

## Examining the Differences between Security Threat Groups (STGs) and the General Offender Population

*STG affiliated offenders have unique and complex needs, behaviours, institutional experiences, and post-release outcomes.*

### Why we did this study

Previous research regarding Security Threat Group (STGs)<sup>1,2</sup> affiliated offenders indicated that they pose operational and behavioural challenges while in custody.<sup>3,4</sup> This study was conducted to provide a comparative examination of STG affiliated versus non-STG affiliated offenders under the jurisdiction of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), as well as to further illustrate the operational and population management challenges.

### What we did

In total, 3,889 men offenders and 93 women offenders were identified as STG affiliated between FY2013-2014 and FY2018-2019. A matched comparison group<sup>5</sup> of non-STG affiliated men ( $N = 3,889$ ) and women offenders ( $N = 93$ ) were identified and compared to the general men ( $N = 34,677$ ) and women ( $N = 2,644$ ) offender populations. Offenders in-custody and in the community were examined separately. Demographics, sentence and offence information, criminogenic risk and need characteristics, institutional experience indicators, and post-release outcomes were explored.

### What we found

Comparisons of STG affiliated men, the matched non-STG men's group, and the general men offender population showed unique differences. For instance, the STG and matched groups were more likely to be Indigenous and younger than the general men's population. STG affiliated men were more likely to have a high static risk and dynamic need, a high rating on the Criminal Risk Index (CRI), and a low reintegration potential compared to the other two groups. Examination of institutional experiences demonstrate that a higher proportion of STG affiliated men also had guilty disciplinary charges, positive urinalysis tests or refusals to provide urinalysis tests, and institutional incidents. The STG and matched groups were more likely to be on a non-discretionary release compared to the

general men's population. STG affiliated men were most likely to have a suspension of their release.

Examination of the women's study groups also demonstrated unique differences. For example, STG women and the matched group were younger and were more likely to be in the Prairie or Pacific regions compared to the general women offender population. STG affiliated women and the matched group had higher static risk and dynamic need factor ratings. However, STG affiliated women were more likely to have a higher rating on the CRI and a low reintegration potential compared to the other two groups. As with the men's cohort, STG affiliated women were more likely to have institutional incidents and guilty disciplinary charges. Among women in the community, the STG and matched groups were more likely to be on a non-discretionary release, have a residency condition, and to have a suspension of their release compared to the general women offender population.

### What it means

Overall, these findings demonstrate the unique and complex needs, behaviours, characteristics, institutional experiences, and post-release outcomes of STG affiliated men and women offenders compared to non-STG affiliated offenders. Understanding these differences may inform CSC's management and operational approaches to STG affiliated offenders.

### For more information

Farrell MacDonald, S., Cram, S., Smeth, A., Jones, K., Garrel, S., & Derkzen, D. (in review). *Examining differences between security threat groups (STGs) and the general offender population* (Research Report R-465). Ottawa, Ontario: CSC.

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<sup>1</sup> STGs are defined as any formal or informal offender group, gang, or organization consisting of three or more members (e.g., street gangs, Indigenous gangs, prison gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, traditional organized crime, Asian gangs, white supremacy groups, subversive groups, terrorist organizations, and hate groups; CSC, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> The Correctional Service of Canada is currently reviewing and updating the STG definition.

<sup>3</sup> Nafekh, M. & Stys, Y. (2004). A profile and examination of gang affiliation within federally sentenced offender population (R-154). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, T.-L. (2012). Women gang inmates: A profile (R-272). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

<sup>5</sup> Matching variables included ethnocultural group, CSC region and age during the study period, sentence length, and release type for community cohorts.