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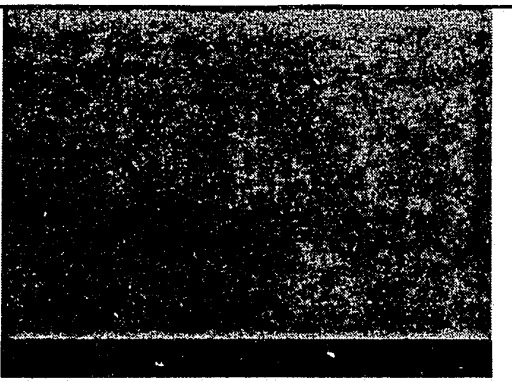
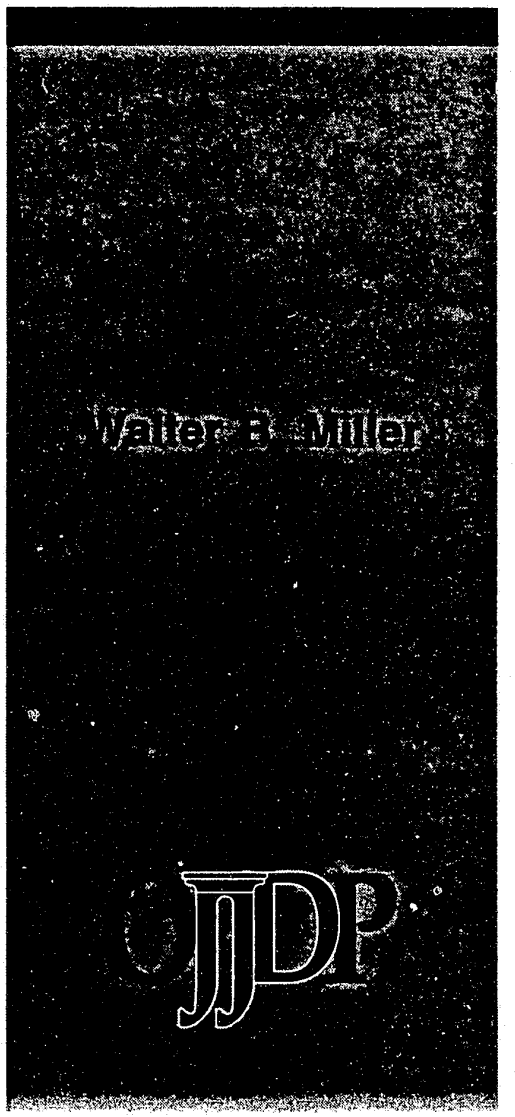


Crime by Youth Gangs and Groups in the United States



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Crime by Youth Gangs and Groups in the United States

Walter B. Miller

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Foreword

Walter Miller's National Youth Gang Survey was originally undertaken to examine the popular notion that gang violence was no longer a problem in the United States. In his pilot study, however, completed in 1975, he found high levels of gang violence in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. From data provided by local officials, Miller estimated that there were at least 760 gangs and 28,500 members in these six cities. He found that gangs of the 1970's differed from those of the 1950's in several disturbing ways: they were more violent; they were more likely to use guns; they were less formally organized; and they were more active within the public schools. The results of this study were published in:

> Miller, W., *Violence by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups as a Crime Problem in Major American Cities*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1975.
>
> National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Summary Report: Violence by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups in Major American Cities" (by Walter B. Miller). Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, April 1976.

The findings of Miller's pilot study prompted the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to sponsor an expansion of the National Youth Gang Survey. This report on the second phase of the study covers the late-1970's and includes findings from 26 U.S. cities and metropolitan counties. A major source of information was on-site interviews with more than 450 representatives of police departments, public and private youth service agencies, courts, and other groups familiar with youth gangs.

Miller deserves credit for dispelling the myth that youth gangs were a thing of the past, having disappeared after the *West Side Story* era of the 1950's. His research provides baseline national estimates of the numbers, locations, and criminal activities of juvenile and youth gangs, the first such empirical estimates to be established. These data will thus serve as the benchmark for examining subsequent changes in the prevalence of gangs and the character of gang violence.

Another important contribution of Miller's research is his conceptualization of the "law-violating youth group" as a basic unit in the study of gangs and other forms of collective youth crime. He quite properly points out that the group nature of youth violence is not confined to gangs as strictly defined, and that gangs are only one of a variety of different types of law-violating youth groups. Sooner or later juvenile delinquency research must come to grips with this reality.

Miller is to be commended for insightful predictions based on the findings of this research. Among those predictions in this volume are these:

- Absent a major new commitment to gang control, gang problems in the United States will continue to worsen.

- The gang situation in California—the spreading of gangs from major urban centers to satellite and suburban cities and towns—represents the wave of the future for the rest of the Nation.

- Social and economic conditions associated with gangs will not change in a direction that will produce reductions in gang crime.

- Gun control efforts will be ineffective, and the availability of firearms to youth will continue to increase.

OJJDP is privileged to distribute this report of Miller's landmark research. It is regrettable that it was not published by the Government ten years ago, as it should have been. That it is being published now is consonant with one of Miller's major recommendations—that the Federal Government should play a more active role in addressing the serious problem of youth gang crime and violence.

James C. Howell, Ph.D.
Director of Research
Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention
December, 1992

Preface

Crime by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups in the United States is a report of the first survey to present national-level statistical and descriptive information on youth gangs and youth gang crime. The survey was begun in 1974 and the final report submitted in 1982. It is difficult, in the 1990's, to recapture the climate of the early 1980's when this study was completed, let alone that of the middle 1970's, when it was started. In the 1970's the gang problem was regarded as a thing of the past; in the early 1980's there was growing awareness that gang problems were on the increase, but few recognized the magnitude of that increase.

Today the notion that youth gangs play a central role in domestic crime is accepted as conventional wisdom both by the mass media and the public at large. The phrases "gang violence," "drugs and gangs," and "drug gangs" appear repeatedly in print and electronic media reports. Youth gangs play a major role in television crime dramas and Hollywood films. The image of the urban street gang has come to symbolize the painful and seemingly intractable problems of poverty, drugs, and violent crime in the slums, ghettos, and barrios of the United States.

Crime by Youth Gangs was completed in 1982. The characteristics and circumstances of youth gangs and collective youth crime in the United States are reported in a detailed and extensive series of tables, charts, and descriptions, but the basic message of the book is simple and direct: crime by youth gangs and groups has become a very serious problem in the United States, and in the absence of major new initiatives will almost certainly get worse.

When the report was submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice its circulation was limited to a small group of criminologists and gang researchers. The decision to make the report available to a wider audience reflects the greatly increased urgency of gang problems, and the increased importance of detailed information on gangs as a tool for developing more effective methods for coping with gang crime.

The central message of *Crime by Youth Gangs* is as relevant in the 1990's as it was in the 1980's. But the passage of 10 years has added an additional element of value to the report. While the major conclusions of the book, presented in chapter 9, remain valid on a general level, there have been important changes in details. A large body of contemporary evidence suggests that problems posed by youth gangs and groups, along with their numbers, prevalence, regional spread, and criminal activities, have continued to increase during the past decade. However, as in the 1980's, while available evidence makes it possible to speculate on the character and magnitude of these changes, it does not provide reliable proof of the changes nor systematic information on their character.

But there is a major difference between the '80's and '90's in this respect. The discussion in chapter 9 points out that the trends it describes could not be reliably demonstrated because comparable data from the past were not available. This is no longer the case. The extensive statistical and descriptive data presented in Crime by Youth Gangs provide a detailed informational baseline that for the first time permits an accurate determination of gang developments over time. Collection of data for the 1980's and subsequent decades using the same data categories and comparable methods (e.g., number of small cities with gang problems,

number of gang homicides nationwide) would make it possible for the first time to compile detailed and systematic information on the scope and nature of trends in gang activity.

The proliferation of a wide variety of youth gangs and an increase in serious gang crime during the past decade is clear evidence of the failure of the United States to develop effective methods of dealing with gang problems. A major recommendation of Crime by Youth Gangs was an enhanced and focused federal role in gathering information on crime by youth gangs and groups and developing programs to cope with it. The report calls for "a specific national commitment to the prevention and control of collective youth crime, implemented by a planning body with the capacity to develop imaginative programs, the flexibility to abandon unsuccessful approaches and try new ones, and a responsibility for careful evaluation of a range of remedial efforts."

Since these words were written, there have been substantial increases in gang control efforts at local, State, regional, and Federal levels. The development by some gangs of drug-dealing networks that cross state lines has weakened the longstanding Federal position that gang control is essentially a local problem. Several new national-level gang data bases have been developed. Gang control efforts at the Federal level have increased. Programs are conducted by cabinet-level departments including the Department of Justice and Health and Human Services. In accordance with the recommendations of the present report, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice has established a National Youth Gang Information Center to serve as a centralized clearinghouse for information on gangs and gang control programs throughout the country. But the kind of "specific national commitment" called for in the report has not yet been made. Drug problems have been made a national priority, with an officially declared war on drugs, spearheaded by a Federal Office of Drug Control Strategy. There is no such commitment or Federal office for gang control strategy. The profusion of local efforts is largely uncoordinated and unmonitored. The development and support of a national strategy and a nationwide organizational structure for dealing with collective youth crime remains an urgent priority.

Walter B. Miller
Cambridge, Massachusetts
October, 1992

Acknowledgments

Much of the credit for this report must go to the 460 youth workers, former gang members, criminal justice personnel, and others in all parts of the country who so generously contributed their experience and special knowledge to the National Youth Gang Survey. Their hospitality, cooperation, and openness made it possible for me to obtain vital information on gangs and groups in the United States.

The staff members of the National Youth Gang Survey were Hedy Bookin, John Delaney, Joan Peterson, G. Giridhar, and Gail Travis. I am grateful to them for their dedication and conscientious execution of the many tasks involved in a national level survey. My very special thanks go to Dr. Bookin, whose sound judgment and entrepreneurial style were invaluable assets at every stage of the project. She assumed major responsibility for the collection and processing of many types of qualitative data. Dr. Delaney designed, executed, and reported much of the quantitative analysis.

I am grateful also to my colleagues at the Center for Criminal Justice of the Law School of Harvard University—Alden Miller, Robert Coates, Gary Marx, Lloyd Ohlin, Lloyd McDonald, Dale Sechrest, Dan McGillis, Craig McEwen, Edith Flynn, and others, who provided help and guidance to the Survey through formal seminars and informal discussions. Special thanks to Alden Miller and Dale Sechrest, participants in countless corridor conferences on issues large and small throughout the project. Alden Miller was especially helpful with quantitative design issues and statistical procedures. Professor Karl Scheussler of Indiana University also helped with statistical and research design issues.

I owe particular thanks to our OJJDP project monitor, Dr. James C. Howell, who guided me to set limits on my tendency to expand the project to unmanageable proportions, and provided unfailing support for a pioneering enterprise whose goals were ambitious but whose methods were largely untested.

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1. A National Survey of Collective Youth Crime

The United States faces a profusion of serious crime problems. They affect life at all social levels and include consumer fraud; political corruption in Federal, State, and municipal governments; epidemics of arson in major cities; widespread use of addictive drugs; organized crime; and a wide range of predatory and assaultive crimes commonly referred to as "street crime."

The multiplicity of crime problems and the limited resources available for crime prevention and control make it imperative that policymakers set priorities. What are the best patterns for allocating available resources to current crime problems?

Setting such priorities must of necessity involve a wide range of considerations—the degree of threat posed by various forms of crime to the domestic security of the Nation, susceptibility to change through explicitly developed programs, the political feasibility of such programs, and many others. But an indispensable requirement of any effective decisionmaking process is *information*—reliable, accurate, and current—on the actual scope, character, and degree of social threat posed by the various forms of crime.

By its very nature, criminal behavior that victimizes identifiable classes of persons—children, the elderly, women, the innocent—is unusually subject to distortion, because it so frequently evokes strong emotions. The news media, as the principal source of public knowledge of the prevalence and character of crime, play a major role in this distortion, because out of the multitude of potentially reportable offenses, they generally select those most likely to evoke the strongest reactions. The types of crime selected for intensive media attention in many cases represent a small proportion of the total crime picture, are relatively transient manifestations, and have little potential for being materially altered by programs of prevention or control. But because of the fragmentary and often exaggerated nature of available information on such offenses and the character of political responses to such information, forms of crime that may in fact be quite inappropriate as objects of concerted efforts become the recipients of major resources; meanwhile other forms are neglected that may pose a greater threat, are more endemic, and show more potential for change through planned programs.

Violence and other forms of crime by members of youth gangs and youth groups is one of the host of crime problems affecting American communities. But the process by which both the general public and policymakers obtain information on the character of these phenomena is peculiarly erratic, oblique, and misleading. There are a variety of reasons for this. One is the dominant role played by New York City in the origination and distribution of media information. Developments during the last several decades, viewed from the perspective of the New York media, were simple and clear.

In the 1950's, the media pictured black-jacketed youth gangs roaming the city streets. They bore romantic names such as Sharks and Jets, engaged each other periodically in planned rumbles that required courage of the participants ("heart") but were not particularly dangerous to the general public, and were receptive or at least susceptible to peace parlays by mediators, outreach programs by social workers, and enforcement measures by the police. Then, quite suddenly in the early 1960's, the gangs were gone. The police and social workers had enfeebled their internal organization, making them particularly vulnerable to the dual onslaught of drugs that sapped their fighting spirit and political activism that directed their remaining energies toward agents of social injustice rather than other gangs.

All was quiet on the gang front for almost 10 years. Then, suddenly and without advanced warning, the gangs reappeared. Bearing such names as Savage Skulls and Black Assassins, they began to form in the South Bronx in the spring of 1971, quickly spread to other parts of the city, and by 1975 made up 275 police-verified gangs with 11,000 members. These new and mysteriously emerging gangs were, as portrayed by the media, far more lethal than their predecessors—heavily armed, incited and directed by violence-hardened older men, and directing their lethal activities far more to the victimization of ordinary citizens than to each other.

The violent activities of these new gangs peaked in the mid-1970's and then subsided. For the rest of the decade the gangs were pictured as essentially dormant, with an occasional outburst of violence by extortion gangs in Chinatown or of feuding and property destruction by gangs in Brooklyn. Public concern with collective youth crime shifted from the gangs to the ubiquitous and frightening robbery bands that robbed and assaulted the citizenry on the streets and in the subways of the city.

This New York-centered picture of youth gang developments—a flowering in the 1950's, death in the 1960's, revival in the early 1970's, and dormancy in the later 1970's—had a powerful influence on general perceptions of gangs, and led many to assume that the sequence of events depicted for New York, however valid it may have been, was similar in other American cities.

This assumption was radically wrong. In the year 1967, virtually the midpoint of the "gangs are all dead" period of the New York media—the Nation's second largest city, Chicago, reported 150 gang-related killings—the highest number recorded for an American city up to that time. Gang killings in Philadelphia started to increase in 1965, and by 1968 had reached sufficient proportion that the State crime commission undertook an extensive inquiry into the problem of gang violence. In the late 1970's, the "gangs are dormant" period for the New York media, the city and county of Los Angeles reported the highest number of gang killings for a single urban area in the history of the country—recording almost 400 killings in 1979 and close to 500 in 1980.

These events show clearly that developments in New York are far from identical with those in the rest of the country and that a concept of national trends based on the New York media can be highly misleading. But the influence of the New York media was so pervasive that many people, including academicians and government officials, were led to conclude that the sequence

of events delineated for New York in fact applied to the entire country. The final benediction over the gangs pronounced by the media in the 1960's had a particularly potent influence on policymakers at the national level, who concluded in a series of commission reports that gangs and gang crime no longer posed a problem for the country. It was this conviction that gave birth to the perception in the 1970's that the gangs had suddenly and mysteriously reemerged.

How could so blatant a misreading of the overall national situation have occurred? The answer is simple. There has never been an agency, in or out of government, that gathers nationwide information on gangs and gang activities. When the New York media resumed their coverage of gang activities in the early 1970's, it was virtually impossible to evaluate the quality, accuracy, or generalizability of their often sensationalized claims of a "new wave of gang violence." Moreover, all but a few academic and other criminal justice researchers had abandoned youth gangs as an object of study and were in no position to fill the informational gap.[1]

The media coverage of gang activity in New York, however sensationalized, did raise a set of important questions. Was there really a "new wave" of gang violence in the United States or was it only an image created by the media? Were the gang members of the 1970's really amoral killers, preying on helpless adult victims rather than fighting one another as in the past? Were the gangs and their violent activities confined to a few localized districts of a few cities, or had they spread throughout the Nation—operating in the suburbs and small towns as well as in the urban ghettos? Were the "new" gangs of the 1970's vicious wolfpacks, wandering widely and striking suddenly at all manner of victims at any time or place, rather than acting in accordance with the relatively predictable discipline of the well-organized and authoritatively controlled "fighting gang"? What proportion of violent and other crime by American youth was committed by youth gangs and groups?

In the absence of systematically collected information there was no way to evaluate the accuracy of the media portrayal or to make informed decisions about the character and scope of remedial efforts—if, indeed, such efforts were warranted. A major purpose of the survey reported here was to collect and distribute at least some portion of the required information.

Purpose and Scope of This Report

A comprehensive treatment of a pressing social problem should address at least three major questions: What is the nature of the phenomenon at issue? How can it be explained? What can be done about it? Because crime by gangs and other types of youth groups continues to be a pressing problem in the United States, a comprehensive treatment should address all three questions.

But each of the three areas of inquiry requires different methods of data collection, modes of analysis, and styles of presentation. Because of this, and because an adequate treatment of all three areas would require a very lengthy document, the present report focusses almost exclusively on the first of the three questions—description or diagnosis. This report examines

that part of the overall U.S. crime problem that can be attributed to *groups of youths acting in concert*, and presents as much information as possible on the character, prevalence, and location of such crime. The report does not directly address the important issues of explanation and remedial measures.

