project Description:

The project aims to reduce gang violence and criminal activity by providing intensive skill development and cultural reclamation programming along with education, counselling, and establishing connections to multiple support services.

The Circle of Courage has the following components:

- *Education:* youth are encouraged to reconnect participants to education and ensure attendance at school. This includes the development of alternative classrooms and e-learning opportunities.
- *Employment Preparation:* youth are offered guidance resources that provides information regarding career choices coupled with information on appropriate education and training requirements.
- *Emotional and Spiritual wellbeing:* Youth are engaged in community and traditional ceremonies which include healing circles, sharing circles, healing ceremonies, and individual counselling for reintegration into the community.
- *Mentors:* youth are matched with young Aboriginal male adults responsible for mentoring them in living positive and healthy lifestyles. Youth are also exposed to community resources such as transitional housing and places to access food, clothing and community services.
- *Recreation and Leisure:* Youth are engaged in a range of leisure and recreational activities so as to provide them with healthier alternatives to gangs.

Organization: Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc

Project: Turning the Tides

Type of Agency: Community Organization

Target Group: At-risk youth aged 15 – 19

Project Description:

This project is designed to provide youth with a progressive and supported approach to leave/resist gang activity. The program is comprised of two main components: mentoring and employment skills. The mentoring component matches youth with mentors who provide positive adult role models and facilitates access to appropriate programs, services, employment, and other opportunities that help youth find alternatives to gang involvement. Mentors help youth define educational goals and aspirations and link them with appropriate resources such as transitional schools and tutoring to build towards the part-time, supported work component of the project. Mentors also link and monitor youth participation in relevant recreation, counselling, addiction treatment and cultural activities.

Another component is the employment skills. The goals this component include the improvement of work readiness, skills and attitudes, provision of legitimate income earning experiences, increase income and increase labour market attachment. In addition, part-time work opportunities are provided through Ndinawe programs and partners who identify paid part-time employment opportunities

Organization: Halifax Regional Municipality

Project: Youth Advocate Program (YAP)

Type of Agency: Government

Target Group: At-risk youth 9-14 years

Project Description:

The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) is designed to prevent at-risk youth from joining and engaging gang related activities in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Participants undergo a personal needs assessment and an individual action plan. The plan identifies and details key risk factors and strategies on how to address adverse factors. Youth also participate in *Life Skills trainings, initiatives* designed to direct youth towards health and pro-social behaviours. They include work ethics, decision making, conflict resolution, nutrition, time management, money management, and healthy, active living. Another aspect of the program offers *Coordination of Resources and Youth Support services*. This aspect facilitates access to coordinated resources, services, and informal supports. It also provides linkages for youth to services such as recreation and leisure pursuits, therapy, academic tutoring, group counselling, discussions and referrals for parents to parenting courses, support groups, and formal services.

Organization: Chebucto Communities Development Association

Origination: Seeds of Change: Youth Inclusion Program

Type of Agency:

Target Group: Youth ages 14 - 18

Project Description:

This project is based on Youth Inclusion Program, an approach designed to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour in high-risk neighbourhoods by creating a safe haven for acquiring new skills while fostering participation in pro-social activities with others. As a result, youth are assisted in their education and other identified needs are addressed.

The project responds to the identified need for interventions aimed towards the reduction of youth crime levels with emphasis on drug crime in Spryfield; an area where local residents, merchants, and business owners have expressed concerns about assaults, property damage, drug abuse, and drug trafficking.

The project involves three main components: A school attachment program that includes peer tutoring, identifying and recovering school credits from previous years and recreation opportunities; a behaviour modification program consisting of life skills development, drug resistance and conflict resolution training; and a parent training program with sessions designed to strengthen parenting skills and improve parent/child relationships and family communication.

Organization: Durham Family Court Clinic

Project: Durham Youth Gang Strategy, DYGS)

Type of Agency: Community Organization

Target Group: Youth aged 12 – 18

Project Description:

This project provides a one to one multi-systemic support program for youth in Durham region that are in conflict with the law and/or at significant risk of engaging in gang activity. This approach is used to implement therapeutic interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy, solution focus therapy, and group work. The therapeutic intervention is to assist in changing youth's self-identity that impact the type of choices at risk youth may make. Additionally, it encourages youth to form healthy adult relationship (a positive role model) by involving both youth and their families.

