From The President
Darlanne Hector Mulmat
Criminal Justice Division
San Diego Association of Governments

On behalf of the 2000-2001 Board of the Western Society of Criminology, greetings! The conference in Kona, Hawai‘i was typical of our conferences: full of lively discourse between practitioners, academics, and researchers. Immediately following the conference, plans for the 2001 conference in Portland, Oregon began. Our theme is Programs that Work. Theories that Illuminate - Charles Tracy and Clarice Bailey are hard at work as co-program chairs.

The 2001 Western Society of Criminology Annual Meeting is scheduled for February 23-24, 2001 at the Portland Marriott in Portland, Oregon. Please contact Charles Tracy, Co-Program Chair, Portland State University, P.O. Box 784, Portland, Oregon 97207, (phone) 503.725.5142; tracye@pdx.edu to submit paper ideas.

My goal for this year as WSC president is simple - for those serving on the board and on committees, to enjoy each other and complete the tasks at hand. I encourage you to share information about our association with your colleagues, as well as students. There is no better way to keep an organization vital than through the experiences of members. So, please share the benefits of WSC membership with others, which include the privilege and responsibility of serving as a member of the WSC Executive Board and/or one of its committees. Several Internet addresses are on the back of the newsletter and a full list of board members can be found on the WSC webpage. The nominations committee is eagerly soliciting names of individuals willing to serve on the board next year (2001-2002). Contact Linda Humble lhumble@jps.net; Marilyn Brown marilyn@hawaii.edu or Jan Johnston johnston@email.sjsu.edu.

Enjoy this newsletter and I look forward to seeing you in February, if I don’t hear from you earlier, to become involved in WSC activities.

Identity and Popular Culture among Navajo Gang Members

By Barbara Mendenhall, MA, Anthropology
California State University Sacramento

Ms. Mendenhall’s paper was one of two first place June Morrison Student Award winners at the 2000 WSC Conference in Kona, Hawai‘i.

This paper draws upon findings from a project funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and awarded to the Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation to study youth gangs on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation is the largest, most populated self-governing Native American reservation in the United States. More than 180,000 Navajo reside on the reservation, with over fifty percent being under 18 years of age. An additional 65,000 Navajo live in surrounding Southwestern towns and cities, as well as in more distant metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, Dallas and Denver. Tribal members, especially those on the reservation, are greatly disadvantaged in education, health, other negative social factors such as substance abuse and domestic violence, and are heavily impacted by poverty. Traditional Navajo culture was based on pastoralism with Navajo families living in scattered homesites with extended relatives in close proximity. Geographic mobility was a feature in their response to seasonal or longer term resource shortages. Starting in the 1930s, livestock reduction, subsidized relocation to urban areas and building of modern cluster housing on the reservation changed that traditional pattern. Some families live periodically in low income neighborhoods off-reservation to earn wage income; many on-reservation families reside in crowded housing developments along with unrelated families. This is a major break with long established residential patterns.

One of the hypotheses underlying the study was that Navajo youth involved in gangs would be heavily influenced by certain strains of youth culture, especially those glamorizing “gangsta culture.” In this paper I focus upon factors of street culture and popular youth culture that shape identity of the Navajo Gang Study respondents. Creation of identity is a complex process, and for some youth appropriate socialization by the family may not occur (Vigil 1988), leaving the developing child in a void where socialization is carried out by other means including street and popular culture (Vigil 1996). For Navajo youth numerous forces of marginalization affect development of self-identity, including: poverty, street socialization, loss of connection to Native culture and community, alienation from tribal government and institutions, lack of connection to prosocial
peers, negative and delinquent peer influence and identification with popular youth culture.

The last fifty years have been characterized by the emigration of ethnic groups to post-colonial western nations and by a resurgence of Native American tribes that has resulted in a tremendous expansion in the numbers of youth in Indian Country. Prior to the flight of industrial jobs to foreign economies, schools were the social institution that served to "assimilate immigrants and prepare them for work in an industrial United States" (Hagedorn 1988:45). However, school has only recently been an avenue for creating identity for Navajo young people, since only in the last 50 years have many Navajo attended school or sought employment off their tribal land (Young 1972). Currently, almost all Navajo children are enrolled in day schools, which espouse the goal of preparing students for wage work. However, few jobs are available on the reservation — many must leave the reservation to find work. Off-reservation there are no longer factory jobs for unskilled workers, only minimum wage service economy jobs that may not even require the ability to read. Youth who have problems in school see little advantage to high school graduation. Young people see the dead-end jobs of the few employed adults as not worth pursuing or as giving up the American dream of becoming economically successful, since these jobs will never realize that dream. The attractions of drugs, crime and gangs are powerful alternatives, and illegitimate activities become avenues for youth to demonstrate competence and independence.