The survey, however, did not ignore the other two questions. A considerable body of data on the other two questions was collected and analyzed. Major attention was paid to the issue of explanation—taking as a point of departure an early finding that striking differences existed, both among different localities and in the same locality at different times, in the likelihood that gangs would be present or absent and in the forms and volume of criminal activity by gangs. Data were collected for twenty-three cities on more than 500 measures of crime, population characteristics, employment, housing, expenditures, service efforts, and other relevant variables. These data, computerized, were subject to a variety of analytic procedures. Results appeared in a series of inhouse reports, including a major analysis using a set of newly developed clustering algorithms.[2]

Considerable effort was also devoted to programmatic issues—programs and prevention/control measures undertaken prior to and during the survey period—and into proposals for new approaches to collective youth crime. Among the documents produced were a preliminary report on prevention and control efforts conducted by public and private agencies in 12 cities during the survey period, a report describing and analyzing the program philosophies of a variety of operating agencies, and a proposal for a new approach by Federal and local agencies to problems of collective youth crime.[3]

Other materials *not* reported here include information on a variety of topics obtained through interviews in 26 localities. These include the relationship of youth gangs to organized adult crime, political activities of gang members, drug and alcohol use by law-violating groups, and legal activities, including employment experience, of group members. A listing of all the topics on which information was gathered appears in appendix A. Another important topic not reported here concerns trends in gang activity. Detailed histories were prepared for nine large cities, describing gang activities and local efforts to cope with them. Also omitted are predictions of future trends in gang activity.[4]

The major questions addressed in the present report include the following:

What kinds of youth groups engage in criminal activity?

How many such groups are there in the United States?

How can one distinguish gangs from other forms of law-violating youth groups?

How many youth gangs are there in the United States?

What proportion of all groups are gangs?

Where are youth gangs located?

Where are other forms of law-violating youth groups located?

What regions, metropolitan areas, and cities show the highest concentrations of gangs?

What kinds of crimes are committed by members of gangs and other types of groups?

What are the distinctive characteristics of violent crimes by gang members?

How many murders are committed by gang members, and have homicide rates increased or decreased?

How much crime is committed by law-violating youth groups?

What proportion of all serious crime can be attributed to youth groups?

How do the kinds of offenses committed by gang members compare with those committed by nongang youth?

How seriously are youth gang problems regarded by local authorities?

How seriously are crime problems by nongang groups regarded by local authorities?

What are the social characteristics of gang members?

How has gang activity affected the public schools?

The present report, then, consists almost entirely of descriptive or baseline information on problems of collective youth crime. Some would question the value of such an enterprise, feeling that resources that become available for dealing with particular social problems should be allocated primarily to action or service programs intended to remedy those problems. Such problems, these critics say, have been overstudied, and adding yet another study to those gathering dust on library shelves contributes little.

This report is tangible evidence that its author disagrees. He rejects the "either/or" position on the action/research issue and regards collecting baseline information and mounting ameliorative programs as mutually interdependent components of a well-grounded approach to social problems.

In the concrete instance of collective youth crime, the case for the importance of an information baseline is even more compelling. Our ignorance in this area is vast, with accurate information virtually nonexistent on the most basic issues—numbers, locations, kinds of crimes committed. Most local programs have little knowledge of the character of youth gang problems and programs outside of their immediate area.

Past attempts to cope with these problems provide substantial evidence for the critical importance of adequate information. Although a few gang programs seemed to have achieved limited success, the urban landscape of the past several decades is strewn with the wreckage of programs aborted, hopes dashed, grand schemes come to nought. For many of these ventures, the classic "insufficient resources" is an inadequate explanation for failure. Powerful public and private agencies put millions of dollars into some of the most spectacular cases of failure to convert violent gangs into peaceful youth groups and seriously criminal gang members into law-abiding citizens.

A major reason for this long record of failure was the absence of those kinds of information that would have made it possible to plan and execute more effective programs. Although most gang control programs did gather information of varying kinds and in varying degrees, what stands out in reviewing their experience is the discrepancy between what the sponsoring agencies believed to be the circumstances of the gangs and their communities and actual conditions. Over and again the visions of the planners ran athwart the hard realities of life in the slums, ghettos, and barrios, and the ingrained attitudes and orientations of the youths whose lives they were trying so hard to change.

This report is unique in scope in that it represents the first detailed overview of collective youth crime as a national phenomenon. There is a fairly large body of literature on youth gangs, but with few exceptions these studies are based on a single city and focus primarily on groups identified specifically as gangs. None has systematically considered law-violating youth groups other than gangs, taken the Nation as a whole as its range, and used site visits as a major method.

Precedents for national coverage are found in two previous studies. Saul Bernstein surveyed nine major cities with gang problems in 1962. While he did visit the cities, his study did not focus on the characteristics of the groups themselves, but rather on social work programs using the "outreach" method of working with gangs.[5] The most comprehensive study of youth gang violence during the 1960's is that of Malcolm Klein. Klein in 1968 reviewed all available literature on gangs and reported his findings in an appendix to the report of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.[6] His report clearly treats gang violence

as a nationwide phenomenon, but uses as its primary source research published by others rather than information obtained directly from local respondents.

Although the original impetus for the national survey was a desire to test media perceptions of a new wave of youth gang violence, the scope of the report described above shows that its objectives expanded substantially. But before presenting the results of the expanded inquiry, it is important to address directly the originating question: Was the United States, in the early 1970's, experiencing a new wave of gang violence?

The answer is no. There was no new wave, but rather a continuation of an old wave—a wave that strikes with great fury at one part of the shore, recedes, strikes again at another, ebbs away, strikes once more, and so on. The "new wave" of the early 1970's was primarily a realization forced on the New York media by local gang violence that the youth gangs were not dead, but alive and lethal. Had the media been following gang developments in Chicago, Philadelphia, and other cities during the previous decade, they never would have sounded the death knell of the gangs in the first place.

Data-Collection Methods

The task of obtaining accurate, balanced, and current information on collective youth crime presents unusual difficulties. These arise from a variety of sources. Although collective youth crime is, for the most part, more visible than crime by groups such as large corporations, crime syndicates, or the organizers of fraudulent consumer schemes—all of which generally involve intricate and ingenious methods of concealment—significant elements of secrecy, deception, and concealment also appear in the identities and activities of law-violating youth groups. Only trusted persons who maintain close and continued contact with group members can secure reasonably accurate information on the actual activities and membership of such groups.

Another difficulty is that collective youth crime provides a highly marketable basis for sensationalized or exaggerated media pieces. Frequently these represent the most extreme forms of current criminal activity as typical. This aspect of relations between law-violating youth groups and adult agencies has remained virtually unchanged throughout the years. A third problem is that information about gangs and groups tends to be highly politicized; the kinds of information released by many agencies dealing with collective youth crime—police, courts, probation, municipal authorities, public service agencies, private agencies, and others—are frequently presented in such a way as to best serve the organizational interests of the agency rather than the interests of accuracy. This aspect of relations between the groups and adult agencies has also shown remarkable stability.

Probably the single most significant obstacle to obtaining reliable information, however, is the fact that there exists nowhere in the United States a single agency whose continuing responsibility is the collection of information based on *explicit* and *uniform* data categories that permit comparisons from locality to locality and between different periods of time. Data-collection operations such as the routine collection of unemployment data by the Bureau

of Labor Statistics or of arrest data by the Federal Bureau of Investigation have never been seriously considered, let alone implemented. This striking omission has a variety of detrimental consequences and is one reason why authorities are caught off guard by the periodic waxing and waning of youth gang violence and the generally low effectiveness of efforts to cope with it.

The information problems that characterize the field of collective youth crime as a whole are reflected in the treatment of many of the individual topics in this report. Discussions of the nature of these problems and the methods used in attempting to accommodate them appear as part of the presentation of most of the topics. They are intended to acquaint the reader with some of the elements to be considered in judging the adequacy of the findings.

Given the kinds of informational problems just noted, the primary methodological challenge faced by the survey was that of constructing a reasonably accurate and comprehensive picture of collective youth crime out of materials that were for the most part scattered, incomplete, and hard to obtain. Conventional social research methods such as the survey research techniques used in opinion polling or the collection of census data were not feasible.

Data gathering methods of the survey used multiple rather than limited sources of data and broad rather than restricted data-gathering techniques, all focused on an effort to derive a coherent set of findings out of a variety of diverse and often disparate sources of information.

Information was obtained from personal interviews, phone interviews, newspaper library files, a national newsclip service, computerized news retrieval, media articles and features, routine police reports, academic literature, agency documents and reports, Federal publications, and other sources. These are described in detail in appendix E.

Site-Survey Localities

Prior to this survey, published information on gang problems was available for only a very few of the many thousands of American communities, and much of it was incomplete, ambiguous, or both. To obtain reliable information it was necessary to make direct contact with knowledgeable people located in and familiar with cities where gang problems had been reported or appeared likely.

Which cities? The most obvious choices were those such as New York and Philadelphia where there had been extensive media coverage of gang problems in the recent past. But while media attention to gangs almost always indicates that gang problems are present, the lack of such attention by no means indicates that they are absent.[7]

City size was the next most important selection criterion. Initial reviews seemed to indicate that the larger the city, the greater the likelihood of gang problems. Early analysis indicated further that the size of the metropolitan areas surrounding the cities seemed to bear a closer relationship to gang problems than the size of the cities themselves.

Table 1-1. Site survey localities: 24 cities, 2 counties

Locality populations: 29,308,000 SMSA populations: 66,643,000

Location	Population[a]	SMSA[b]	Population[c]
New York City	7,423	New York, NY-NJ	9,509
Chicago	3,074	Chicago, IL	6,993
Los Angeles	2,744	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	6,997
Philadelphia	1,797	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	4,803
Houston	1,455	Houston, TX	2,423
Detroit	1,314	Detroit, MI	4,406
Dallas	849	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	1,738
Baltimore	827	Baltimore, MD	2,144
San Diego	789	San Diego, CA	1,624
San Antonio	784	San Antonio, TX	996
Washington, D.C.	700	Washington, DC-MD-VA	3,037
San Francisco	663	San Francisco-Oakland, CA	3,158
Milwaukee	661	Milwaukee, WI	1,415
Cleveland	626	Cleveland, OH	1,967
Boston	618	Boston, MA	2,862
New Orleans	581	New Orleans, LA	1,137
St. Louis	519	St. Louis, MO-IL	2,384
Denver	480	Denver-Boulder, CO	1,438
Pittsburgh	449	Pittsburgh, PA	2,303
Minneapolis	372	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	2,048
Fort Worth	368	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	[d]
Miami	355	Miami, FL	1,268
Newark	331	Newark, NJ	1,993
St. Paul	272	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	[d]
Prince George's County, MD	674	Washington, DC-MD-VA	[d]
Montgomery County, MD	574	Washington, DC-MD-VA	[d]

[a] In thousands, 1976.
[b] Designations and populations from Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1978, appendix 2.
[c] In thousands, 1977.
[d] See data given above for this SMSA.

Such analysis provided another criterion: certain demographic characteristics such as housing, population density, numbers of foreign-born residents, and ethnic status seemed to be associated with the presence or absence of gangs. Also derived from early analysis were assertions that gang problems were affecting suburban and rural as well as urban areas, leading to a decision to visit selected nonurban localities.

Interviews in the survey localities yielded a rich store of information, consumed a major portion of the survey's resources, and constituted a central method of the survey.

Table 1-1 lists the 26 localities that were selected for onsite surveys along with the names and sizes of the 22 standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSA's) in which they are located. Among the 24 cities and two counties, the cities ranged in size from 272,000 (St. Paul) to 7,423,000 (New York).

The average city size was 1.17 million; the median size was 662,000. The combined population of the 24 cities, 22.1 million, was equal to 73 percent of the population of all U.S. cities over 250,000 and 53 percent of the population of cities over 100,000. The 24 cities included all of the 10 largest and 18 of the 25 largest, containing 86 percent of their population. The 7 cities from the 25 largest that were *not* visited were Indianapolis, Phoenix, Memphis, San Jose, Columbus, Jacksonville, and Seattle. The 24 cities were located in all major regions of the United States and most of the subregions (table 2–4).

The 22 SMSA's ranged in size from 996,000 (San Antonio) to 9,505,000 (New York). The average size of the SMSA's was 3,029,000, and the median size, 2,223,000. Their combined population, 66.6 million, was equal to 76 percent of the population of all SMSA's over 1 million. The SMSA's included all but 3 of the largest 25 (Atlanta, Seattle–Everett, and Tampa–St. Petersburg) and contained 94 percent of their population. None of the SMSA's in which site-surveyed cities were located ranked below the largest 25.

Site-Survey Agencies and Respondents

Interviews with respondents in the 26 localities were arranged in advance by phone. Almost all respondents were affiliated with an identifiable agency; the few with no agency affiliation were either former members of an agency (e.g., retired head of juvenile division) or appeared within an agency context (e.g., gang member in a community residential facility). A total of 458 respondents from 173 agencies participated. In most instances agency heads had the authority to arrange interviews; for some criminal justice agencies, mostly police departments, a commanding officer had to give written authorization. Only one of the 173 agencies—the Milwaukee Police Department—denied permission for an interview.

Several criteria guided the choice of agencies. The most important was the likelihood that agency personnel would be thoroughly familiar with collective youth crime on some specific level—informational, operational, or administrative. A special effort was made to speak to people whose work brought them into daily contact with youth in the community.

A second criterion was based on the "triangulation" principle. In seeking information on a subject as elusive and differently-perceived as collective youth crime, it is important to tap informational sources and viewpoints of as many kinds of observers as possible, in an attempt to correct for the biases inherent in particular occupational and personal perspectives. A juvenile court judge and a young street worker might both have daily contact with youthful offenders, but the nature of their contacts, their spheres of operation, and their conceptions of the issues will almost certainly be very different.

Interviews were thus conducted with representatives of public and private, official and unofficial, lay and professional agencies, as well as representatives of as wide a range of occupations as possible (e.g., police, youth workers, teachers). Because political philosophies significantly influence conceptions of youth crime, the survey tried to interview persons representing the full ideological spectrum from reactionary to radical.

The racial or ethnic status of respondents may also exert considerable influence on how they perceive and portray collective youth crime, and efforts were made to contact persons representing the major ethnic groups in survey localities. If most of the youth groups in a locality belonged to a particular ethnic category, interviews focused on persons in that category.

A third criterion concerns geographical coverage. Most of the site-surveyed localities were very large cities containing varied districts, sections, and neighborhoods. Initial interviews showed that respondents with excellent knowledge of one area could be quite uninformed about another. Therefore, a special effort was made to locate agencies with workers or branch offices in different city districts and to have representatives of as many of these as possible present. Examples are a probation department with officers assigned to 8 or 10 district offices or a youth service agency with workers in 15 different neighborhoods. A particular query quite often elicited very different responses from workers in different areas: "There are organized gangs in my district," or "There are no gangs in mine."

A special effort was made to locate agencies engaged in intensive work in particular areas. Pre-site-visit research generally indicated which city districts experienced the most serious problems and often spotlighted an agency whose operations were concentrated in particular high-problem districts. Another type of agency chosen for coverage purposes was one with broad citywide administrative responsibilities, though not necessarily operational responsibilities. Examples are a metropolitan area criminal justice coordinating council, a police department research unit, a city or State legislative office. Agencies of this kind seldom had intimate knowledge of particular local areas, but were able to provide important general or summary information. This process of selection made it possible to meet the requirements both of intensive coverage of particular districts and extensive coverage of very large metropolitan areas.

In light of the fact that close familiarity with the local youth crime situation was a major criterion for selection of respondents, the question at once arises—"Why weren't interviews arranged with youth group members themselves?" Surely these youths would be in an excellent position to provide full and accurate information. The decision not to arrange interviews with

persons specifically identified as members of a gang or other form of group was deliberate, for several reasons.

The most important has to do with the likelihood of obtaining accurate information from members of local youth groups under the interview conditions of the national survey. On the face of it, it seems quite unlikely that any adult from an outside community would be given honest and reliable information by members of law-violating youth groups whose social class or ethnic/racial background probably differs from that of the outsider. The author's experience in working with such groups over extended time periods, as well as the experience of many other workers, shows that it *is* possible, despite the status differences, to reach a point where group members will share information that is reasonably accurate, if not complete in all details, but reaching this position requires a special set of circumstances.[8] The major condition for the exchange of even moderately reliable information is the establishment of a relationship between group and adult that incorporates a fair degree of trust. Such a relationship, especially in the case of seriously criminal groups, is not readily established and may take months of effort and repeated "testing" of the adult by group members before an acceptable level of trust is achieved. Even then the relationship can be quite fragile—easily eroded on the suspicion, grounded or not, that the trust has been betrayed—perhaps by the belief that the adult has provided damaging information to authorities.

The circumstances for developing a trusting relationship cannot be achieved in the course of a relatively short contact period. Most interviews were one-shot affairs lasting from two to five hours; whatever rapport or trust was achieved had to be established during this period. The fact that in most cases interviewer and respondents shared the status of a professional adult dealing with criminally inclined youths generally provided an adequate basis for a relatively open exchange of information. This commonality would not obtain in contacts with youth group members.

A second reason concerns the objectives of the survey and the kinds of information needed to achieve them. Many of the questions in the Interview Guide (see appendix A) require judgments, evaluations, and generalized kinds of information that few youth group members are in a position to provide.[9] Most local youth group members are parochial beings, often unable to provide reliable information about another group in an adjoining neighborhood, let alone all the groups in a district or city. Interviews with group members thus would not be an efficient way of satisfying the "extensive coverage" criterion, and for most informational items would be less efficient than interviews with agency workers closely familiar with the conditions of their local service area.

Another reason involves the logistics of arranging interviews—primarily by phone contact, supplemented in some cases by correspondence. Few law-violating youth groups maintain offices with telephones, and arrangements to contact groups would have had to be conducted through third parties. This would introduce considerable uncertainty as to the status of those youths who would agree to be interviewed; it is quite likely that they would be marginal rather than core group members, or in some cases youths only claiming to be members.

Further, the survey was not in a position to provide cogent incentives for participation by group members. Agency respondents had a variety of incentives for participating in the survey, including the receipt of useful feedback information and an opportunity to familiarize a wide audience with the existence of local service needs that were unattended or insufficiently attended. Incentives of this kind would have little meaning for youth group members.

However, even though no specific arrangements were made to interview youth group members, a fair number of past or present gang members did take part in the interviews. About 20 respondents volunteered that they had been members of gangs, often providing the name and location of their gang. No direct question concerned respondents' own gang membership, and it is possible that such a query would have revealed that past gang membership was even more common. Some of the ex-gang members were in their early 20's, making their gang membership quite recent. A few current gang members also contributed to the interviews. Some interviews took place in agency settings where youths were present; adult respondents often sought information from the youths to supplement their own answers. For example, several interviews occurred in community-based correction facilities, with youthful clients in attendance or milling around; an agency worker might call out, "Hey Joe! How many kids are there in that gang you're in?"