Support is also provided by this project to assist youth and their parents with to the necessary resources (housing, education for youth, youth employment, positive community involvement) that will assist in changing risk factors that contribute to youth's choice of either becoming involved in gang activity or not.

The project also engages youth in their community in a meaningful way. Youth who successfully complete the treatment program will become the role model for other youth who enter the program. In addition to youth becoming a role model, youth parents can also become a support for other parents. The project also offer parenting sessions that emphasize different parenting strategies. Through fact based information sessions, community members will be given resource information as to who they can contact for parenting support or support for their son/daughter.

Organization: Living Rock Ministries

Project: Gang Prevention Strategy Program (GPS)

Types of Program: Community Organization

Target Group: Youth aged 13 - 25

Project Description:

The aim of this project is to reduce the influence of risk factors related to gang

membership and involvement. These risk factors include: a lack of supervision and activity, and minimizing the time that youth at-risk have to engage in behaviours that can lead to gang affiliation. The project reduces the influence of risk factors by building assets that lead to prevention and intervention in gang involvement for youth and reduce criminal activities.

The project's first phase is assessment and intake. This phase identifies youth at-risk of involvement or affiliation with gangs, and serves as the assessment of their individual risk factors and appropriate protective factors. Once the risk has been identified, the project presents youth with access to resources such as housing services, family counselling, educational services, substance abuse treatment referrals, and assistance with financial matters such as setting up bank accounts.

Youth involved in the project can access one of two types of activities, Level A and Level B. Level A activities are open access to all youth participating in the project. These activities provide an effective method of developing relationships. Youth are engaged in an array of recreational activities where they would otherwise have faced barriers accessing. The choice of activities includes team sports, fitness, outward bound type experiences, art, music, and cultural activities.

Level B activities are more intensive training and personal development exercises. They include counselling, anger management, drug use check-ins, communication and interpersonal skill building. The process is a means to continue supplementing and reinforcing protective factors gained and to address the changing issues youth in the program are experiencing.

Organization: Niagara Citizens Advisory Committee Inc.

Project: Youth Options for Success (YOS)

Type of Agency:

Target Group: youth aged 16-24

Project Description:

This project offers a comprehensive and integrated intervention to youth who are "at risk" of becoming involved in gang related and youth who are involved in gang related activities and delinquent behaviour.

The project provides three main components. The first provides prevention and intervention to schools (identified as having a youth gang issue), to elementary school children in grades 4-8. The program within the school offers sessions on bullying, developing strong relationships with adults, effective communication, anger management and decision-making.

The second component is a family program which provides sessions that use group interaction, activities and skills practice to engage parents and children in positive family interactions. Participants learn strategies to improve family communication, set expectations and boundaries, enhance decision making skills and improve their knowledge of the community.

The third component offers a series of intensive workshops that explore negative behaviour patterns and begin to establish strategies for interrupting these through life and social skill development. A trained facilitator offers resources and support in initiating therapeutic interventions for mental health issues, anger, substance abuse and negative peer association. Youth are also assisted with referrals for housing, food and income support needs. Trained professionals will work with youth (and their families) to set psychosocial goals. These professionals will work to address youth/family need for resources such as housing, education, youth employment, and positive community involvement.

Organization: San Romanoway Revitalization Association

Project: A Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs

Type of Agency: Community Organization

Target Group: Youth (10-14 yrs)

Project Description:

This project works with high risk, ethno-racial minority youth living in the Jane-Finch community of Toronto to prevent enrolment in gangs and avoid conflict with the law. The project also works with youth who are gang-involved to support their safe exit.