It is through leisure activities instead of employment that youth engage in the creative, symbolic work of building adult identity. Music, especially, is the popular medium that young people use to create identity and there is strong connection with African American music and its representations of powerlessness, racial domination, the despair of urban life, police harassment, gender conflict, sexuality, spirituality, and mutual oppression (Willis, et al. 1990). Clothing is also a way that youth explore and express identity. Selection of clothing is a conscious choice in experimenting with or stating identity and may even be the first symbol that a young person uses to signal his or her new identity as a street gang member or associate. The example of "saggin' and baggin' clothing styles and "gangsta rap" music being shared by youth of diverse ethnic groups illustrates just how insignificant ethnic identity is to many youth. Instead, it is through commercial popular culture that alienated youth explore "the gap between lived experiences and human hopes in a world with too many broken promises and too many unrealized dreams" (Lipton 1990:177).

Alienated youth not only explore and create identity through popular culture, but they also frequently proclaim their alienation by identifying with despised groups including Chicano gang chos or African American street gangs through the commercial media of music and costume. The commercial music industry has blended a variety of indigenous musical sources and has created "shared cultural space" that uses commercial theatrical space, which has replaced the "lost public sphere" (Lipton 1994:6). This shared cultural space appeals to alienated youth, including Navajo adolescents, who are creating identity outside their traditional society, which they see as stuck in the past with little relevance for the problems they are facing in the present. One of the most important commercial music genres of this new globally shared cultural space is "hip hop" culture with its musical forms: rap and especially "gangsta rap.

Hip hop culture and rap were created by American inner-city youth of color in the 1970s and 1980s, who found themselves pushed out of budget cutting schools, unserved by service-cuting cities, and mistrusted by neighborhood merchants. Not wanted in their own communities, hip hop creators developed a music that resisted oppression. Hip hop and break-dancing were adopted by youth on the Navajo Nation by the early 1980s. An Anglo anthropologist studying Anglo, Ute and Navajo adolescents discovered alienated Navajo break-dancers in a border-town (Deyhl 1986). This phenomenon was mentioned to the Navajo Gang Study ethnographer, who recalled that break-dancing had been popular across the reservation at that time. Deyhl described the students' involvement as:

a powerful support group for these Indian students. The clique dictated clothing and social stance. It offered its members both self-confidence and means for expressing success in an otherwise indifferent or negative school and community environment.

[Deyhl1986:112]

The students had learned their clothing styles and dance moves from movies, magazines and television.

By the mid-1990s rap music was the preference for most of the 183 respondents in the Navajo Gang Study. Rap music became available on television in the 1980s when cable stations and MTV began airing rap artists' music videos (Nightingale 1993). Kelley traces the roots of gangsta rap to "African American narratives...about power...a challenge to virtually all authority (which makes sense to people for whom justice is a rare thing)...an imaginary upside-down world where the oppressed are the powerful...(1994a:187). In a structured, questionnaire-based interview, respondents were asked about their favorite movies, music, and magazines. The electronic media to which respondents were attracted varied widely but was primarily gangsta culture; 68 percent reported liking gang-banging and/or action movies. The interest in gangsta rap music was even higher with 85 percent of the respondents stating that they listened to rap or hip-hop. Many of the study respondents reported reading Vibe and Source, the primary rap/hip hop music magazines on the market.

For Navajo Gang Study respondents who had lived in urban centers, exposure to gangsta rap occurred during the 1980s and 1990s at movies and in their own homes and the homes of friends while watching cable television or listening to CDs or cassette tapes. The respondents who lived on the Navajo Nation were similarly introduced to rap while living in cluster housing settlements where electricity, cable television and VCRs were available, or while living in traditional dispersed homesteads where electricity is produced by generator or battery and television is accessed by satellite dish, or by contact with friends who had access to these media. In any case, by the early 1990s Navajo youth in all settings had plugged into popular culture and particularly rap music. The initial connection with rap music and its themes
of opposition to White oppression and authority must have been a factor carrying great vitality in creating identity as proud Native Americans for many Navajo youth. People of every sort on the Navajo Nation are working to overcome the tribe’s colonial status and dependence and take control of their own institutions and their own future. In this atmosphere of throwing off the shackles and dependencies of colonialism, it is not surprising that alienated young Navajo would choose to identify with the strength, independence, cohesive values of loyalty and mutual support, and militant opposition to institutions of authority that are the expressed principles of gangsta rap and American street gangs. Unfortunately, this also means identifying with the anti-social behaviors of substance abuse, gang-banging, and terrorizing the community. It should be noted that contrary to simplistic analyses of youth crime that “rap music has become the central explanation for everything that’s wrong with... youth today” (Kelley 1994b:350), I do not make that claim. Instead I think that rap music is an emotionally and physically compelling strain of popular culture adopted by certain youth who are creating identity and are not able to successfully develop a sense of identity through their own strong families and traditional Navajo culture.