In one interview, respondents were young adults (in their 20's and 30's), all of whom had been members of a large named gang in the 1960's. Unlike most of the "politicized" gangs of this era which had failed to "go legit," this one had succeeded in changing from a fairly violent gang to an agency providing educational, recreational, and employment services for local youth. In the course of the interview, a respondent who seemed uncomfortable about the group's former status said, "Well, we weren't *really* a gang—people just *called* us a gang." He was immediately challenged by another respondent who said, "When we would come down the street swinging our chains and carrying our clubs, people would say 'Here comes that *gang*'—and they called us a gang because we *was* a gang." The kinds of responses provided by the ex-gang members differed very little from those of similar kinds of agencies whose personnel had not been gang members.

Despite the fact that the survey's data-gathering strategies did not include arranged interviews with members of current groups, it is important to stress that important kinds of information about gangs and other groups can be obtained only through close and continued contact with members themselves, using "participant observation" or similar methods. The fact that the survey did not use such methods reflects its basic purpose—extensive coverage of many localities rather than intensive coverage of a few—and does not reflect any judgment that intensive methods are of lesser importance.

Table 1–2. Survey interviews: Numbers of agencies and respondents

Type of Agency	Number of Agencies	Number of Respondents
Police: Juvenile/Youth Division/Bureau	29	60
Police: Youth Gang Unit	5	6
Police: Other	11	18
Public Outreach Service	7	28
Public Youth Service	10	45
Public Service, Other	7	11
Public Criminal Justice Council, Planning/Coordinating Agency	5	12
Private Outreach Service	7	20
Private Youth Service	18	34
Private Agency, Youth Gang Service	2	24
Private Service, Other	14	27
Judicial, Court	13	22
Probation, Court-Affiliated	10	26
Probation, Other	13	72
Prosecution	2	3
Juvenile/Youth Corrections, Detention	6	12
Public School Security	6	20
Public School, Other	4	14
Legislative, Governmental	2	2
Academic Research	2	2
Totals	173	458

Table 1–2 lists the types of agencies whose members participated in the interviews, along with the numbers of agencies and affiliated respondents. The total number of respondents was 458, and the number of agencies 173. The agencies are grouped into 20 different categories, representing a wide range of services, orientations, and levels of involvement. Agencies are public and private, criminal justice and social service, lay and professional, administrative and operational, localized and centralized. Included are the three major branches of the criminal justice system: law enforcement, judicial, and corrections.

Police units include juvenile divisions, special gang units, and other kinds of units (e.g., homicide, research and analysis). Probation agencies include units directly affiliated with particular courts as well as units affiliated with other organizations such as counties. Judicial system positions include juvenile court judges, adult court judges, court administrators, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. Correction agencies include State youth authorities, detention facilities, and community-based correctional facilities.

Public service agencies include "outreach" programs sponsored by city or county governments, some devoted specifically to work with youth gangs; city and county youth services, such as community-based prevention services; and municipal youth employment agencies. Private service agencies include outreach programs, some devoted specifically to work with gangs;

community-based operations of larger organizations such as the YMCA; agencies serving particular ethnic groups such as Hispanics, Asians or African-Americans; and citizen organizations such as ex-offender societies and local security patrol groups.

Because so many collective youth crime problems surface in the public schools, persons interviewed included school personnel such as school security staff, teachers, school guidance counsellors, and union personnel. Two legislators (city councilman, State representative) and two academic researchers also gave interviews.

Proportions of agencies and respondents in different categories are as follows: criminal justice, 50 percent of the respondents, 54 percent of the agencies; public and private service, 41 percent of the respondents, 38 percent of the agencies; schools, 8 percent of the respondents, 6 percent of the agencies; and "other," 1 percent of the respondents, 2 percent of the agencies.

Because the ethnic/racial status of respondents figured in the selection process, data on ethnic and some other social characteristics of respondents became relevant. Of the 458 respondents participating in the arranged interviews, 43 percent belonged to three major ethnic/racial categories: African-American, Hispanic, and Asian. Of these, blacks made up 73 percent, Hispanics 24 percent, and Asians 3 percent. Females comprised 15 percent of the total respondents. No data were gathered on the age or social class of respondents, but some general statements can be made. Respondents ranged in age from the late teens to middle seventies; most were in their thirties and forties. Their educational status ran from high school dropout to persons with advanced professional degrees.

Quality of Information

Before presenting the major findings of the survey, a few words should be said about the quality of survey information and the reliability of the findings. This chapter and appendix E describe 14 different kinds of data-collection procedures under three categories: interview-based methods, media reports, and other sources. As noted, in light of a serious paucity of information on collective youth crime, data collection was guided by the "triangulation" principle—bringing to bear a variety of different kinds of information and collection methods on the subject of inquiry. A consequence of using this approach is the virtual certainty that the various sources of information will differ considerably in validity, reliability, and completeness.

Some of the sources were quite reliable and accurate; others less so. There was considerable variation in quality even within source categories—for example, some newspaper accounts were carefully researched and accurate, others were poorly researched and of questionable reliability. Overall, the general quality of informational sources would have to be characterized as uneven.

The accuracy and dependability of the findings presented in subsequent chapters must be judged in light of these considerations. Given the unusually wide range of data sources, every effort was made to rely more heavily on higher quality sources, and to use maximum caution when using lower quality sources. Despite this, the limitations remain.

Ultimately, the accuracy of present findings presented here will have to be judged against findings derived from more reliable and more comprehensive information collected in the future. One objective of the survey has been to encourage the collection of such information, and to develop a set of informational categories that might facilitate more systematic and comprehensive data collection. Success in achieving this objective would justify the risk that some present findings will prove to be wide of the mark.

Terms and Concepts

Subsequent chapters of this report consist primarily of a set of empirical findings along with some interpretation of these findings. Most of the terms and concepts used in presenting the findings follow common usage and require no special explanation. There are, however, a few terms that either do not follow common usage or that carry a connotation that differs from common usage. These terms are derived from a general conceptual scheme developed in some detail by the author. Because some of these terms are used here, a highly condensed version of the conceptual scheme is presented.

The central concept of the scheme is that of "collective youth crime" rather than the concept of "gang." Collective youth crime is illegal activity engaged in by groups of youths, or by youths who are affiliated with identifiable youth groups. Knowledge of this type of crime is extremely primitive. Information concerning even the most basic kinds of issues is poor or nonexistent. How common is such crime? What forms does it take? How serious is it relative to crimes committed by individuals? How does one go about gathering information about it? Should there be special methods for dealing with it, or should one ignore the collective character of the offense in dealing with offenders?

It is paradoxical that knowledge in this area is so poor. The notion that the bulk of youth crime is collective is accepted as conventional wisdom by most workers in the field. Over and again one hears that lone offenders—particularly with respect to serious offenses—represent a minority, and in all probability a small minority, of all offenders. But coupled with this conviction is a curious reluctance to pursue its implications in any systematic fashion. With some exceptions, the individual remains the primary focus of concern—in recordkeeping, in criminal justice processing, in programs of control, reform, and rehabilitation.[10] This reluctance to exploit systematically the collective nature of most youth crime extends, for some, to a studied effort to minimize its importance, and to play down both the amount and significance of serious youth crime involving multiple offenders acting in concert.[11]

One consequence of the dearth of systematic attention to collective youth crime is that no satisfactory unit of analysis has ever been developed for this area. During the past 50 years, the major concept used to guide the examination of this phenomenon has been that of "gang." This concept has become increasingly unsatisfactory as the years have passed. At no time has there been anything close to consensus as to what a "gang" might be—for scholars, for criminal justice workers, for the general public.

Although there has been very little scholarly attention to this subject for almost 20 years, a fair amount of work was done in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Scholarly efforts during this period were characterized by a high level of disagreement—much of it attributable to definitional problems. Prominent among these were a confusion of the concepts of "gang subculture" and "gang delinquency," and difficulties in trying to distinguish between "true" or "real" gangs and "pseudo" or "near" gangs.[12]

One might have expected that a period of intensive scholarly concern with gangs would have led to an upgrading of the concept—making it more precise, more refined, and more useful as a basis for analyzing and coping with collective youth crime. Instead, the opposite seems to have occurred. The concept emerged from its brief period under the academic spotlight in worse shape than when it went in. Moreover, a set of social and historical developments during this period combined to infuse the concept of gang with strong pejorative connotations—connotations that had been weaker or absent in earlier usages. The concept of gang, in most current usages, thus suffers the unhappy fate of being at the same time conceptually confused and connotatively contaminated.

A major deficiency of the term lies in its scope, or semantic domain. It is applied very broadly, very narrowly, and in all degrees in between. Such elasticity makes the term highly susceptible to manipulation, for political and other purposes. In general, police departments in large cities apply the term quite narrowly, police in smaller cities and towns less narrowly, most media writers more broadly, and most distressed local citizens very broadly. Insofar as large-city police can define as few as possible of the thousands of problem youth groups in their jurisdictions as "gangs," to that degree they minimize their "gang problem," for which they are generally held quite directly accountable. Perhaps the most restrictive definition was used in the 1970's by the Philadelphia police, who designated as a "gang" only those youth groups that claimed control over a specific territory and defended that claim by force. At the other end of the spectrum are residents of local communities who are upset by cliques of 15- or 16-year-olds who congregate nightly in local parks, and who complain to the police that the community is being terrorized by savage gangs.

Unfortunately from the viewpoint of the citizens, those most directly responsible for dealing with these problems—primarily the police, courts, and local governmental agencies—generally use the most restrictive definitions. This has led to a radical underestimation of the amount of street crime attributable to youth collectivities. When the only major form of collective youth crime subject to systematic consideration is gang crime, and when only those groups that are large, well-organized, named, and highly visible are designated as "gangs," it becomes possible to discount the hundreds of thousands of smaller or less formalized cliques, bands, rings, crowds, networks, and assemblages whose members are responsible for so massive an amount of violent and predatory crime. It is not so much that the collective nature of such crime goes unrecognized, but rather that these groups are so often dismissed as "loosely knit" or "casual," and thus, by implication, not to be taken very seriously. The term "gang," then, presents serious disadvantages as the major concept for dealing with collective youth crime, because, as generally used, it provides an easy way to exclude from systematic consideration the tens of thousands of

youth groups that do not readily qualify as gangs, and for representing their criminal activities as random or adventitious.

Moreover, gangs as commonly defined, were, in the 1970's, most often found in the largest cities. The fact that there were few or no gangs in most medium or smaller sized cities or in suburban or rural communities makes this concept particularly inappropriate as a basis for examining collective youth crime as a national phenomenon.[13] What is needed, then, is a unit of analysis that will provide a more satisfactory basis for examining problems of collective youth crime and a precise specification of the relationship of the term "gang" to this unit.

The Law-Violating Youth Group:
A Unit of Analysis

The present report uses the concept "law-violating youth group," rather than the concept of "gang," as its major unit of analysis. The concept is defined as follows:

> *A law-violating youth group is an association of three or more youths whose members engage recurrently in illegal activities with the cooperation and/or moral support of their companions.*

The term "law-violating" is used rather than "deviant" or "delinquent" because the notion of deviance encompasses much too wide and heterogeneous a range of behavior for present purposes, and the term "delinquent," in most usages, applies only to offenses by persons 16, 17, or younger. Because the ages of most members of law-violating youth groups range from approximately 10 to 21, their illegal activities, as classified under law, include both "crimes" and "delinquencies." The age-range of those designated as "youths" thus corresponds roughly to the period of social adolescence—approximately 10 or 12 to 21 or 22.

Of several usages of the term "group," the definition employs that usage which makes no assumptions about the degree of solidarity, cohesion, direct interaction, or esprit de corps. While some or all of these elements may be present, "group" in the present usage refers to a type of association whose members may be related to each other in a variety of ways; for example,in the case of group types designated as "networks," "crowds," or "casual cliques," relations among group members may be indirect, temporary, or casual, as well as close and persisting. The term "recurrent" does not yield readily to precise specification due to wide variations in frequency of group offenses. For practical purposes, however, it is not difficult to ascertain whether or not illegal activities by particular groups represent one-time occurrences or part of a pattern of repeated occurrences; the determination of recurrence must also take into account differing standards of different communities. The use of three as the minimum size for a "group" reflects the fact that this number was chosen as the lower size limit for gangs by more survey respondents than any other, that triads are generally regarded as groups in popular usage, and that three-boy cliques represent one of the most prevalent forms of law-violating collectivities.[14]

The terms "numbers," "cooperation," and "moral support" are used to convey the idea that to be considered group related, illegal activity does not have to involve simultaneous participation in particular ventures by all or most group members. In many instances, in fact, acts of group illegality represent cooperative rather than simultaneous-participation ventures, with selected group members playing different parts in their execution, including functions such as planning.

Further, acts such as "hits" by single assailants against rival gang members, while executed by one person, are clearly group related in that they arise out of collective planning. To qualify as group related it is necessary only that illegal acts by one or more individuals be executed with the moral support and/or cooperation of their colleagues. Thus, if two members of a six-boy clique engaged recurrently in pocketbook theft and their actions were condoned by the others, the group would be considered law-violating; if, on the other hand, the act was condemned by the others, and was nonrecurrent, the group would not be considered law violating.

Central to any attempt to gauge the size, scope, and character of collective youth crime problems in the United States is a delineation of the most prevalent types of law-violating youth groups, based on systematic principles of categorization. A comprehensive treatment of such a typology would include a discussion of the principles on which it was based; a delineation of types at several levels of generality; a method for categorizing "specialized" and "diversified" types; an empirical examination of the criteria used for distinguishing "gangs" from other types of groups; and detailed descriptions of the form, character, age, and sex composition, and modus operandi of each type. For purposes of this report, a condensed version of one typology developed by the author is presented.[15]

The delineation of 18 types and subtypes of law-violating youth groups in table 1-3 provides a basis for a systematic examination of the numbers of such groups in designated areas (e.g., cities, towns, metropolitan areas, districts, and counties), as well as the volume and types of crime they are responsible for. There is at present no locality in the United States for which such information is available; later chapters provide estimates of numbers of groups and group-related offenses for selected categories of cities. For present purposes it is sufficient to note that only 3 of the 18 types and subtypes of youth collectivities in table 1-3 are designated as "gangs." The others are designated as cliques, groups, bands, rings, networks, and crowds. Thus, in the context of a listing of a discrete number of common types of law-violating youth collectivities, groups distinguishable as "gangs" are in a minority.

A Consensual Definition

Serious definitional problems with the term "gang," some of which have been noted, underlie the decision to replace this concept with that of the "law-violating youth group" as the basis of a systematic typology. But the typology does not discard the term gang; rather it reduces it from the status of a major generic concept to that of one category among several categories. This means that the definitional problems associated with the term cannot be disregarded because it is still necessary to be able to distinguish this particular type from other types as precisely as possible.

Chart 1-1. Types and Subtypes of Law-Violating Youth Groups

Type/Subtype Number	Type/Subtype Designation
1.	Turf Gangs.
2.	Regularly Associating Disruptive Local Groups/Crowds.
3.	Solidary Disruptive Local Cliques.
4.	Casual Disruptive Local Cliques.
5.	Gain-Oriented Gangs/Extended Networks.
6.	Looting Groups/Crowds.
7.	Established Predatory Cliques/Limited Networks.
7.1	Burglary Rings.
7.2	Robbery Bands.
7.3	Larceny Cliques and Networks.
7.4	Extortion Cliques.
7.5	Drug-Dealing Cliques and Networks.
7.6	Fraudulent Gain Cliques.
8.	Casual Gain-Oriented Cliques.
9.	Fighting Gangs.
10.	Assaultive Cliques and Crowds.
10.1	Assaultive Affiliation Cliques.
10.2	Assaultive Public-Gathering Crowds.
11.	Recurrently Active Assaultive Cliques.
12.	Casual Assaultive Cliques.

Most available definitions have been developed either by individual scholars or local police departments. Biases related to particular purposes of both of these occupational groups militate against the development of a definition suited to the more neutral purposes of a descriptive typology. Most scholarly definitions are developed within the context of specific theoretical or ideological frameworks, and incorporate the special assumptions of these frameworks. Most police definitions, as noted, reflect considerations related to specific policy objectives, such as minimizing or inflating the scope and seriousness of local gang problems.

The present definition does not incorporate the special biases of any particular occupational group because it is derived from definitions provided by many categories of practitioners engaged in a wide variety of service and informational pursuits in all parts of the United States. It thus provides, for the first time, a definition derived from the pooled conceptions of a large and diverse nationwide group. Respondents in the 26 site-surveyed localities were asked "What is *your* conception of a gang? Exactly how would you define it?" A summary definition, based on responses by 309 respondents representing 121 agencies in the 26 localities, was developed through the analysis of 5 out of approximately 1,400 definitional elements provided by respondents.[23] Six major elements were cited most frequently—being organized, having identifiable leadership, identifying with a territory, associating continuously, having a specific purpose, and engaging in illegal activity. Combining these elements produces the following definition:

A youth gang is a self-formed association of peers, united by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership and internal organization, who act collectively or as individuals to achieve specific purposes, including the conduct of illegal activity and control of a particular territory, facility, or enterprise.

There was a surprising degree of agreement on the major elements of this definition by respondents of all age categories, both sexes, many occupations, in larger and smaller cities, in all regions of the country, of all races and ethnic categories, of gang members, former gang members, and nongang members. There was 85-percent agreement that the six cited elements represent the essential criteria of a gang, with agreement exceeding 90 percent for three of the six criteria. The definition thus comes as close as anything available to representing a national consensus on the characteristics of a gang.

Two-thirds of the definitional responses relate to the six major criteria just cited. The remaining responses relate to 10 additional criteria, characterized in the analysis as "minor." One of these concerns the size of gangs. Of those who specified lower size limits, the majority was willing to designate as a "gang" a group as small as 3; however, the average size for a gang was given as 20. These findings thus indicate that a gang, for most practitioners, was a group that averaged 20 persons, operated according to formal organizational procedures, utilized hierarchical authority, and was specifically structured for the purpose of engaging in criminal activity. It is quite obvious that groups with such characteristics—particularly with respect to size and organization—make up only a small proportion of all groups that pose serious crime problems. The findings thus provide strong empirical support for the position that the term "gang," as generally understood, is too restrictive to serve as a satisfactory generic term for the study of collective youth crime.

Once having determined the basic elements of respondents' conceptions of the term "gang," it was important to specify its boundaries as precisely as possible. To this end, respondents were presented with a detailed description of a regularly congregating, disruptive local group ("hanging" or "corner" group) of the type designated in table 1-3 as a "solidary local clique." The group was represented as congregating regularly and engaging in a range of disruptive and other illegal activities, but lacking the established leadership, organization, and dedication to purpose seen by most respondents as essential features of a gang. Respondents were asked "Do you consider this type of group to be a gang?" Of 187 respondents providing answers, 51 percent said "yes" and 49 percent "no."