PAYG activities include the In-School Group Program, After-School Program, Family Support Program Intervention, and Summer Program. The In-School group program, involves youth participation in an hour of group sessions involving mentoring, social-recreational, drama, audio-visual, arts and music activities to address content areas such as conflict resolution, problem solving, peer mediation, leadership, gender roles, gang resistance strategies, racism and culture shock, addictions, bullying and family violence. The after-school offers homework help, reading circles, access to computers, theatre and recreational activities. The Family Support program provides support to the parents/caregivers of youth participants in order to teach parents how to keep their children from gangs. The program also provides referrals to educational upgrading, job skills training and addictions treatment for the parents and youth. The Summer Program offers daily social-recreational, music and arts programming during the summer months.

Organization: City of Toronto – Community Safety Secretariat

Origination: Preventing Youth Gang Activity in Toronto

Type of Agency: Community Organization

Target Group: Youth (13 – 24 yrs)

Project Description:

The project delivers an intervention to youth in order to prevent them from joining and engaging in gang related activities in selected Toronto neighbourhoods. Youth are engaged in intensive, group-based training opportunities that support the development of pro-social skills for youth.

Parents/families of gang involved youth are offered practical supports so as to assist them in gaining access to resources and strategies to help themselves and their children reducing risk factors and building preventative factors for their youth members.

The project will also provide a haven where community organizations, youth prevention groups, academics, and the Toronto Police Service can coordinate their efforts, share best practices and develop new approaches that help prevent youth gang activity.

Organization: The Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC)

Project: P'tit Police	Type of Agency: Community Organization
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Target Group: Youth (10-12 years old) from visible minorities

Project Description:

The project offers youth involved in gangs or at-risk of potential involvement a variety of workshops, recreational activities, and police presentations to instil knowledge on developing positive peer relationships and reducing negative attitudes. Youth participate in activities related to civic engagement and are taught the rights and responsibilities of citizens so as to teach them to live healthy lifestyles. Police officials are engaged in organizing activities for youth so as to establish a relationship with the police and reduce the fear and mistrust of police often passed from one generation to the next within the Black community. Additionally, the project assist schools in linking with community resources to find supports for at-risk youth or youth who are already exhibiting behavioural difficulties that are likely to result in future violent or aggressive behaviour. The schools also organize recreational activities.

Organization: Centre jeunesse de Montréal – Institut universitaire

Project: Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal – Gangs de rue	Types of Agency: Educational institution
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Target Group:

Project Description:

The program provides youth involves in gangs or related criminal activities with access to intensive supervision and participate in social integration activities. The families of these young people will also have access to support services. The activities of the project include the availability of alternative activities, curfews and restrictions to reduce association with negative peers, workshops on enforcement and monitoring of judiciaries conditions; group workshops based on a cognitive-behavioral approach so as to teach youth social skills, empathy, problem solving, and alternatives to violence; referral to community resources such as school, job training, pre-employability, job search, work, volunteering, hobbies, etc.

Organization: Prince Albert Outreach Program, Inc.

Project: Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence	Type of project: Community
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Target Group: Youth engaged in gang activity aged 12-19

Project Description:

The Alliance Against Youth Violence engages youths and assists them to leave gangs and stay out of gangs by providing alternative opportunities to develop pro-social competencies and attitudes. The programming provides safety from violence, drugs and gang activity as well as access to support, skills training, job skills, social skills, anger management, parenting support, increased vocational and school accreditation, skills for non-violent problem solving, cultural connecting and employment readiness. Project activities also facilitate access to justice system court workers, and specialized health services including mental health supports, trauma debriefing and physical and sexual health. The program uses a peer counselling and support model to assist youths to make positive changes and increase engagement with the centre and broader community.

Organization: North Central Community Association

Project: Regina Anti-Gang Services (R.A.G.S.)

Type of Agency: Community Organization

Target Group: youth aged 12-24

Project Description:

The R.A.G.S. project primarily focuses on youth and their families that are currently involved in gangs but are trying to disassociate. The program is a 24/7 programming for participants. Youth are engaged in intensive counselling designed to coach youth to develop pro-social behaviour, personal skill development training, cognitive skills, and conflict resolution. Literacy programming, substance abuse/harm reduction programming, family (and extended family) counselling, employment programming, and some cultural activities such as Aboriginal Sweats are integrated into the interventions.