When factors impede positive parental involvement with youth, greatly reduced identification with family will occur. In urban settings, if positive community organizations do not provide an alternative, youth will quite likely create identity through street culture. Many of the cluster housing communities on the Navajo Nation as well as the urban communities where the respondents had lived are “socially marginal spaces where patterns of social disorganization sprout and flourish” (Vigil 1988:18). Crime is frequently a factor of daily life for even law-abiding residents, and lack of recreational and job opportunities for youth leads to hanging out with peers and becoming socialized to street culture. Gang respondents themselves cited the lack of positive peer activities available in their communities both on and off the reservation as an important factor in youths’ gang-involvement. Many of the respondents cited involvement with gang-involved peers, siblings or cousins as a major factor that influenced why and how they joined their gang and why they maintain intense identification with that group. In interview after interview, the respondents cited growing up with gang-involved friends, brothers or cousins or growing up on the streets of an urban community where African American and Chicano gangs were endemic. In these settings, respondents spent much of their time immersed in street culture and associating with members of these gangs.

Several researchers have suggested that factors of multiple marginality are most problematic for that generation of youth who for various reasons including immigration and other displacements must create identity in a social framework and culture with which parents (who have lost traditional means of social control of their children) are not familiar (Vigil 1988, Lewis 1991, Sanders 1994). This condition of generational change is the situation of numerous Navajo youth as their parents and grandparents have moved from traditional Navajo homesites to border-towns, poor urban communities and cluster housing communities on the reservation with subsequent losses of traditional culture and support from extended groups of relatives.

Space allowed for this paper is too limited to cover the detailed history of tragedies visited upon the Navajo people by European settlers and the United States govern-

ment. The history of the Navajo Nation has been well-documented in works that establish the intense culture conflict between the Navajo people and mainstream culture. I suggest that the involvement of Navajo youth in street gangs in the 1990s can be traced in large part to this history of culture conflict and culture change and the resulting multiple marginalities these circumstances have bestowed upon Navajo families, Navajo communities and the Navajo tribe. Long-term culture conflict for various ethnic groups, destruction of traditional culture, postmodern losses of productive employment opportunities and other disruptions in the structure and social institutions of urban communities of the United States have led to the development of the now entrenched social institutions and subcultures known as youth or street gangs. As Navajo youth have moved with their families to neighborhoods where street gangs are an embedded factor in the social institutions of the community, they have encountered street gangs and have had to contend with these social organizations.

Certain Navajo youth plagued with a condition of multiple marginality resulting from disrupted families, losses of traditional culture and lack of connection to prosocial community institutions and peers have identified with gangs present in those communities where they are living. Gang-identified youth have subsequently returned from these urban settings to live on the Navajo Nation, frequently residing in cluster housing communities where numerous other Navajo youth and their families are experiencing the same family and community factors of multiple marginality. Some of these youth, who have never lived off the reservation in communities with street gangs, are, however, primed to identify with gang-involvement through exposure to popular culture.

When youth who have undergone first-hand gang experience in cities return to reservation communities, they encounter a social environment that is being catalyzed by the gangster strain of popular culture for the adoption of gang values and identity by their alienated peers. A vacuum experienced by certain youth in the areas of healthy socialization within their families, loss of connection to traditional culture, and lack of involvement in school is filled by street socialization and identity with gangsta culture. Peers serve as the bridge between the void of healthy family and community identity processes and harmful processes of gang identity. Because of a century of deteriorating economic, political, and social conditions among the Navajo people, there is simply a lack of sufficiently powerful, positive social institutions to counteract the attractions of youth gangs.

Editors Note: Due to space limitations, some parts of the paper and the references have been deleted. Please contact the author at mendenhall@csus.edu.

Call for Papers

A special issue of *Journal of Drug Issues* will be published in 2001 on the topic of drug courts. Submissions should be sent to David Shichor and Dale K. Sechrest at the Department of Criminal Justice, California State University San Bernardino, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397. For additional information, call 909.880.5566 or email dkssechrest@aol.com. Manuscripts should be received by June 30, 2000.
Domestic Violence Recidivism

By Carrie Blades, MA, student in Sociology
California State University, Sacramento.
Ms. Blades' paper was one of two first place
June Morrison Student Award winners at the 2000
Western Society of Criminology Conference
in Kona, Hawai'i.