There was a statistically significant difference between cities reporting more serious problems with collective youth crime and those reporting less serious problems; approximately 60 percent of respondents in the former, compared to 40 percent in the latter were willing to grant the status of "gang" to the type of local group described. These findings document once again the inadequacies of the term "gang"; the 50-50 split among respondents as to whether such a group is a "gang" comes about as close to perfect nonconsensus as one can find. The good agreement among respondents as to the essential characteristics of a true gang thus deteriorated into disagreement when considering the status of a type of group having some of these characteristics but lacking others. Moreover, the fact that a strong majority (60 percent) in the

lower-seriousness localities denied "gang" status to criminally involved neighborhood groups suggests that the concept of "gang" is even less appropriate for analyzing collective youth crime in smaller and thus more typical American cities than in the larger urban centers.

Outside the special meanings assigned the terms "collective youth crime," "law-violating youth group," and "gang," most of the other terms used in the report accord with customary usage. A partial exception is found in the terms "crime" and "criminal," which are often used to refer to law-violating behavior by either adults or juveniles; in some legal usages, illegal activity by juveniles is "delinquency," not "crime."

The major substantive chapters of this report describe collective youth crime in the United States during the 1970's under the following headings; Prevalence and Location of Youth Gang Problems, Collective Youth Crime Problems in Major Cities, Numbers of Law-Violating Youth Groups and Group Members, Social Characteristics of Gang Members, Criminal Activity by Law-Violating Youth Groups, Gang-Member Violence, and Gang Activities and the Public Schools.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Analyses of the reasons for the decline in academic attention to youth gangs are presented in H. Bookin, "Ideology and gang research," a paper presented to the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Philadelphia, March 13, 1981, and in H. Bookin and R. Horowitz, "The end of the gang: fad or fact," paper presented to the American Criminological Association, Washington, D.C., November 11, 1981.

2. Methods and preliminary findings of the explanational study are presented in J.L. Delany, "Research methods for explaining the variation in seriousness of youth gang and group problems in 23 American cities," and "Summaries of correlations of city and SMSA characteristics for 23 cities in an intercity study of youth gang problems," reports submitted to the National Institute of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, February 1977. A more detailed report using cluster analysis is presented in J.L. Delany, "Intercity variation in crime by youth gangs and youth groups," unpublished paper, Yale University, December 1977.

3. H. Bookin, "A survey of gang control methods used by public and private agencies in U.S. cities," unpublished report, 1976; W. Miller, "Operating philosophies of criminal justice and youth service professionals in twelve major American cities," report to the National Institute of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, May 1975; W. Miller, "New Federal initiatives regarding serious youth crime," memorandum to James Vorenberg, Si Lazarus, Sam Bleicher, September 1, 1976; in Serious Youth Crime, hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency of the Committee of the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, April 10 and 12, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978: 262.

4. Histories of gang problems in six cities and efforts to deal with them are contained in W. Miller, Violence by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups as a Crime Problem in Major American Cities, National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, December 1975, U.S. Government Printing Office 1975: ch. VIII, pp. 56-66. This chapter also contains predictions on the future of gang problems, based on evaluations by local respondents. The predictions, for a period falling roughly between 1975 and 1980, proved fairly accurate. Predictions of worsening problems in Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco, and of lessening problems in New York and Philadelphia were essentially borne out. Few respondents, however, foresaw the magnitude of worsening problems in Los Angeles.

5. S. Bernstein, Youth on the Streets: Work with Alienated Youth Groups, New York, Association Press, 1964.

6. M. Klein, "Violence in American juvenile gangs," in Mulvihill and Tumin, Crimes of Violence, National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, vol. 13, 1969: 1428.

7. W. Miller, "American youth gangs: past and present," in A. Blumberg, Current Perspectives on Criminal Behavior, second edition, New York, Knopf, 1981: 313.

8. The use of gang members as a source of information is discussed in some detail in Miller, Violence by Youth Gangs, n. 4 above: 305-307.

9. Miller: 306.

10. This method of conceptualizing collective youth crime was originally presented at a symposium entitled "The Serious Juvenile Offender." The choice of the phrasing "the offender," rather than "offenders," shows how well entrenched is the practice of referring to collective phenomena in individual terms.

11. M. Klein, Street Gangs and Street Workers, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1971; M. Hindelang, "With a little help from their friends: Group participation in reported delinquent behavior," British Journal of Criminology 16,2 (1976).

12. See W. Miller, "Youth gangs in the urban crisis era," in J. Short, Delinquency, Crime and Society, University of Chicago Press, 1976.

13. As noted in the next chapter, California during the 1970's represented a partial exception to this generalization. The presence of gangs in suburban communities is discussed in chapter 5, W. Miller, 1981, (cited above), and in J. Johnstone, "Youth gangs and black suburbs," Pacific Sociological Review, 24, 3 (July 1981).

14. This usage also conforms to that of police departments in several major cities. An official of the Gang Crimes Investigation Division of the Chicago Police Department stated, "We are interested in any group of three or more." The gang intelligence unit of the Los Angeles Police Department defined a "gang incident" as "any legal infraction involving three or more juveniles."

15. A detailed analysis of the definitional data collected in all 26 survey localities is contained in W. Miller, "Conceptions, definitions and images of youth gangs," unpublished paper, Harvard University, 1977.

2. Youth Gang Problems in the United States: Prevalence and Location

The public becomes aware of crime by law-violating youth groups primarily through media attention to an unusually shocking instance of gang violence or an unusually lethal period of gang feuding. Media coverage is often sporadic, highly selective, and focused on the atypical. But behind the impressions conveyed by the media lies a set of very basic questions concerning the nature of collective youth crime: How prevalent are law-violating youth groups in the United States? Where are they located? How many are there, and how many members do they have? How much crime are they responsible for? What kinds of offenses do they commit? How serious are the problems they create compared to other kinds of crime problems?

The previous chapter outlined a framework for addressing these questions. It defined the *law-violating youth group* as a major unit of analysis and presented a typology of such groups. It specified the criteria used by respondents to define a youth gang and the basis for distinguishing between gangs and other types of law-violating youth groups. These concepts and definitions are used as the basis for presenting baseline information on gangs and other types of youth groups in the 1970's. The present chapter deals only with youth gangs and addresses two major questions: how widespread were problems with youth gangs in the United States, and where were they located? Future chapters will deal with other types of law-violating youth groups.

The tabulations and analyses in the present chapter take as a primary object of examination *problems* with youth gangs rather than the *presence* of youth gangs. There are several reasons for this. One concerns the complex issue of how "social problems" are defined and conceived. Theoretically youth gangs as defined here could be present in a community without posing problems to some or many community residents. The notion of the "benign gang," discussed elsewhere, often carries the implication that gangs pose problems only to those who erroneously fail to appreciate their value to their members and others. A former gang member in a southern city answered a query about gang problems by saying, "The *city* doesn't have a gang problem; the *gangs* have the problem—they are continually harassed by the police and other community groups."

A second reason concerns the methods by which information was collected. The scope and resources of the survey made it impossible to do systematic empirical research in all communities where gang problems were reported or suspected. Guiding the choice of information-gathering methods was consideration of the feasibility of obtaining accurate answers to four separable questions.

1. Are there groups in a locality that conform to the definitional criteria of "youth gangs" as conventionally conceived?

2. Are some or all of these groups identified as gangs by knowledgeable persons?

3. Are such groups considered by these persons to pose crime problems?

4. Do those who consider gangs to pose crime problems include a substantial number of persons in positions of influence or authority in the community?

Collecting information with respect to question 1 for any substantial number of localities (for example, the 150 U.S. cities of 100,000 or more) would require a prohibitive amount of time and effort. Sound empirical research aimed at ascertaining the presence or absence of gangs and other types of law-violating youth groups in a large number of communities is expensive and difficult. As already noted, information of this type is rarely collected on a routine and systematic basis by official agencies, and what information is collected is generally incomplete and confined to particular communities or limited geographical areas.

To achieve the aims of the present survey—that is, the presentation for the first time of a national-level picture of collective youth crime—it was necessary to use questions 2, 3, and 4 as the basis for the choice of data-collection methods. The previous chapter explained that most information was collected by (1) direct communication with knowledgeable local respondents through intensive onsite interviews; (2) communication with local officials and other knowledgeable persons by telephone, correspondence, and the use of official reports; (3) analysis of newspaper accounts reporting statements by authoritative sources or providing specific information such as the incidence of gang-related killings, identification of named feuding gangs, and the operation of special gang-control units by the police or other agencies.

Information obtained through these methods, including the information used to designate communities as "gang problem localities," may be categorized according to three types. Type one information is of good quality and clearly indicates the presence of gang problems on the basis of specific details such as the numbers of gangs in particular neighborhoods, names of some or most gangs, statistics on gang offenses including assaults and killings, and substantial agreement among knowledgeable persons that identifiable gangs pose crime problems. Examples of this type of information may be found in the situation in Los Angeles and some of its surrounding communities during the latter 1970's.

Type two information is also of good quality and clearly indicates the absence of gang problems through the availability of information concerning the numbers, activities, and characteristics of law-violating youth groups other than gangs, and high levels of consensus among knowledgeable persons that such groups are *not* identifiable as gangs. An example of this type may be found in the situation in St. Louis in the earlier 1970's during the operational period of a special group-delinquency service and research project.

Type three information involves situations where information is poor or ambiguous, or where good quality information indicates that local groups have some of the characteristics of gangs but not others, and consensus is low among informed persons as to the existence of a gang

problem. A good example of this situation may be found in Houston during the late 1970's and early 1980's.

In the mid-1970's, authorities in Houston, including all survey respondents, were unanimous in reporting that gang problems were absent. By the late 1970's, however, the situation had changed. The police department had established a special unit of 25 officers called a "youth gang squad" and had identified 60 to 65 youth groups, all named, in various districts of the city.

These groups were involved in serious criminal activity, including at least three killings in 1979. Despite these developments, there was not, at the time of writing, substantial agreement among knowledgeable persons that Houston was experiencing a youth gang problem. The primary reason for this was that most of the 60 to 65 named groups lacked some of the characteristics conventionally used to designate a group as a gang (see definition, page 18). Among the elements lacking were a well-developed sense of turf, the degree of organization felt to be necessary for gang status, clearly identifiable leadership, and the degree of purpose in the commission of criminal acts associated with recognized gangs.

Some knowledgeable persons in the city felt that the presence of 60 to 65 named groups associated with particular parks and other areas, and their involvement in crimes such as burglary, hijacking, and assault—including several killings—provided sufficient grounds for reporting the existence of a gang problem in Houston. Other knowledgeable persons disagreed. Although his unit was called a "gang squad," the commanding officer of the unit was one such person. After analyzing the information collected by his 25 investigators (2 of whom were threatened with death by group members), he concluded that "on the basis of information we have been able to get, we did not find what we would consider to be 'gangs,' in the textbook sense of the word."

For present purposes, in order for a community to be designated a "gang-problem" locality, there must be substantial agreement among knowledgeable persons that such a problem exists. This criterion was not met in Houston in the late 1970's, so this city is not included among the gang-problem cities listed in table 2–1.

Significantly, however, the great majority of assignments to the "gang problem" and "no gang problem" categories were made on the basis of type one and two information. The decision, on the basis of type three information, not to make designations introduces a conservative bias into the tabulations, because it is more likely that inadequate consensus would be present when local collective youth crime problems come close to being identified as gang problems than when they come close to being identified as nongang problems. If borderline cases such as Houston and some other cities had been included in the gang-problem designations, the numbers of such localities in present tabulations would undoubtedly be larger.

Distribution of Gang Problem Localities

The question "What localities report youth gang problems?" appears at first to be simple and direct. But further consideration shows that there are a number of alternatives with respect to the kind of *unit* of locality one uses to answer the question. Most studies of collective youth crime have used the city as their major locality unit. But present purposes require a broader conception. Cities, of course, remain important units for purposes of locating gang problems, but a comprehensive national picture requires the use of other kinds of units as well. Significant locality units in the United States include regions, states, counties, metropolitan areas, cities, towns, unincorporated areas, and intracity districts.

This chapter uses most of these kinds of units in examining the distribution of gang-problem localities. Major sections deal with metropolitan areas; large cities, regions, and the cities, towns, and counties of one State—California. The term "locality" is used as the most inclusive general term to refer to all of the various types of geographical units. Because the locality units vary widely in size, it is important to present information both with respect to the numbers of units and the size of their populations. Most of the tables in this chapter include counts based on both numbers and populations.

It is also important to specify the time period under consideration. Many kinds of social problems vary over time in their extent and seriousness (e.g., poverty, unemployment, drug abuse), but in the case of gang activity the element of periodicity is of particular importance. Youth gangs characteristically show considerable variation over time in their locations, numbers, characteristic activity patterns, seriousness of the crime problems they pose, and so on. During the period of the survey, for example, the numbers of recognized gangs and the seriousness of gang problems diminished substantially in cities such as Philadelphia and New York, while gang problems came into existence or increased in seriousness in cities such as San Diego and Phoenix. Prevalence data should accommodate such variation by reviewing a sufficiently extended time period, and the present chapter uses one decade, 1970 through 1980, as its basic reporting period. A locality is designated a "gang-problem locality" if it reported gang problems at any time during the decade.

Gang Problems in Major Areas

In examining the distribution of collective youth crime problems, the metropolitan area—that cluster of urban-area communities surrounding or constituting a major municipal center—appears in some respects more significant than the city itself. Government agencies recognize the usefulness of such units for information purposes and administration and have developed a precise unit—the "standard metropolitan statistical area" (SMSA) for these purposes. More than 9,300 such units throughout the country were so designated during the 1970's.[1] Also defined was a more inclusive unit, the "standard consolidated statistical area" (SCSA), which comprised two or more SMSA's. This type of unit also figures in the present analysis.[2]

In the 1970's there were 36 SMSA's with populations of 1 million or more. In table 2-1 these are divided into three categories—5 million and over, 1.5 to 5 million, and 1 to 1.5 million. The largest category, the metropolitan areas of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, had a combined population of 23.5 million. Gang problems were reported for all of these. The second category includes 17 metropolitan areas with a combined population of 44 million. Gang problems were reported for 8 of the 17 (47 percent), with 53 percent of their combined population. The third category includes 16 areas with a combined population of 20.1 million. Gang problems were reported for 7 areas (44 percent) with a population of 20.1 million, or 44 percent of the population of SMSA's in this category.[3]

Table 2-1. Youth gang problems in large metropolitan areas 1970-80

Size of category in 1,000,000's	Number of areas in category[a]	Number of areas reporting gang problems[b]	Percentage of areas reporting gang problems	Population of area in thousands[d]	Population of areas with gang problems	Percent of area population with gang problems
5 & over	3	3	100.0%	23,500	23,500	100.0%
1.5 to 5	17	8	47.1	44,000	23,250	52.8
1 to 1.5	16	7[c]	43.7	20,100	8,900	44.3
	36	18	50.0%	87,600	55,650	63.5%

[a] Standard metropolitan statistical areas as defined in *Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas 1975*, U.S. Office of Management and Budget.
[b] Names of SMSA's in appendix B.
[c] Includes San Antonio, slightly under 1 million in 1970.
[d] U.S. Census, 1976.

In testing the statistical significance of the numbers and populations of SMSA's reporting gang problems, a marked difference appears between proportions for metropolitan areas over 5 million and those under 5 million, with something over 40 percent of the SMSA's in the smaller categories reporting gang problems, compared to 100 percent for the largest. The differences between proportions in the two smaller categories, however, are not statistically significant.[4]

For the Nation as a whole, then, youth gang problems were reported for 18 out of the 36 metropolitan areas of 1 million or more—50 percent of their number, and 62 percent of their population. Half the largest metropolitan areas in the country thus experienced problems with youth gangs during the 1970's.

Youth Gang Problems in Large Cities

Popular tradition as well as available research findings have indicated a direct relationship between city size and gang problems—the larger the city, the more gang problems. Table 2-2 provides information on gang problems in large American cities during the 1970's. For present purposes a "large" city is defined as one with a population of 100,000 or more. There were 150

U.S. cities this size during the survey period. Forthcoming sections present data on the numbers, sizes, and proportions of cities reporting gang problems using two kinds of distinctions—city size and regional location.

Prevalence by City Size. Cities are divided into five population categories: 1 million and over; 500,000 to 1 million; 250,000 to 500,000; 150,000 to 250,000; and 100,000 to 150,000. Table 2-2 shows that 41 of the 150 large cities—over one quarter—reported gang problems during the 1970's.[5] However, as in the case of metropolitan areas, gang-problem cities tend to be larger, so that the population of cities reporting gang problems is just about half the population of all large cities.

Table 2-2. Youth gang problems in cities of 100,000 and over, 1970–80

Size of category in 1,000's	Number of cities in category	Number of cities reporting gang problems[a]	Percentage of cities reporting gang problems	Population of cities in this category[c]	Population of cities with gang problems	Population of cities with gang problems as a percentage of city population
1,000 & over	6	5[b]	83.3%	17,807	16,352	91.8%
500–999	17	7	41.2	9,399	4,734	50.4
250–499	32	10	31.2	11,015	3,437	31.2
150–249	45	7	15.6	8,164	1,282	15.7
100–149	50	12	24.0	6,050	1,409	23.3
	150	41	27.3%	52,435	27,214	51.9%

a. Names of cities in appendix C.
b. Houston excluded; see text.
c. U.S. Census, 1970.

Of the six cities of 1 million or over, all but one, Houston, reported gang problems during this period. Houston's borderline status was discussed earlier. If Houston had been designated a gang-problem city, the proportion of large cities reporting gang problems would rise to 28 percent, and their population to 55 percent.

The generally assumed relation between city size and gang problems—the larger the city, the greater the likelihood of such problems—is largely confirmed by table 2-2. In both numbers and city size, the proportion of gang-problem cities is higher in the larger size categories. However, the relationship is not as direct as expected. In testing the statistical significance of differences among the various categories, a strong and highly significant difference appears between the largest size category (1 million and over), and the other categories combined.[6] However, tests of the differences among the lower four categories do not provide statistical support to the proposition that there is a direct relation between city size and presence of gang problems, since

none is statistically significant.[7] Moreover, while proportions of gang-problem cities diminish from category one through four, category five shows a somewhat higher proportion than category four.

These data thus suggest that there may have been a historical change in the traditional direct relation between city size and gang problems, in that cities in the lowest population category during the 1970's reported gang problems at a higher rate than those in the next highest catgory (24 percent of cities between 100 and 150 thousand compared with 15.6 percent of cities between 150 and 250 thousand). To explore this possibility, it is necessary to look more closely at the special circumstances of the State of California during the 1970's.

California merits special attention because of two of its characteristics: during the survey period the State contained both the highest number of large cities in the country and the highest number of large cities with gang problems. With 20 cities of 100,000 or more, California had almost twice as many such cities as the State with the second highest number—Texas, with 11. The combined population of California's large cities was about 7.5 million, over 1½ times the equivalent figure for Texas. The presence of so many large cities and so many cities with gang problems raises the possibility that California data distort the national statistics, thus suggesting the advisability of examining the national situation with California factored out.

Table 2-3 separates the national prevalence figures shown in table 2-2 into two parts—the part contributed by California cities, and the part contributed by cities in the rest of the country. The major figures in the table are percentages; those in the first three columns are based on numbers of cities, and those in the second three on populations. Percentage for these two types of unit are very similar.

Comparing the prevalence of gang-problem cities in California with the rest of the country shows, first of all, that California cities contributed disproportionately in all categories. With respect to numbers of cities, California, with 13 percent of the Nation's large cities (20 of 150), contained 46 percent of its gang-problem cities (19 of 41). Of the 27 percent of large U.S. cities reporting gang problems, California contained 12½ percent, compared to 14½ percent for the rest of the country. With respect to population, large cities in California comprised 14 percent of the population of the Nation's large cities, but 28 percent of the population of its gang-problem cities. Gang-problem cities contained 52 percent of the population of the Nation's large cities, of which California contributed 14 percent and the rest of the Nation 38 percent.

California's overcontribution to the prevalence of gang-problem cities was, however, most pronounced in the lower size categories. Among cities between 100 thousand and 250 thousand, California reported more gang-problem cities than all the other states combined. Of 19 gang-problem cities in this category, 12, or 63 percent, were in California. California cities had 17 percent of the population of cities in this category, but 62 percent of the population of gang-problem cities.

Several points should be noted in connection with California's disproportionate contribution to gang prevalence in the lower size categories. In the rest of the country, cities under one million had significantly lower percentages of gang cities than those over one million; in California the sharp break between the largest cities and the others was not seen. Outside of California cities containing 60 percent of the population of cities over half a million reported gang problems, compared to 14 percent for cities under half a million. In California the equivalent figures are 100 percent and 93 percent. The 60-percent/14-percent difference is highly significant statistically; the 100-percent/93-percent difference is not significant.

Table 2–3. Youth gang problems in large cities: California compared with other States

Size category[a]	Percent reporting gang problems					
	Number of cities			Population of cities[b]		
	All U.S n=41	Calif. n=19	Outside Calif. n=22	All U.S. pop.=27,214	Calif. pop.=7,393	Outside Calif. pop.= 19,821
1,000 & over	83.3 %	16.7%	66.7%	91.8%	15.4%	76.4%
500 to 999	41.2	17.6	23.5	50.4	21.5	28.8
250 to 499	31.2	9.4	21.9	31.2	8.5	22.7
150 to 249	15.5	11.1	4.4	15.7	10.7	5.0
100 to 149	24.0	14.0	10.0	23.3	13.5	9.8
	27.3%	12.7%	14.7%	51.9%	14.1%	37.8%

[a] Population in 1,000's.
[b] U.S. Census, 1976.

A second point concerns the finding that for the country as a whole the proportion of gang-problem cities was highest in the largest size category and diminished successively through each lower category except the lowest. Because California cities contribute so heavily to prevalence in the lower categories, it seemed likely that the upturn at the lower end of the national distribution could be a consequence of the overcontribution of California. Table 2–3 shows that this was not the case. Even with California cities removed, the slight upturn at the low end of the national distribution remains. California does seem to affect the distribution to a limited extent; the difference between proportions in the fourth and fifth size categories drops slightly when California is removed from consideration, but the upturn remains. This suggests that there has been a change, albeit a small one, in the traditional direct relationship between city size and the prevalence of gang problems, in that cities between 100,000 and 150,000 showed a somewhat higher prevalence rate than those between 150,000 and 250,000.

Nevertheless, the difference between California and the rest of the nation in the relation between city size and gang problems is striking. For the nation as a whole, except for the small upturn in the lowest category, the prevalence of gang problems decreases sharply as city size decreases. In California, by contrast, the distribution is almost flat; no significant relationship appears between city size and gang problems. In none of the categories in table 2-3 (Number of Cities)

does the proportion of gang-problem cities differ more than 4 percentage points from the all-category figure of 12.7. Because all but one of California's 20 large cities reported gang problems, and because these cities were distributed proportionately through the size categories, city size was not associated with the presence of gang problems.

This finding admits of several interpretations. If one assumes that the situation in California in the 1970's was a temporary historical aberration, one would then expect the traditional relationship between city size and gang problems to reappear once conditions returned to normal. If, on the other hand, one assumes that in this instance, as in many others, developments in California represent the wave of the future for the rest of the country, the California situation may presage a new national development whereby problems with youth gangs will break out of their traditional location in the largest cities and appear with increasing frequency in smaller localities as well.

Regional Location of Large Gang-Problem Cities

The distribution of large cities with gang problems differs according to regional location as well as city size. The importance of region as a differentiating factor has already been suggested by the finding that one Western State, California, contained a disproportionate share of the Nation's gang-problem cities. Youth gang problems have traditionally been associated primarily with the Northeast, particularly New York City, and the Midwest, particularly Chicago. Survey data show some changes in this picture.

The regional location of gang-problem cities is shown in table 2–4. There are various systems for designating regions in the United States. The system used here delineates four major regions: Northeast, North Central, South, and West and nine subregions—three in the South and two each in the others.[8] As in the case of tabulations by city size, figures are presented both for numbers of cities and for city populations.

Looking first at the numbers of gang-problem cities in each of the four major regions, table 2–4 shows that a majority of the cities—56 percent—were located in the West. Twenty-four percent were located in the Northeast, 12 percent in the South, and 7 percent in the North Central region. Population figures show a somewhat different distribution. On this basis the Northeast ranked first, with 42 percent of the population of the gang-problem cities, followed by the West with 32 percent, North Central with 19 percent, and the South with 7 percent.

Of the nine subregions, the Pacific subregion, with almost half of all gang-problem cities, clearly outranked the others. Next came the New England and Middle Atlantic subregions, each with about 12 percent of the gang-problem cities. Only one subregion, West North Central, reported no gang cities.

Table 2–4. Youth gang problems in large cities, by region

N Cities = 41 Population = 26.7 million[c]

Major region[b]	Subregion	Number of cities with gang problems	% cities in this area	Population of gang-problem cities	% population this area
Northeast		10	24.4	11.1	41.6
	New England	5	12.2	1.15	4.3
	Middle Atlantic	5	12.2	9.98	37.3
North Central		3	7.3	5.0	18.7
	E. No. Central	3	7.3	5.01	18.7
	W. No. Central	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
South		5	12.2	1.9	7.2
	South Atlantic	2	4.9	0.48	1.8
	E. So. Central	1	2.4	0.28	1.0
	W. So. Central	2	4.9	1.17	4.4
West		23	56.1	8.7	32.4
	Mountain	3	7.3	1.27	4.8
	Pacific	20	48.8	7.39	27.6
All regions		41	100.0	27.7	99.9

[a] Differs from figure in table 2–2 because of rounding differences.
[b] System of regional classification used by *Uniform Crime Reports*, U.S. Department of Justice.
[c] Population in 1,000,000's.

Distributions based on population size provide a different picture. On this basis the Middle Atlantic subregion, with 37 percent of the population of gang-problem cities, ranked first, followed by the Pacific with 28 percent, and East North Central, with 19 percent.

These data show both change and continuity in the regional distribution of gang-problem cities. The Northeast still contained the largest number of urban residents exposed to youth gang problems, and the South the fewest, as has been the case for most of the present century. However, the positions of the West and Midwest appear to have been reversed, with the West taking over second place from the Midwest. With respect to numbers of gang-problem cities, the West had assumed a commanding lead over all other regions, and contained, in the 1970's, over twice as many gang-problem cities as the next-ranking region, the Northeast.

A major reason for the differences between regional rankings based on numbers of cities and those based on populations is the unusually high number of California cities in the lower size categories, as just shown. The top-ranking position of the West in numbers of gang-problem cities is due almost entirely to the large number of California cities reporting gang problems. The top-ranking position of the Northeast in the population of gang-problem cities was due to the fact that the Northeastern cities that did report gang problems tended to be very large. For example, the Middle Atlantic subregion contained 2 cities, New York and Philadelphia, whose combined population (9.2 million) exceeded that of all 20 cities in the Pacific subregion (7.4 million).

Further analyses of the reasons for the differential distribution of gang problem cities by region and for changes in this distribution are part of a broader treatment of explanations of the existence, distribution, character, and historical developments in youth gang problems. This treatment is not included in the present report.

Gang-Problem Localities in California

Findings presented thus far indicate clearly that an adequate picture of collective youth crime in the 1970's requires a special examination of youth gang problems in California. One reason for this examination is to document the unprecedented extent of California gang problems; another is to illustrate the importance of seeking evidence of gang problems in all communities rather than focusing primarily on larger cities. This section looks at gang problems on a statewide basis, examining first the large cities, then the metropolitan areas, and finally the extended metropolitan area (SCSA) of Los Angeles.

As noted earlier, in the 1970's there were 20 cities in California with populations of 100,000 or more. Of these, 19 reported problems with youth gangs. The total population of these cities was 7.4 million, representing 97 percent of the population of all cities over 100,000 and 34 percent of the population of the State. The one city not reporting gang problems at the time of writing was Fremont, a city of 200,000 located between San Jose and Oakland. Officials reported the existence of several gang-type groups in the city, but felt they were not yet identifiable as gangs according to the conventional definition.

There were 17 standard metropolitan statistical areas in California, whose combined population of almost 20 million made up 93 percent of the State's population. They ranged in size from 163,000 (Santa Cruz) to 7 million (Los Angeles), with an average size of 1.2 million. The location of gang-problem localities by SMSA is shown in table 2-5. Cities and towns reporting gang problems were found in 11 of the 17 SMSA's. These 11 contained 86 percent of the population of all SMSA's and 80 percent of the population of the State. Four SMSA's made up the standard consolidated statistical area (SCSA) of Los Angeles. All four of these, with a combined population of 10.5 million, or just under half of the population of the State, reported gang problems. The seven gang-problem SMSA's outside the Los Angeles area contained 31 percent of the State's population. SMSA's not reporting gang problems contained only 13 percent of California's population. There is a good likelihood that some of the six SMSA's listed as not reporting gang problems did in fact contain one or more cities or towns with gangs, but this could not be confirmed on the basis of available information.

Table 2-5. Youth gang problems in California cities and towns, statewide, by metropolitan area

Number SMSA's = 17 Population = 19,968[a]

Standard metropolitan statistical areas	Number of areas	Population	% of State population
Reporting gang problems	11	17,196	79.9%
Los Angeles SCSA[b]	4	10,467	48.6
Outside Los Angeles SCSA	7	6,729	31.3
Not reporting gang problems	6	2,772	12.9
Totals	17	19,968	92.8%

[a] Population in 1,000's.
[b] Standard consolidated metropolitan area. For definitions, see *Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas*, U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 1975.

During the 1970's 103 cities and towns in California reported problems with youth gangs, as shown in table 2-6. The combined population of these localities was 10.7 million—almost half the population of the State, and 62 percent of the population of the SMSA's in which they were located. Eighty of these cities and towns were located in the Los Angeles SCSA and contained 70 percent of its population. Twenty-three were located in other SMSA's, and contained just over half of their combined population.

Table 2-6. California localities reporting gang problems, statewide

No. localities = 103 Population = 10,691[a]

Location	Size of locality						All localities			
	Under 20		20-100		Over 100		No.	%	Pop.	Pct. SMSA Pop.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%				
Within L.A. SCSA[b]	18	22.3	50	62.5	12	15.0	80	77.7	7,262.6	69.4
Outside L. A. SCSA	9	39.1	7	30.4	7	30.4	23	23.3	3,428.4	50.9
	27	26.2	57	55.3	19	18.4	103	100.0	10,691.0	62.2

[a] Population in 1,000's.
[b] See note b, table 2-5.

Table 2-6 divides the 103 gang-problem localities into three size categories—under 20,000, 20,000 to 100,000, and over 100,000. The middle category (20,000 to 100,000) had the highest proportion of gang-problem localities, 55 percent, with the lower category (under 20,000), at 26 percent, the next highest. These figures support and amplify the finding that gang problems had started to appear in smaller communities. The "smaller" communities reported in earlier findings were still over 100,000; table 2-6 shows that over 80 percent of California's gang-

problem localities were under 100,000, and over a quarter were under 20,000. Within the Los Angeles SCSA the highest proportion of gang-problem localities—62 percent—fell into the middle size category (20,000-100,000), but outside that area the highest proportion—almost 40 percent—fell into the lowest (under 20,000) category.

Table 2-7. California localities reporting gang problems, Los Angeles and adjacent metropolitan areas[a]

Metropolitan area[b]	Number of counties	Population[c]	Number of cities/towns reporting gang problems	Population of gang problem localities as a % of gang population[d]	Population of larger gang-problem localities as a % of larger localities
Los Angeles	1	6,997	53	80.6%	89.1%
Anaheim	1	1,756	11	53.2	71.9
Riverside	2	1,265	12	41.6	93.4
Oxnard	1	448	4	36.6	57.8
	5	10,466	80	69.4%	87.4%

[a] Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim SCSA. See note b, table 2-5.
[b] See note b, table 2-1.
[c] In 1,000's.
[d] 1976 Census Bureau figures for most localities; 1970 figures for some localities under 20,000.
[e] 20,000 and over.

The highest concentration of gang-problem localities in California was found in the extended metropolitan area or SCSA of Los Angeles. This area comprised five counties—Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura, with a combined population of 10.5 million. The 80 cities and towns in this area reporting gang problems contained 70 percent of the population of the extended metropolitan area and 87 percent of the population of cities and towns of 20,000 and over. The highest number of gang-problem localities, 53, was found in Los Angeles County; these cities and towns contained 80 percent of the population of the SMSA and almost 90 percent of the population of localities of 20,000 and over. The highest proportion of larger gang cities was found in the Riverside-San Bernardino SMSA, whose 12 gang-problem cities contained 93 percent of the population of all localities over 20,000. The numbers of cities and towns with gang problems in the extended Los Angeles metropolitan area, along with the size of the population aggregates affected, were almost certainly without precedent in American history.

Summary

Examining the prevalence and location of youth gangs during the decade of the 1970's shows that crime problems posed by gangs were widespread throughout the Nation. Of the 36 metropolitan areas with populations of 1 million or more, gang problems were reported for 18, with a combined population of 55.6 million, or 63 percent of their population.

Of the Nation's 150 "large" cities—those with populations of 100,000 or more—gang problems were reported for 41, or 27 percent, with a combined population of 52 million, or 52 percent of the large city population. In the largest size category, 1 million and over, 5 of 6 cities with a combined population of 16 million, or 92 percent of their population, reported gang problems. In general, the proportion of cities reporting gang problems became lower as city size decreased, except for a slight upturn in the 100,000 to 150,000 category. Separating California cities from the rest of the Nation shows that cities in this State contributed disproportionately to national prevalence figures; with 13 percent of the Nation's large cities, California contained 46 percent of large gang-problem cities. The direct relationship between larger city size and higher prevalence of gang problems found in the rest of the Nation did not appear in California, possibly presaging a nationwide spread of gang problems to smaller cities.

With respect to the regional location of large gang-problem cities, the West had the largest number of such cities—over one-half—while the Northeast, whose gang-problem cities contained a population of 11 million, or 42 percent of the population of such cities, ranked highest in gang-city population. These data indicate some changes in the traditional regional distribution of gang-problem cities, with the West taking over first place from the Northeast in the number of such cities, and replacing the Midwest in second place with respect to population.

A more detailed examination of California, the State with the highest concentration of gang-problem localities, shows that cities and towns with gang problems were located in 11 of the State's 17 metropolitan areas. The population of these 11 was 17 million, about 80 percent of the population of the State, and 85 percent of the population of all metropolitan areas. Gang problems were reported for 103 cities and towns whose combined population of 10.6 million constituted one-half of the population of the State and 60 percent of the metropolitan area population. The size of many communities with gang problems was much smaller than has traditionally been the case; 80 percent of the gang-problem cities and towns were under 100,000, and 26 percent under 20,000. The area of highest gang concentration, the extended Los Angeles metropolitan area, reported 80 cities and towns with gang problems; these contained 70 percent of the population of the area and 87 percent of the population of cities of 20,000 and over.

The existence of so many gang-problem localities in the metropolitan area outside of Los Angeles itself raises the possibility that examination of the metropolitan areas of other large cities might reveal more gang-problem localities than are generally reported.

Youth gang prevalence in the United States in the 1970's may be summarized by citing, in ascending order, the proportions of the populations of different kinds of locality units reporting gang problems. For large cities, 52 percent; metropolitan areas, 62 percent; California metropolitan areas, 80 percent; extended Los Angeles metropolitan area, 87 percent; larger California cities, 97 percent.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

2. SMSA's, cited above: 60.

3. These SMSA's are listed in appendix B.

4. Chi square (χ^2) SMSA's > 1 million vs. < 1 million = 18.4, 1 d.f., $p < .001$. χ^2 SMSA's 1,500,000 to 5,000,000 vs. SMSA's 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 = .40, 1 d.f., p. not significant.

5. These cities are listed in appendix C.

6. $\chi^2 = 17.0$, 1 d.f., $p.<.001$.

7. $\chi^2 = 2.8$, 3 d.f., p. not significant.

8. The method used here for dividing the United States into regions is that developed for the Uniform Crime Reports. See, for example, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports 1979, app. 3, "Uniform Crime Reporting area definitions": 324.

3. Collective Youth Crime Problems in Major Urban Localities: Presence and Seriousness

Information on the prevalence and location of youth gang problems in the United States, as presented in the previous chapter, is essential to a national-level survey of collective youth crime. But such a survey also requires information that goes well beyond the question of whether gang problems are present or absent, and where. Also necessary is information on the character of law-violating youth groups (such as numbers, sizes, ethnic composition, characteristic activities) as well as the character of the crime problems they pose (e.g., seriousness, extent of recognition).