Historically, Americans have shown concern with the issue of domestic violence since the mid-17th century when the first laws against family violence were passed in England. However, interest in controlling and criminalizing such behavior since that time has been episodic. Probably the primary factor affecting social interest in domestic violence is that this behavior must be defined and perceived as a threat to the social order, not only as a threat to the victim (Pleck 1989:19). The main obstacle to this end has been the American ideological view of the sanctity of the family; that all others, including the criminal justice system, should not interfere.

In the 1970s, domestic violence became a women's rights issue. Women activists applied pressure to gain recognition of the criminality of domestic violence and to reform the criminal justice approach and policies for dealing with the problem. Research from the 1970s indicated a lack of police action (arrests) when called out to domestic violence disputes. Prosecutors were criticized for being lax in pursuing prosecution of cases that did result in arrest. In New York, the Vera Institute of Justice (1977) found domestic violence cases more likely to be dismissed than other cases. Even upon conviction, defendants in domestic violence cases were found to receive lighter sentences than in other kinds of cases (Davis and Smith 1995).

The intimate relationship (past, present or future) between the parties in domestic violence cases adds complexity that is absent in other kinds of cases. There has been much debate as to what is the best approach in dealing with the criminality of the assault and protecting the victim from subsequent violence, while still respecting their needs (victims of domestic violence are often economically dependent on their batterers) and desires (domestic violence victims often do not want to terminate the relationship but just want to change the behavior of their partners). The on-going debate about what works best to control domestic violence has led those in the social sciences and the criminal justice system to study and conduct research in order to better understand the complexity of the issue and to better answer this question. In this study, we will be looking at what affects recidivism in domestic violence cases.

An extensive literature review included the available research on the effects of arrest, prosecution and mediation on domestic violence recidivism. A review of the effect of treatment programs on domestic violence recidivism was also conducted. The literature identified several areas for future research.

Our study consisted of 4286 domestic violence cases forwarded to the Sacramento (California) District Attorney's office (SCDAO) by the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) and the Sacramento Sheriff's Department (SSD) between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996. Other small outlying area agencies, such as Galt or Folsom Police departments, forwarded cases to SCDAO, but since they comprised only 5 percent or less of cases reported in Sacramento County and data retrieval costs were high, these cases were not included. Through the use of a simple random sampling method a final sample, consisting of 455 domestic violence arrest cases, was selected.

Data were collected from agency documents including: law enforcement arrest and crime reports, district attorney's information, pretrial release program interview records, court minute orders and abstracts of judgement/sentence, probation orders, petitions for violation of probation, probation reports, and the California Department of Justice provided defendant arrest histories. During the fall of 1998, the data were coded by coders utilizing a code book which incorporated 120 variables covering victim, offender and offense characteristics plus case outcomes.

The data set comprised several outcome variables that may be pertinent to the issue of recidivism, including subsequent offender domestic violence arrests, subsequent offender adult felony domestic violence convictions, and subsequent offender adult misdemeanor domestic violence convictions. Since these data were compiled from official reports and records, they do not include repeat incidents that were not reported and consequently limit the validity of findings related to recidivism. Due to the small number of cases applicable to the latter two variables, the dependent variable used in this analysis was the presence of subsequent offender domestic violence arrests which were utilized to measure the existence or absence of repeat domestic violence. This variable was dichotomized by dividing cases according to whether the offender had a subsequent domestic violence arrest or not.

The independent variables considered for this analysis were chosen based on the hypotheses formulated from the findings of previous research. These include: 1) Domestic violence offenders (with low stake in conformity, measured by employment and marital status) who have had previous contact with the criminal justice system (those previously arrested regardless of prosecutorial outcome or sentence severity) are more likely to recidivate than those without previous criminal justice contact; 2) Domestic violence offenders who are prosecuted successfully are less likely to recidivate than those who are not prosecuted; 3) Domestic violence offenders who are prosecuted and ordered to complete Batterer's Treatment Programs as part of their sentence are less likely to recidivate; and 4) Domestic violence offenders who have higher stakes in conformity are less likely to recidivate. The control variables included defendant age, ethnicity, gender, education level and socio-economic status as measured by the type of attorney who
represented the defendant (i.e., public defender/court-appointed, private or none).

The data analysis was conducted using logistic regression in the computer program SPSS. Logistic regression measures the existence, strength and direction of the association between the dependent and independent variable(s) or control variables simultaneously allowing for the assessment of the importance of one variable while controlling for the effect of other variables.