Collecting information on this order of detail for even one of the major types of locality units considered in the prevalence analysis—for example, the 150 cities of 100,000 and over—would entail a prohibitive effort. Rather than covering the full range of national localities used in the prevalence analysis, the bulk of the more detailed information presented here was collected in the course of onsite data gathering in one subset of these localities—the 26 large cities and urban counties listed in chapter 1. Most of the descriptive information in this and subsequent chapters comes from intensive interviews with a wide range of respondents, as described in chapter 1.

On the basis of this information, the present chapter addresses one major set of policy-relevant questions. Were problems with law-violating youth groups locally identified as "gang problems" or as problems with other kinds of groups? How widely were such problems recognized? How serious were problems posed by gangs and other kinds of youth groups compared with other kinds of local crime problems?

Identification of Gang Problems in Major Cities

Table 2-2 shows that 41 out of the 150 cities with populations of 100,000 or more reported problems with youth gangs during the 1970's. Ten of these were visited between 1974 and 1977, and local respondents were interviewed in depth with respect to collective youth crime. In 9 of the 10 cities, 90 percent or more of those interviewed reported that groups identified as youth gangs posed crime problems (table 3-1, column 1). In the 10th city, San Diego, only one complete interview was conducted, and the respondent, the commanding officer of the police department's youth division, reported that the city was not experiencing gang problems. About half a dozen other local respondents corroborated this report in the course of less intensive interviews. By the end of the decade, however, the situation had changed. Police and other local authorities reported a serious gang problem, with a minimum of 40 police-recognized gangs in the city, and 15 known gang-related killings during a two-year period.

Table 3–1. Youth gangs in major cities: Percent respondents reporting gang problems

N cities = 23 Population = 27.8 million

90–100%		50–90%		Under 50%	
N cities = 9		N cities = 8		N cities = 6	
N respondents = 155		N respondents = 91		N respondents = 51	
City	% reporting problems	City	% reporting problems	City	% reporting problems
New York	100.0%	Washington	77.8%	Newark	44.4%
Chicago	100.0	Cleveland	75.0	Dallas	40.0
Los Angeles	100.0	St. Paul	70.0	Milwaukee	38.5
Philadelphia	100.0	Pittsburgh	69.2	St. Louis	37.5
San Francisco	100.0	Baltimore	60.0	New Orleans	28.6
Miami	100.0	Denver	56.2	Houston	0.0
Detroit	92.3	Minneapolis	50.0		
San Antonio	92.3	Fort Worth	50.0		
Boston	91.2				
	96.1%		61.5%		35.3%

Total respondents = 297.
Total percent reporting problems: 75.2%.

Table 3–1, which deals with gang problems in site-visit cities, does not include San Diego as a gang-problem city since it was not so designated during the site-visit period, 1974–77. It is, however, included in the chapter 2 tabulations dealing with the entire decade.[1]

Table 3–1 presents information on the identification of gang problems in 23 cities with a combined population of 28 million that were visited between 1974 and 1977. Respondents were asked "Is your city currently experiencing problems with youth gangs?" (see appendix A). Of 298 respondents, 75 percent said yes. However, the proportion of respondents reporting gang problems was different in different cities. Table 3–1 divides the 23 cities into 3 categories according to the proportion of respondents identifying local collective youth crime problems as "gang problems."

In nine cities—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Miami, Detroit, San Antonio, and Boston—all or almost all of those interviewed reported gang problems. In eight cities a majority (50–90 percent) reported gang problems. These were Washington, Cleveland, St. Paul, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Denver, Minneapolis, and Fort Worth. In six cities gang problems were reported by a minority (under 50 percent). These were Newark, Dallas, Milwaukee, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Houston. The percentage of all respondents reporting gang problems in the first set of cities was 96 percent, in the second set 61 percent, and in the third 35 percent.

There are several reasons why respondents in 17 of the 23 cities differed in reporting the presence of gang problems. One reason is that respondents differed in their degree of familiarity with the conditions of street life in their city. In general, "field" or "line" personnel were more likely to know about gangs and gang problems in the local communities, whereas command-level or administrative personnel with little or no direct contact with the daily life of these communities were less likely to know about such problems. Also, in large cities of the kind under consideration here, whatever gang problems are present are almost always found in some districts and not in others. Some of those who worked in or were familiar with districts without gang problems were simply unaware of their existence in other districts or neighborhoods.

Another reason involves possible differences among respondents as to whether certain of the law-violating youth groups in their city should be identified as "gangs." However, evidence presented earlier suggests that this factor was relatively unimportant. Chapter 1 showed surprisingly high agreement among respondents with respect to the defining characteristics of a gang, so that the role of definitional differences among respondents, while undoubtedly affecting their reporting to some degree, was in all probability a minor one.

Only 9 of the 23 site-visit cities are designated as "gang-problem" cities. Chapter 2 states that one of the criteria used to designate a locality as a gang-problem locality is that there be "substantial agreement" among knowledgeable authorities that gang problems are present. The criterion used here for "substantial" agreement, as shown in table 2-1, is an agreement level of 90 percent or more. Cities such as Washington and Cleveland, where three-quarters of those interviewed reported the presence of gang problems, are not designated as gang-problem cities for the purposes of this report. The use of a conservative criterion for assigning cities to the gang-problem category suggests that present prevalence figures might represent undercounts. If a more generous criterion were used—an agreement level, say, of three-quarters or two-thirds—the number of gang-problem cities would be larger.

Recognition of Gang Problems by Municipal Agencies

In the six largest gang-problem cities, respondents who reported gang problems were asked for their opinions on whether persons in five local agencies or groups also recognized the existence of such problems. This question was asked both to learn about the degree of correspondence between respondents' positions and their perceptions of the positions of others, and to get some notion of which city agencies or groups granted higher or lower priority to problems of gang crime. The five agencies or groups were the police, the municipal or county government, the schools, the social agencies, and the citizens or residents of the city. Tables 3-2 and 3-3 show respondents' estimates.

Eighty-three percent of the 135 responses included a judgment that others perceived gangs as a problem. The agency seen by most respondents (96 percent) to be cognizant of and concerned with youth gang problems was the schools. Elementary, junior, and senior high schools were mentioned, with junior high schools most frequently cited. Most respondents felt this recognition was especially noteworthy in light of a traditional tendency by the schools to conceal from outsiders internal problems with discipline or serious misconduct.

Table 3-2. Agency recognition of youth gang problems: Respondents' estimates by agency

N cities = 6 N responses = 135

Agency/group being judged: All cities	Number of responses	% estimating agency/group recognized existence of gang problems
Schools	29	96.5%
City residents	23	91.3
Police	31	90.3
Municipal/county government	29	68.0
Social service agencies	23	65.2
All categories	135	83.0%

Ninety-one percent of respondents felt that city residents perceived gangs as a problem and many cited a pervasive sense of fear by citizens in local communities—particularly minority communities. Almost every agency cited examples of desperate pleas from the citizenry for help in coping with gang violence. Ninety percent reported recognition by the police of gang problems; some police officers in juvenile or gang divisions felt that their fellow officers failed sufficiently to recognize how serious gang problems were, but most officers, as well as nonpolice personnel, attributed to the police a clear recognition of the gravity of the problem.

Perceptions of the positions of municipal or county governments and the social agencies differed. While the majority attributed concern to these agencies, only about 7 in 10—in contrast to the 9 in 10 estimates for schools, residents, and police—felt that these agencies recognized gang problems. One common complaint about city governments concerned discrepancies between words and deeds. One respondent said, "They are big on rhetoric, but the amounts of money actually allocated for gang-related problems reflects a low priority in fact." The reluctance of some social agencies to recognize the seriousness of gang problems was most often attributed to a marked preference for working with the "good kids" rather than the tough, often violent, and seldom tractable gang members.

There was considerable variation among the six cities with respect to estimates of gang-problem recognition by others. In New York, all respondents agreed that all five categories of agencies and citizenry recognized the existence and seriousness of gang problems. This probably relates to the conspicuous role of media communication in this city; during the decade, particularly the first half, youth gang problems were heavily publicized in magazine articles, newspaper features, and television programs. For a New York resident, lay or professional, to be unaware of gang activities in the Bronx and elsewhere would require an unusual degree of insulation from media sources. The rankings of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, and San Francisco correspond fairly well to estimated and documented levels of seriousness in these cities; for example, the "recognition" rankings in table 3-3 correspond quite closely to the "seriousness" rankings in table 3-4.

Table 3–3. Agency recognition of youth gang problems: Respondents' estimates by city

N cities = 6 N responses = 135

City being judged: All agencies/groups	Number of responses	% estimating agency/group recognized existence of gang problems
New York	18	100.0%
Los Angeles	21	92.5
Philadelphia	19	89.5
Detroit	22	81.8
Chicago	40	77.5
San Francisco	15	53.3
Six cities	135	83.0%

Seriousness of Crime Problems by Youth Gangs

Criminal activity by gangs and other types of law-violating youth groups is only one of a wide variety of crime problems facing the United States. With limited resources available for the prevention and control of crime, it is important to establish priorities for allocating available resources. One factor to be taken into account in determining priorities is the seriousness of various types of crimes. How serious are crime problems posed by youth gangs compared to other kinds of problems?

Rating the seriousness of various forms of crime is very complicated. It's difficult to establish objective ratings because people's values play such a large part in the seriousness they assign to different kinds of crime. Is white-collar crime more serious than street-crime? Is child abuse more serious than robbery? Are low-volume felonies more serious than high-volume misdemeanors?

Many factors influence the way people evaluate the seriousness of different kinds of crime. Among these are the "class interests" of social categories such as males and females, higher and lower status persons, younger and older persons, and so on. Different judgments on seriousness are often based on a "whose ox is gored" principle, with rape generally regarded as more serious

Table 3–4. Seriousness of youth gang problems in major cities: Respondents' ratings

N cities = 9 N ratings = 107

City	Seriousness rating*
Los Angeles	7.4
Philadelphia	7.4
New York	7.2
Chicago	6.3
Detroit	6.0
San Francisco	6.0
San Antonio	5.8
Miami	5.5
Boston	5.5
All-city average	6.1

* One-to-ten scale (see text). City figure is mean of all ratings for that city.

by most females than by most males, consumer fraud more serious by most consumers than most producers, mugging as more serious by most middle-class adult females than most lower-class adolescent males, and so on. Political philosophies also influence appraisals of seriousness, with white-collar crime generally being regarded as more serious by most liberals than by most conservatives, and welfare fraud as more serious by most conservatives than by most liberals. Thus, appraisals both of the nature and seriousness of gang problems are strongly influenced by the social position and interests of the appraisers.

Despite these difficulties, various methods of classifying offenses by seriousness have been developed, and some are widely used. The legal distinction between "felonies" and "misdemeanors" represents one such method; the distinction between "Part I" and "Part II" offenses used by the FBI in *Uniform Crime Reports* is another. One of the most systematic and comprehensive efforts to rate the seriousness of various types of offenses is that of Thorsten Sellin and Marvin Wolfgang, reported in detail in their volume *The Measurement of Delinquency*.[2] Sellin and Wolfgang attempted to devise an "objective" scale for rating the seriousness of juvenile offenses, based on criteria such as the presence or absence of physical injury, presence or absence of property damage, the nature of victimization, and similar factors.

It was beyond the scope of the present survey to use the kinds of methods developed by Sellin and Wolfgang. Among other reasons, detailed information on the numbers and kinds of offenses committed by or attributed to gang members was not available. The measures of seriousness used here are much more gross, and methods of measurement much more crude. Respondents were asked to consider the full range of offenses customarily committed by local gang members, to conceive this as one kind of crime problem, and to compare its seriousness with other crime problems. Respondents who were reluctant to ignore the differences among the various forms of gang crime were asked to make their appraisals on an offense-by-offense basis, and to provide separate ratings for gang fighting, gang extortion, and so on. These ratings were then averaged to obtain a composite.

Respondents in all nine site-surveyed gang-problem cities were asked to compare the seriousness of gang-crime problems to that of other crime problems; in some cities they were also asked to compare the seriousness of gang crime problems to that of noncrime urban problems such as unemployment and housing.[3] The fact that those providing seriousness ratings represented a relatively wide range of different interests, occupations, and social categories accommodated to a limited extent the whose-ox-is-gored problem.

Respondents were asked to rate the seriousness of crime problems posed by youth gangs on a 1-to-10 scale. As a basis of comparison, they were shown a list of local crime problems compiled through a previsit review of local reports. They were asked to rate the most serious of these—offenses such as murder, armed robbery, and aggravated assault—as 8 to 10 in seriousness, and to rate offenses such as truancy, occasional use of marijuana, and larceny of school supplies in the 1-to-3 range. Respondents were also asked to base their estimates on citywide conditions and to consider both high- and low-crime areas rather than focusing on particular high-crime neighborhoods.

Table 3–4 presents averaged seriousness ratings for the nine gang-problem cities. Ratings were provided by 107 respondents, an average of 12 per city.[4] The average rating given by respondents in the nine cities was 6.1. The range was relatively limited, with less than two points separating the low of 5.5 for Boston from the high of 7.4 for Los Angeles and Philadelphia. Taking the midpoint of the 10-point scale as representing a condition of "medium" or "average" seriousness, the table shows that respondents in all nine cities rated the seriousness of problems posed by youth gangs as above average on a scale including crimes such as murder and armed robbery. The highest ratings were recorded for Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and New York, all of which had seriousness scores of 7 or higher.

Almost all respondents cited variation by city districts as a complicating factor. In San Francisco, for example, all respondents rated the seriousness of gang problems outside Chinatown as low, but within Chinatown as very high or the highest. The citywide rating of 6 thus represents a combination of rankings in the 9 to 10 range for Chinatown and in the 2 to 3 range for the rest of the city. Seriousness ratings would have been considerably higher if estimates for only the areas of high gang activity (e.g., South Bronx, East Los Angeles) had been solicited, rather than citywide estimates.

Another factor affecting the seriousness ratings was the tendency by respondents to compare the seriousness of current gang problems with those of the recent past. This was most evident in Chicago, which, on the basis of the numbers of gangs and the amount of gang crime, might have been expected to provide seriousness ratings at the level of Los Angeles and New York. However, almost every Chicago respondent compared the seriousness of current problems with those of the city's "supergang" era of the 1960's—a period of unusually lethal gang activity—which resulted in a set of ratings that were somewhat lower than would have been obtained if only the current situation had been considered.

Table 3–5. Seriousness of problems by youth groups other than gangs: Respondents' ratings

N localities = 20 N ratings = 226

Locality	Seriousness rating[a]
Cleveland	8.4
Miami	8.1
Washington	8.0
Pittsburgh	7.8
St. Paul	7.5
Boston	7.2
Newark	7.1
Prince George's County, MD	6.9
New Orleans	6.7
San Antonio	6.3
Dallas	6.2
Denver	5.9
Montgomery County, MD	5.8
Minneapolis	5.7
Fort Worth	5.7
Detroit	5.6
Milwaukee	5.2
Chicago	4.7
St. Louis	4.7
Houston	3.7
All-locality average	6.4

[a] See note a, table 3–4.

Problems by Groups Other Than Gangs: Presence and Seriousness

Crime problems by youth gangs, as shown in table 3–1, were reported by 75 percent of 298

respondents in 23 cities. However, in six of these cities, over half the respondents reported that gang problems were absent, and in another eight, one-half to one-quarter of the respondents reported that gang problems were absent. Respondents in these 23 cities, along with those in two urban-area counties not listed in table 3–1 (Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, Maryland) were also asked whether their communities were experiencing problems with law-violating youth groups other than gangs (Survey Guide, appendix A, item I–1–B). As examples, 4 or 5 of the 15 types of nongang groups listed in table 1–3 were cited: disruptive local groups, robbery bands, burglary rings, assaultive public-gathering crowds, and the like.

Of 241 practitioners providing responses to this query, 239 reported that their localities *were* experiencing crime problems with youth groups of these kinds. A common response to the naming of types of nongang groups was "All of the above." The two respondents who said that there were no group problems in their cities were reporting for Newark and Houston, respectively.

The all-but-unanimous (99.2 percent) reporting of crime problems with youth groups other than gangs in 25 cities and counties is a central finding of this report. As already noted, problems with gangs, for a variety of reasons, have been the primary focus in dealing with problems of collective youth crime. This finding—that crime problems by law-violating youth groups other than gangs are universally experienced in major population centers, including communities outside of large cities—suggests that much greater attention be devoted to this type of crime problem and that substantially increased resources be allocated both to information gathering and program development with respect to crime by youth groups other than gangs.

Despite the nearly unanimous reporting of problems with groups, however, it is still possible that respondents might have considered such problems to be relatively trivial, especially when compared with crimes such as murder and armed robbery. Respondents were asked to evaluate the seriousness of youth group problems using the same methods and same scale of comparison used in the case of gangs. Table 3–5 presents seriousness ratings for 20 localities, based on 226 ratings provided by respondents.[5]

For all 20 localities, the average rating was 6.4. Assuming, as in the case of gangs, that a rating of 5 represents a problem of average seriousness, this finding indicates that crime problems by youth were considered to be of above-average seriousness when compared to other crime problems. Above-average ratings appeared for a substantial majority of the localities—17 out of 20. The range of estimates is considerably wider than in the case of gangs. Respondents in three cities, Cleveland, Miami, and Washington, rated the seriousness of group problems at 8 or higher—indicating that they considered such problems to be extremely serious. Four other cities provided ratings of 7 or higher—Pittsburgh, St. Paul, Boston, and Newark. Three cities, Chicago, St. Louis, and Houston, rated group problems as below average in seriousness.

Comparing the estimates of the seriousness of gang problems with those of group problems proves instructive. Because gang crime is generally much more violent than crime by nongang youth groups, and since gang problems are generally accorded much more publicity and attention

than group problems, one might have expected respondents to regard gang problems as much more serious. Comparing tables 3–4 and 3–5, however, shows that this was not the case. The all-locality ratings for gangs and groups are very similar, with the group seriousness ratings actually somewhat higher.[6] Moreover, in five cities the seriousness ratings assigned to group problems were higher than any rating assigned to gang problems in any city.

Respondents in 14 of the 20 cities listed in table 3–5 provided seriousness ratings for both group and gang problems. Of these, 11 rated group problems as more serious than gang problems, 2 as less serious, and 1 about the same. Three of the cities rating group problems as more serious were the gang-problem cities of San Antonio, Boston, and Miami. In one gang-problem city, Chicago, gang problems were rated as more serious (gangs 6.3, groups 4.7).