Bivariate analysis indicated a significant association between subsequent violence arrest (recidivism) and prior domestic violence arrest. The finding suggests that the odds of recidivism for offenders with prior domestic violence arrests are 2.8 times higher than for those who have not had prior domestic violence arrests. The analysis also found no significant association between recidivism and either disposition of the case or length of jail term served for the target case. However, the data indicated that the odds of recidivism for those who failed to complete a batterers treatment program or other counseling program as ordered by the court were 2.6 times higher than those who did complete the programs. This association between program failures and subsequent domestic violence did not hold in the final regression model however, because there were too many missing cases.

Offenders who had a prior prison record had lower odds of recidivism than those without prior prison, but when analyzed in the regression model the odds became even lower and the association became significant. This suggests that formal controls as evidenced by a prior prison record and sentence severity may have positive effects on the reduction of domestic violence. Age of the defendant was also found to have a significant association to domestic violence, with the odds of recidivism decreasing as age increases. Males were also found to have higher odds of recidivism than females.

There was no association between either relationship of the offender to victim and ethnicity, employment status and education level of the defendant. There was a significant association between lawyer type and recidivism. Those who were represented by a public defender or a court appointed attorney had 2.09 times higher odds for recidivism than those represented by a private attorney or had no attorney. Finally, there was a significant positive association between prior domestic violence arrests and recidivism and between being male and recidivism. Thus, the odds of recidivism increased for males as opposed to females and for those who had prior domestic violence arrests as opposed to those who had not. There was also a significant negative association between prior prison and recidivism, along with a significant negative association with age and recidivism. The odds of recidivism decrease for those who have had prior prison as opposed to those who have not; odds of recidivism decrease as one ages.

The results from this study suggest that domestic violence offenders with a low stake in conformity who have had previous contact with the criminal justice system are more likely to recidivate. Some of my findings, which are consistent with prior research, suggest that formal controls have a strong influence on the likelihood of recidivism, but there exists ample room to argue that other factors are also at work in these cases. My findings, however, do not confirm earlier research which suggest that domestic violence offenders who are prosecuted successfully are less likely to recidivate. Nor did this study significantly corroborate that prosecuted domestic violence offenders who completed a Batterer's Treatment Program as part of their sentence were less likely to recidivate.

One of the biggest problems in attempting to study outcomes involved with domestic violence, as with other criminal activity, is that control groups are very difficult to establish. Often the ethics concerning harm to victims is an issue, for example withholding a treatment that may lead to harm or increased harm to the victim. Another problem is randomization of particular treatments. For example, those in the criminal justice system are reluctant to randomly assign cases to be prosecuted or not, or to be sentenced to a particular sanction through random selection. It could be construed that type of assignment (i.e., random) obstructs justice and may infringe on defendant rights as well as possibly releasing offenders who could pose a threat to society generally and their victims more specifically. Justice researchers however, are continually exploring new issues and methodologies to learn more about domestic violence and its related problems.

Editors Note: Due to space limitations, some parts of the paper and the references have been deleted. Please contact the author at carrieblades@juno.com.

WSC Awards 2000

Recipients of the Western Society of Criminology Fellow Awards 1999-2000:
M. Douglas Anglin, Herman Goldstein, John Hubner, and Jill Wolfson.

Recipients of the Western Society of Criminology Awards 1999-2000:
The Paul Tappan Award - For Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Criminology - Delbert S. Elliott

The Joseph D. Lohman Award - For Outstanding Service to the Western Society of Criminology - Barbara Bloom and Pat Jackson

The June Morrison-Tom Gitchoff Founders Award - For Significant Improvement of the Quality of Justice - Sandy Menefee

President's Award - For Contributions to the Field of Criminology and Positive Influence on the Current President's Career - Sheldon Messinger

W.E.B. DuBois Award - For Those Persons Who Have Significantly Contributed to Scholarship or Activism on Crime and Race or Ethnicity - Marjorie S. Zatz
Acknowledgment of Sponsors
The Executive Board of the Western Society of Criminology, on behalf of itself and all of the members of the association, wishes to express thanks and appreciation to the Office of the Provost, Southern Oregon University for sponsoring Friday’s continental breakfast. Special thanks are also extended to the Sociology Department of the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa who provided funding for the printing of the program and other conference material.

Meeting Announcement
The Spring 2000 Semi-Annual Meeting of the Association for Criminal Justice Research (California) is to be held on May 4 and 5 at the Hilton Inn on Arden Way in Sacramento. The theme is Updating the Field. Contact John Dunbauld, Program Chair (ski@cwnet.com) or Dale Sechrest at 909.880.5566 (dksechrest@aol.com).