Although information as to the relative seriousness of gang and group problems was not obtained for the cities reporting the most serious gang problems (Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia), it is unlikely that these cities would have rated group problems as more serious. However, present findings indicate clearly that in cities other than those experiencing the most severe gang problems, groups are generally regarded as posing more serious problems than gangs. This finding, along with the finding that problems with youth groups were substantially more prevalent than gang problems in the 26 site-visited localities, strengthens the conclusion that crime problems involving law-violating youth groups other than gangs should be granted increased recognition with respect both to research and policy.

Summary

Data collected in the course of onsite interviews in urban localities throughout the country make it possible to present information on the character of collective youth crime problems that is more comprehensive than the present/absent kind of information presented earlier. Findings with respect to the identification and seriousness of collective youth crime problems are presented for 26 localities containing 56 percent of the population of all U.S. cities over 100,000.

Information on the presence of gangs was obtained for 23 of the site-visit cities, including most of the Nation's largest. In 22 of these, some proportion of local respondents reported the presence of problems by law-violating youth groups identified as youth gangs. Problems with youth gangs were reported by all or almost all respondents in nine cities, by a majority in eight cities, and by a minority in five. The nine cities, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, San Antonio, Miami, and Boston, are designated "gang-problem cities" for present purposes.

Respondents in the six largest cities ranked the level of recognition of gang problems by a selected set of municipal agencies and groups in the following order: schools, residents, police, government, and social agencies. New York reported the highest level of recognition by all agencies, and San Francisco the lowest.

In all nine gang-problem cities, respondents rated the seriousness of crime problems posed by youth gangs as over 5 on a 1-to-10 scale, using the most serious forms of crime as a basis of comparison. Los Angeles and Philadelphia had the highest ratings (7.4) and Boston (5.5) the lowest.

While 40 percent of the site-visit cities reported problems with youth gangs, 100 percent of the 26 surveyed localities reported problems with groups other than gangs, with respondents virtually unanimous. Moreover, except in those cities experiencing the most severe gang problems, problems with nongang youth groups were generally considered to be more serious than gang problems.

Thus, during the 1970's, approximately one-half of all large American cities experienced crime problems by youth gangs, and all large cities, along with many other communities, experienced problems with law-violating youth groups other than gangs. Both gang and group problems were regarded as serious, but law-violating groups other than gangs were substantially more prevalent, and in many localities were seen as posing more serious crime problems.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Before preparing the final versions of the prevalence tables in chapter 2, respondents were contacted in the nine site-visit cities where less than 90 percent but more than 50 percent of respondents reported gang problems (table 3-1), to find out whether such problems had emerged subsequent to the site-visit period. Of these, respondents in eight of the nine cities reported little change; the ninth, Cleveland, was placed in the gang-problem category on the basis of respondent reports. In addition, San Diego, not categorized as a gang-problem city on the basis of site-visit-period information, was so categorized on the basis of subsequent developments.

2. New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1964.

3. See appendix A item I-A-2. Results of this query are not presented here. In general, respondents' ratings of the seriousness of gang problems with respect to their most pressing noncrime urban problems such as housing or finances were lower than their ratings with respect to crime problems.

4. Table 3-4 uses an arithmetic mean to provide a pooled measure of seriousness for each locality (sum of ratings/number of ratings). Because of some ambiguities in the use of averages in connection with ratings of this kind, ratings were also calculated using medians as a check. The ranked positions of the nine cities obtained through the use of medians were the same as those obtained through the use of means.

5. Ratings of the seriousness of group problems for six site-visit cities (Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York, San Francisco, Baltimore, San Diego) are not included in table 3-5. For these cities there were either too few responses to construct a representative average or the group-seriousness question was not asked. Most of these cities were gang-problem cities visited during initial itineraries, before the importance of nongang group problems was sufficiently realized.

6. The difference between the two means is not statistically significant.

4. Numbers of Law-Violating Youth Groups and Group Members in the United States

How large a part does collective youth crime play in the total crime picture in the United States? At least three kinds of information are needed to answer this question: the number of law-violating youth groups and group members, the amount of crime for which they are responsible, and the form and seriousness of their offenses. Earlier chapters presented information on forms and seriousness; chapter 6 will present information on the volume of collective youth crime. The present chapter addresses the question of the number of law-violating youth groups and group members.

In evaluating the importance of collective youth crime, it makes a good deal of difference whether there are 500 or 5,000 gangs in the country; whether there are 5,000 or 50,000 gang members; whether there are 10,000 or 100,000 groups other than gangs; whether the average city has 5 or 25 groups; whether the average group has 10 or 100 members; whether members of law-violating youth groups total 1 percent or 5 percent or 10 percent of American youth.

Accurate information is very difficult to obtain. A major reason is that the vast majority of American localities do not gather any information on the numbers of law-violating youth groups and group members in their jurisdictions. Some of the larger cities collect some information, as do a few smaller cities and some counties, but these data apply almost exclusively to groups designated as gangs by an official agency, usually the police. Systematic collection of information on groups other than gangs is nonexistent for all practical purposes.

Another problem is the intermittency that characterizes the existence and numbers of particular groups in particular locales. Some communities such as East Los Angeles and Boston have a persisting tradition of group membership, and the numbers and types of groups remain relatively constant from year to year. More common are communities where groups form, stay active for varying periods of time, and pass out of existence. In such communities the numbers wax and wane in response to forces that are poorly understood. For example, a city might report 75 police-recognized gangs in a given year, 35 gangs 5 years later, and 100 gangs 5 years and after that. Nationwide, the prevalence of gangs at any given time more closely resembles that of, say, influenza rather than blindness.

Because of these problems, much of the data underlying the figures and tabulations in this chapter are considerably less complete and reliable than is desirable. In an attempt to compensate for some of the deficiencies, a number of techniques involving estimation and extrapolation are used. Procedurally, the major objective of the chapter is to provide figures on the numbers of selected types of law-violating youth groups for the country as a whole by extrapolating information from communities for which data were available in the 1970's to other communities of similar size and other characteristics for which data were not available.

Three major sets of communities provided the basis for the extrapolations. These are: (1) the 10 largest cities in the United States reporting gang problems; (2) 13 cities ranging in size from 300,000 to 800,000 for which data on numbers of groups other than gangs were available; (3) a group of about 50 or 60 communities, mostly smaller, for which data were gathered on a nonsystematic basis. These are located primarily in the metropolitan areas of Boston, Philadelphia, and Albany, and in the state of California.

Data for the first set of cities are based on statistics released by official agencies and figures provided by local survey respondents. In cases where citywide figures were not available, respondents were asked to estimate the numbers of gangs and gang members in the districts with which they were most familiar, and these district figures were totaled to obtain citywide figures. In cases of discrepancies among figures for the same district, medians were used.

Because official agency reports provide no information on groups other than gangs, data for the second set of cities are based entirely on respondent reports. As in the case of gangs, respondents estimated the number of disruptive local groups and/or group hangouts in areas with which they were most familiar, and district figures were totaled to produce citywide figures.

Data for the third set of communities were obtained primarily through field investigations conducted by the author in a group of communities ranging in size from about 10,000 to 100,000 in and near the metropolitan areas of Boston, Philadelphia, and Albany. Additional data came from newspaper reports, mostly from smaller communities in California.

Specifying time periods for tabulated figures involves several problems. As noted earlier, the number of gangs reported for particular localities often varies from year to year. In addition, figures on the number of group members in various localities were obtained during site visits at different times between 1974 and 1978. Rather than presenting detailed time series figures for all localities where numbers vary from year to year, or specifying exact time periods for each figure, only one figure per locality will be reported for the the 10-year period between 1970 and 1980. In cases where only one figure was obtained, it is used as the decade figure. In those cases where several figures were obtained for different years during the decade, the figure for the peak year is used.

In cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles, figures remained relatively stable throughout the reporting period. Other cities such as New York and Philadelphia showed considerable variation in officially reported figures; the use of the peak rather than the average figure in these cases introduces a possibility of some inflation in the decade figures. However, evidence indicating considerable undercounting of the number of gangs by official agencies, particularly in Philadelphia, appears to more than compensate for the possibly biasing effects of using the peak-year figures.[1]

Because of deficiencies in the base data and the use of estimation and extrapolation techniques to derive some of the tabulations, many of the figures presented here must be regarded as tentative. But since no national-level data of any kind on the numbers and locations of law-

violating youth groups and group members are available, the author felt that the risk in presenting figures that fall short of rigorous standards of statistical accuracy were outweighed by the importance of making available a systematically compiled set of figures that provide, at the least, fairly specific indications of the identity and locations of jurisdictions where the more serious problems were found. Despite the strong probability of inaccuracy in some of the specific figures, the data do indicate quite clearly where the largest numbers of groups and group members were located. On this level they are sufficiently accurate to provide an empirical basis for policy planning.

In addition, the presentation of these data may serve to encourage the collection of more comprehensive and accurate information. If this report spurs data-collection efforts that improve the accuracy of present figures it will have served an important purpose.

A comprehensive presentation of the numbers of law-violating youth groups and group members in the United States would require statistics for each of the 18 types of groups listed in table 1–3. The collection of such data was not possible in the present survey. Instead, the chapter will focus primarily on two major types of groups—designated in table 1–3 as "gangs" (turf, predatory, fighting) and "disruptive local groups" (regularly associating local groups and crowds, solitary local cliques). Five major sets of figures are presented: (1) The numbers of gangs and gang members in the 10 largest cities reporting gang problems, (2) The numbers of gangs and gang members in approximately 300 cities and towns with gang problems, (3) The numbers of disruptive local youth groups in 13 cities with populations ranging from 300,000 to 800,000; (4) The numbers of disruptive youth groups and group members in U.S. cities and towns of 10,000 and over, and (5) Combined figures for gangs and disruptive youth groups for U.S. cities and towns of 10,000 and over.

Numbers of Gangs and Gang Members in the 10 Largest Gang-Problem Cities

During the 1970's, despite some changes in the close relation between city size and the prevalence of gangs, most of the Nation's largest cities experienced gang problems. In the mid-1970's the 10 largest cities were New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Houston, Detroit, Dallas, Baltimore, San Diego, and San Antonio. Of these, all but Dallas and Baltimore reported gang problems, with Houston in marginal status.

The present examination of the numbers of law-violating youth groups and group members starts by considering the 10 largest American cities reporting problems with youth gangs. These are listed in table 4–1. The three large gang-problem cities not included among the 10 largest are Phoenix, San Francisco, and Boston, which rank 13th, 15th, and 18th respectively.

The 10 largest gang-problem cities ranged in size from 620,000 to 7.4 million. The average city size was about 2 million, and the combined population of the cities about 20 million.[2] Table 4–1 lists these cities in order of size and tabulates the number of gangs and gang members in each city, the number of gangs per million population, the number of gang members per 10,000 population, and the number of gang members as a proportion of the total number of male youth aged 10 to 19.

Table 4–1. Numbers of gangs and gang members in the 10 largest gang-problem cities, 1970–80

Population = 20.2 million

City	Number of gangs	Number of gang members	Gangs per million population.*	Gang members per 10 thousand population	Number of gang members as a % of male youth 10–19
New York	325	25,000	4.3	33.7	7.3%
Chicago	250	11,250	8.1	36.6	3.8
Los Angeles	180	15,300	6.5	55.8	6.5
Philadelphia	120	7,000	6.7	38.9	4.1
Detroit	50	1,000	3.8	7.6	0.7
San Diego	40	800	5.1	10.1	1.3
San Antonio	25	500	3.2	6.4	0.7
Phoenix	25	700	3.7	10.3	1.4
San Francisco	20	500	3.0	4.7	1.0
Boston	95	2,300	15.3	37.1	4.2
10 cities	1,130	64,350	5.6	32.1	4.4%

* U.S. Census 1970

The table indicates there were 1,130 gangs and 64,350 gang members in the 10 cities. How does one judge the magnitude of these figures? Whether they are seen as large or small depends a good deal on one's baseline of comparison. From one viewpoint the number of gangs is surprisingly small. Thrasher's classic study of gangs in the 1920's reported 1,313 gangs in Chicago alone.[3] If this figure is accurate, it would appear there were more gangs in a single city in the 1920's than in the 10 largest cities combined in the 1970's.

How valid is this conclusion? Probably not very. What is more likely is that Thrasher categorized as "gangs" hundreds of groups that would be excluded from that category under the definition used here. These figures, in fact, provide evidence that the definition used here is quite restrictive, and, conversely, that Thrasher was generous in his criteria for admitting Chicago youth groups into the category of "gang."

From another perspective the numbers are relatively large. Although the number of gang members was equivalent to less than 5 percent of male youths aged 10 to 19 in these cities (table 4–1, column 5), it was considerably larger than the total number of youths confined to all types of juvenile correctional and detention facilities in all 50 States in the middle 1970's. This total, including those confined in all detention centers, shelters, reception centers, training schools, halfway houses, group homes, and forestry camps, was 45,920—about 70 percent of the number of gang members in the 10 cities.[4]

The average number of gangs per city was 113, with a range of 20 (San Francisco) to 325 (New

York). The degree of statistical association between city size and the number of gangs is good; the larger the city, the more gangs (r=.92, p=.000). However, the association between city size and the number of gangs per capita is poor (r= -.09, p=not significant). The average number of gangs per 100,000 city population was 5.6, with a range of 3.0 (San Francisco) to 15.3 (Boston). Boston's aberrantly high figures call for an explanation. Findings reported in chapter 1 indicate that conceptions of the kind of unit conventionally designated a "gang" were surprisingly uniform throughout the Nation. Boston, however, was an exception. In Boston the criteria for designating a group a "gang" were closer to those used by Thrasher in the 1920's than to the criteria cited in chapter 1. The term "gang" was applied to a considerably wider range of group types than was the case for most other cities; in particular, group types 2 and 3 , designated in table 1-3 as "disruptive local groups" were often called "gangs" both in the city and its environs.[5]

Because of this, a much more restrictive criterion was applied to estimates of the numbers of gangs supplied by Boston respondents, and a special effort was made to distinguish between the more formalized "turf gangs" (type 1) and the less formalized but far more numerous disruptive local groups (types 2 and 3) and to count only the former as gangs. But even after applying these measures, calculations of per capita rates for Boston indicate that the city had a considerably larger number of gangs relative to its size than the other cities.

The aberrantly high per capita rate for Boston raises the possibility that the poor statistical association between this rate and city size in the 10 cities might be due primarily to the influence of the Boston figures. However, if Boston is excluded from the correlation calculations, the level of association is still low and not statistically significant.[6]

Because the statistical association between city size and the number of gangs is so strong, the poor association between size and the number of gangs per capita is unexpected. Moreover, as will be shown shortly, the association between city size and numbers of gang members per capita is also poor. A more comprehensive exploration of this finding is beyond the scope of the present report. For the present, it would appear that the "density" of gangs and gang members in the 10 largest cities had little relation to the size of these cities. The poor relationship is evident in comparing, for example, San Diego and New York (table 4-1). New York, with a population of 7.4 million, had a rate of 4.3 gangs per 100,000 population, while San Diego, with a population of 790,000, had a rate of 5.1. The finding of a poor relationship between city size and the "density" of gangs and gang members is repeated in subsequent analyses and will be discussed further.

The total number of gang members reported for the 10 cities, as noted earlier, was 64,350, an average of 6,430 per city. Numbers range from 500 gang members for San Francisco and San Antonio to 25,000 for New York City. As in the case of gangs, there is good statistical association between city size and numbers of gangs members (r=.95, p=.000). Another way of examining this relation is to divide the cities into two categories—larger and smaller. Comparing the 4 cities with populations of 2 million or over with the 6 cities of under 2 million shows that the former, with 77 percent of the combined population of the 10 cities, contained

91 percent of their gang members—statistically a highly significant difference. (χ^2=9.1, p=.003). Excluding Boston from consideration, for reasons explained in connection with the analysis of gangs, the difference remains significant. The four larger cities, with 79 percent of the population of the nine cities, contained 94 percent of their gang members χ^2=7.5, p=.006).

Figures on the number of gang members per capita show an average of 32.1 gang members per 10,000 city population, with a range of 4.7 for San Francisco to 55.8 for Los Angeles. As in the case of gangs, the statistical association between city size and gang members per capita is poor (r=.47, not significant).

Figures on the size of gangs indicate that the average gang in the 10 cities had 57 members. The average gang size ranged from 20 in Detroit, San Diego, and San Antonio to 85 in Los Angeles. The median gang size fell between 25 and 28. The statistical association between city size and average gang size is good (r=.75, p=.02). However, the finding that larger cities had larger gangs does not hold up when additional cities are taken into account, as will be shown. The average gang size was considerably larger than the median because the substantially larger sizes of the gangs in the larger cities pull up the average. In the 4 cities of 2 million or more, the size of the average gang was 67, compared to 22 for the 6 cities under 2 million. This difference is highly significant statistically (χ^2=7.2, p=.007).

What proportion of the total population belonged to youth gangs? For the 10 cities the per capita figures indicate that gang members made up only 0.3 percent of the total population; in the city with the highest per capita rate, the figure was about 0.6 percent—fewer than 1 percent of the total population. A more relevant question concerns the proportion of youth who were gang members. The figures in table 4–1 indicate that for the 10 cities the number of gang members was equivalent to 4.4 percent of male youth between the ages of 10 and 19. The percentages range from 0.7 for San Antonio and Detroit to 7.3 for New York.

As in the case of numbers of gangs and gang members, there is a question of evaluating the magnitude of these figures. The finding that the number of gang members in the 10 large cities was equivalent to something less than 5 percent of their adolescent males, and less than 10 percent in the city with the highest proportion, makes it clear that the proportion of youth who belonged to gangs was quite low. If 95 percent of youth in the 10 cities, and 90 percent of youths in New York during a period of high gang prevalence did not belong to gangs, it would appear that chances for city youth in the high-risk age category to become gang members were quite slim.

On the other hand, as chapter 6 will show, the relatively small proportion of youth who were members of gangs accounted for a disproportionate share of serious youth crime. Further, the percentages in table 4–1 are based on the numbers of persons residing in all areas of these cities—high- and middle-income as well as low-income districts. Figures on the proportion of gang members in city districts differentiated by income or social status levels would undoubtedly show higher concentrations of gang members in lower status areas. Few studies have provided information of this kind, but what limited information is available supports this conclusion. For

example, a survey of a low-income district of about 100,000 persons in Boston in the 1950's and 1960's provides an estimate that 65 percent of the male youth in the community belonged to gangs and disruptive youth groups.[7]

It is important also to bear in mind that the 4.4 percent figure is based on a strict definition of gangs. Figures presented later in this chapter will show that membership percentages for law-violating youth groups other than gangs are considerably higher than those reported for gangs only.

Numbers of Gangs and Gang Members in the United States

Most studies of youth gangs have been based on information collected in a small number of the Nation's largest cities. The previous section, which examined the numbers of gangs and gang members in the 10 largest gang-problem cities, thus conforms to the dominant tradition in gang research. But a study whose major objective is a comprehensive survey of collective youth crime as a national phenomenon cannot confine its examination to the largest urban centers. The data on gang prevalence presented in chapter 2 conformed to established tradition in tabulating the presence of gang problems in cities over 100,000; however, a special survey of one State, California, revealed the presence of gangs in a surprisingly large number of smaller communities. As shown in table 2-6, 80 percent of the gang-problem cities and towns in California were smaller than 100,000, and 26 percent were smaller than 20,000.

Given the aim of the present chapter—to present figures on the total number of law-violating youth groups and group members in the country—smaller as well as larger locales must be taken into consideration. So far as is known, no systematic attempt has ever been made to answer the question "How many gangs and gang members are there in the whole of the United States?" A major reason, as already noted, is that the base data needed to answer the question are uneven, in some cases unreliable, and in many cases nonexistent. But the use of techniques of estimation and extrapolation in conjunction with newly obtained base data make it possible for the first time to present figures on the numbers of gangs and gang members for the nation as a whole. These figures, as in the case of others in this chapter, must be regarded as tentative, but consideration of general policy relevance discussed appears to justify their presentation.

Tables 4-2 and 4-3 present figures for the numbers of gangs and gang members in all U.S. cities and towns during the 1970's. Table 4-2 indicates that there were 2,285 youth gangs in 286 cities and towns in the United States. Comparing the latter figure with those presented in chapter 2 for U.S. cities of 100,000 and over plus California cities of under 100,000 shows that expanding the arena of examination to the whole of the United States increases the number of gang-problem locales almost 2½ times (122 to 286).

The 286 cities and towns, whose total population was about 39 million, are divided into five categories: cities with population of 2 million and over, cities between 100,000 and 2 million in states other than California, cities smaller than 100,000 in states other than California, California cities between 100,000 and 2 million, and California cities smaller than 100,000.

Tables 4–2 and 4–3, in addition to showing the numbers of locality units, gangs, and gang members for each of the five categories, also present figures on the percentage of gangs and gang members in each category, the average number of gangs and gang members per category, and the per capita rates of gangs and gang members.

The number of gangs per category ranges from 290 for smaller California cities (13 percent of the total number) to 875 for the 4 cities over 2 million (38 percent of the total). For the 286 cities and towns the average number of gangs per locale was 8, with a range of 2 per locale for smaller cities outside California to 219 for the four largest cities. Per capita rates show 6 gangs per 100,000 population, with a range of 3.9 for smaller cities outside California to 11.7 for smaller California cities.

Examining the statistical association between the numbers of gangs and the several derived measures in table 4–2 shows that there is a good correspondence between the size of the average city and the average number of gangs per city; the smaller the average city size, the fewer the average number of gangs.[8] The number of gangs per capita, however, shows poor statistical association with average city size.[9] These findings parallel those obtained for the 10 largest gang-problem cities.

Inclusion in the 286 gang-problem cities of a large number of smaller cities, along with the distinction between location in and out of California, produces some refinements of the findings on the relation between city size and numbers of gangs. When size alone is taken into account, the proportion of all gangs in each size category is almost exactly the same as the proportion of the total population in that category. The largest cities had 39.8 percent of the population and

Table 4–2. Number of youth gangs in U.S. cities and towns

N localities = 286 Population = 38,958,000[a]

	Number of localities with gangs	Number of gangs	% of gangs in this category	Average N gangs per locality	N gangs per 100,000 population
	Size, category of locality				
U.S. cities 2 million and over[b]	4	875	38.3%	218.7	5.8
U.S. cities 100,000 to 2 million except California.	19	390	17.1	20.5	5.2
U.S. cities under 100,000 except California	160	320	14.0	2.0	3.9
California cities 100,000 to 2 million	18	290	12.7	16.1	6.2
California cities under 100,000	85	410	17.9	4.8	11.7
All categories	**286**	**2,285**	**100.0%**	**8.0**	**5.9**

[a] U.S. Census, 1976.
[b] Includes Philadelphia, about 1.8 million in 1976.

38.3 of the gangs; for cities in the middle-size category the figures are 29.1 percent and 29.8 percent; for the smaller cities, 31.1 percent and 31.9 percent. However, when location is taken into account, differences appear between population percentages and gang percentages for two of the five categories; smaller California cities, with 9.3 percent of the total population, had 17.9 percent of the gangs—almost double their share—while smaller cities outside of California, with 21.8 percent of the population, had 14.0 percent of the gangs, a disproportionately low percentage.[10]

Thus, the rather direct association between city size and numbers of gangs that emerges from the analysis of the 10 cities is diluted to some extent when smaller cities are taken into account. While California contributed disproportionately to the number of gangs, as it did to the number of gang-problem locales, it should be noted that a good majority (over 60 percent) of the Nation's gangs were still located outside of California.

The distribution of the numbers of gang members among the five locality categories differs in important respects from that of gangs. As shown in table 4-3, gang members were found in disproportionate numbers in the largest cities. Of the total of 97,940 gang members in the 286 cities, 58,550, or 60 percent, were found in the 4 largest cities. By contrast, only 6.1 percent of the total (6,000 gang members) were located in the 160 smaller cities outside of California.[11]

The average number of gang members per locale was 342; numbers range from 37.5 per city for smaller cities outside California to 14,600 per city for the 4 largest cities. The average number of gang members per capita for the 286 locales was 25 per 10,000 population, with a range of 7.0 for smaller cities outside of California to 38.0 for smaller California cities.

As in the case of numbers of gangs, the statistical association between city size and numbers of gang members is good, and between size and numbers of gang members per capita poor.[12] In fact, the highest per capita rate—38 gang members per 10,000 population—was found in one of the smaller city size categories—California cities of 10,000 and under.

The close association between numbers of gang members and city size erodes substantially when comparing the proportion of gang members in each category with population proportions.

Looking at size alone, the figures show that the largest cities contained a disproportionately high percentage of gang members; the top four cities, with about 40 percent of the population, contained about 60 percent of the gang members; the medium and smaller city categories each contained about 30 percent of the population and 20 percent of the gang members. Differentiating by location only shows that the proportions of gang members both within and outside of California were fairly close to the population proportions (California, 21 percent of the population, 25 percent of the gang members; outside California, 79 percent of the population, 73 percent of the gang members).

Taking into consideration both size and location shows that two of the five categories (the top four cities and smaller California cities) had disproportionately high numbers of gang members,

Table 4–3. Number of youth gang members in U.S. cities and towns

N Localities = 286 Population = 38,958,000[a]

Size category of locality	Number of localities with gangs	Number of gang members	Percent members in locality	Average number gang members per locality	Number of gang members per 100,000 population
U.S. cities 2 million and over[b]	4	58,550	59.8%	14,637.5	36.2
U.S. cities 100,000 to 2 million, except CA	19	8,500	8.7	447.4	11.3
U.S. cities under 100,000, except CA	160	6,000	6.1	37.5	7.0
California cities 100,000 to 2 million	18	11,600	11.8	644.4	25.0
California cities under 100,000	85	13,290	13.6	156.3	38.0
All categories	286	97,940	100.0%	342.4	25.1

[a] U.S. Census, 1976.
[b] Includes Philadelphia, about 1.8 million in 1976.

two had disproportionately low numbers (larger and smaller cities outside of California), and one (larger California cities) had numbers proportionate to the population. For all five categories, the differences between proportions of gang members and population were sufficiently large as to be statistically significant ($\chi^2=29.9$, $p<.001$).

It will be useful to compare findings for both gangs and gang members with respect to the relation of city size to the measures analyzed separately for each: numbers, per capita rates, and proportions. Numbers of both gangs and gang members show a direct relation to city size. Per capita rates, by contrast, show little relation to size for either gangs or gang members.

The highest per capita rates for both gangs and gang members were found not in the larger cities but in the smaller California cities (average size, 41,000). The number of gangs per capita for these cities, 12 per 100,000 population, was substantially higher than the rate for the 4 largest cities—6 gangs per 100,000. Rates in the largest cities outside California for both gangs and gang members rank fourth among the five categories.

Comparing the proportions of gangs and gang members in each of the five categories to the proportion of the population in those categories shows that the number of gangs was roughly proportional to the population in large, medium, and small cities; but that the number of gang members was disproportionately high in the largest cities, and disproportionately low, although to a lesser degree, in the others. With respect to location, the number of gangs in California was

disproportionately high compared to the rest of the country, but the number of gang members was roughly proportional to the population.

Looking at both size and location shows that the largest cities, as noted, had a proportional number of gangs but a disproportionately high number of gang members. Smaller California cities had disproportionately high numbers of both gangs and gang members, while smaller cities outside of California had disproportionately low numbers of both. Larger cities outside California had proportionate numbers of gangs but disproportionately low numbers of gang members, while in larger cities outside California numbers of both gangs and gang members were proportional to population size.

The finding of poor association between city size and per capita rates for both gangs and gang members parallels a similar finding for the 10 largest cities (table 4–1). Because many of the figures in tables 4–2 and 4–3 are based on estimation and extrapolation, there is a possibility that this unexpected finding might be due at least in part to the use of these procedures. But because almost all of the figures for the 10 largest cities are based on directly reported counts, the likelihood that the finding is an artifact of the methods is much reduced.

Better understanding of the reasons behind this finding would require more extensive analysis than is possible here. For the present, it would appear that the "density" hypothesis, presented earlier, provides one reasonable explanation. It seems that gangs and gang members in some cities, both larger and smaller, are distributed much more densely among the population than in others. The reasons for this are not known, and would be explored as part of a more extensive analysis. In some of the high-density cities—for example, East Los Angeles and Boston—there is a long-standing tradition of gangs and gang membership that is relatively immune to cyclical variation. In cities where such a tradition is well developed, gangs will be more numerous and gang members will make up a higher proportion of the population than in those cities, regardless of size, where such a tradition is weaker or absent.

Numbers of Disruptive Youth Groups and Members in 13 U.S. Cities

Findings in chapter 3 indicate that crime problems with youth groups other than gangs were far more widespread than gang problems, that the average city reporting group problems assigned higher seriousness ratings to these problems than the average gang-problem city assigned to gang problems, and that some cities reporting both gang and group problems regarded the latter as more serious. These findings underline the importance of seeking information on the actual numbers of law-violating youth groups other than gangs in the United States.

Difficulties in obtaining accurate information on collective youth crime, discussed earlier, are even greater for nongang groups than for gangs because there is virtually no formal recognition by official agencies of their existence, and therefore virtually no activity aimed at obtaining information on their numbers.

A comprehensive enumeration of the numbers of law-violating youth groups in the United States

would require the presentation of figures for each of the 18 types of groups listed in table 1-3, including the 15 types of nongang groups. The collection of data that would make possible such an enumeration is well beyond the scope of this survey. In lieu of this, the present section provides figures for just two of the nongang types—those designated in table 1-3 as "regularly associating disruptive local groups and crowds" and "solidary local cliques."

The tabulations, then, do not include data on the numbers of groups such as burglary rings, robbery bands, and larceny cliques. Because available evidence indicates that tens if not hundreds of thousands of such groups are active throughout the Nation, the figures presented here represent substantial undercounts of the total number of law-violating youth groups in the country.

In order to obtain information that would provide a basis for estimating the numbers of disruptive local groups in different kinds of localities, respondents in the surveyed cities were queried on the number of such groups in the areas with which they were most familiar. In most cases respondents were asked first to describe the kinds of places where youths customarily assembled. They were then asked to estimate the total number of disruptive groups or group hangouts in their neighborhood, district, or city, and the size of the local groups.

Usable information was obtained for 13 of the 25 cities. Reports were provided by 101 respondents. In two of the cities, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, respondents provided usable estimates of the number of groups, but not of the size of the groups. In these cases the city was assigned a figure equal to the average group size for the other 11 cities.

Table 4–4 provides information on the number of groups and group members in the 13 cities along with figures on the numbers of groups and group members per capita and the number of group members as a percentage of the number of male youth.

The combined population of the 13 cities was 6.9 million, with city sizes ranging from 287,000 for St. Paul to 816,000 for Dallas. The population of the average city was 528,000—about one-quarter the size of the average gang-problem city in table 4–1. The size of the average group-problem city thus was closer to that of the average U.S. city than was the case for the 10 largest gang-problem cities.

The average number of groups per city was 708, with a range of 200 for Denver to 1,500 for Boston. The average number of group members per city was 8,249, with a range of 1,400 for Denver to 22,500 for Boston. The size of the average group was about 11, with a range of 7 for Denver, Fort Worth, and St. Paul, to 17 for Dallas.

Examining the per capita rates for the 13 cities shows a figure of 13.4 gangs per 100,000 population, with a range of 3.9 for Denver to 26.8 for Miami. Gang members numbered 156.2 per 10,000 population, with a range of 27.1 for Denver to 364.1 for Boston. The Boston rate indicates that members of local corner groups made up about 4 percent of the city population, compared to about 1.5 percent for the average city.

Table 4–4. Numbers of disruptive youth groups and group members in 13 U.S. cities

City	Population*	Respondent reports: Number groups	Number of group members	Groups per 100,000 population	Group members per 10,000 population	Group members as a % of males 10–19
Dallas	816	700	11,900	8.6	145.8	15.5%
San Antonio	756	1,250	12,500	16.5	164.7	18.0
Milwaukee	691	740	11,420	10.7	165.3	17.4
Cleveland	679	900	8,100	13.0	119.3	11.7
Boston	618	1,500	22,500	24.3	364.1	41.5
St. Louis	558	700	6,300	12.5	112.9	11.3
Denver	516	200	1,400	3.9	27.1	3.1
Pittsburgh	479	275	3,300	5.7	68.9	7.1
Minneapolis	382	700	6,300	5.2	165.3	18.6
Newark	368	385	7,700	10.5	209.2	21.6
Fort Worth	360	530	3,710	14.7	103.1	10.2
Miami	354	950	9,500	26.8	268.4	39.9
St. Paul	287	370	2,590	12.9	90.2	9.1
All cities	6,864	9,200	107,210	13.4	156.2	16.7%

* U.S. Census, 1973 in 1,000's.

Rates based on the number of males 10 to 19 rather than the total population provide a more relevant measure of the size of the group problem. Although females were affiliated with many of the disruptive groups, the groups were predominantly male, and the figures in table 4–4 show the number of group members as a percentage of the male adolescent population rather than of the total number of adolescents. For the 13 cities, membership in local disruptive groups was equivalent to about 2 out of every 10 males (17 percent).

Percentages range from about 3 percent for Denver to about 40 percent for Miami and Boston. Evidence that about 4 in every 10 adolescent males in Boston were affiliated with a local "hanging" group is supported by the fact that the Boston police department in the 1970's logged between 50,000 and 70,000 youth-group disturbance complaints per year—an average of about 150 calls a day.

As in the case of gangs, the statistical association between city size and per capita rates of gangs and gang members is poor. Unlike the case of gangs, however, the associations between city size

and the raw numbers of gangs and gang members, while somewhat better than the associations between size and per capita rates, fail to achieve statistical significance.

Five of the measures in table 4–4 shows a significant statistical association with one another. These are number of groups, number of group members, groups per capita, group members per capita, and group members as a percentage of male youth.[13] The good associations, however, are primarily a consequence of the fact that one measure, number of groups, was used in calculating the others, so that the measures overlap rather than being independent ("colinearity"). For example, since the number of group members was derived by multiplying the number of groups by average group size, all measures involving the number of group members incorporate the figures on the number of groups.

However, four of the measures used to construct the table are independent of one another. These are population (U.S. Census), number of groups (respondent reports), number of adolescent males (Census), and average group size (respondent reports). Except for the relation between city size and number of adolescent males, none of the other independent measures show a statistically significant association with any of the others.[14]

The high association level between city size and number of youths ($r = +.98$) is not surprising because one would expect larger cities to have more youths. But the absence of significant association among numbers of groups, numbers of group members, and numbers of adolescent males is unexpected. Particularly surprising is the poor association between the number of male youths and the number of group members. One would expect that cities with larger numbers of youths would also have more group members, since the recruitment pool for members would be larger. This finding suggests, as in the case of the "density" finding reported for gangs, that factors other than the numbers of youths available for membership influence the size of the youth group problem in particular cities.

Numbers of Disruptive Youth Groups and Members in the United States

The data in table 4–4 make it possible to provide a highly tentative estimate of the total number of disruptive youth groups in American cities. Census data indicate that in the 1970's there were 2,122 cities in the country with populations of 10,000 or over. Their combined population was about 110 million.[15] Although disruptive youth groups were present in many communities of smaller size, present figures omit consideration of communities smaller than 10,000.

Table 4–5 groups the 2,122 cities into 7 population categories. The smaller the category, the larger the number of cities it includes. Estimates of the number of groups and group members in each category are based largely on the figures presented in table 4–4, along with additional data less systematically collected.

Originally it was hoped that the statistical association between city size and numbers of groups in the 13 cities would be sufficiently close so that the numbers of groups and group members in other cities could be estimated or "predicted" on the basis of population, using established

statistical prediction or extrapolation methods. The poor associations actually obtained made the use of such methods unfeasible.

Table 4–5. Estimated number of disruptive youth groups and group members in U.S. cities of 10,000 and over

N Cities = 2,122[a] Population = 109.3 million[a]

City size category	Number of cities	Total number groups[b]	Total number group members[b]
1 million and over	6	24.9	302.6
500,000 to 1 million	17	14.7	180.9
250 to 500,000	35	14.6	182.7
100 to 250,000	105	16.4	208.7
50 to 100,000	230	16.1	209.3
25 to 50,000	514	15.9	215.8
10 to 25,000	1,214	13.3	72.8
All categories	2,122	115.9	1,372.0

[a] *Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1978.*
[b] In 1,000's.

Instead, the number of groups and group members for each population category were calculated through the use of a fairly simple set of ratios. Several assumptions were made. First, it was assumed that the ratio of groups and group members to city size for cities in the size range of one-quarter to one-half million would be about the same as the ratios in the 13 cities for which data were available. Second, despite the poor association between city size and numbers of groups in the 13 cities, it was assumed that the number of groups per capita would be smaller in smaller cities. This assumption was based primarily on data gathered less systematically in about 50 or 60 smaller cities in the metropolitan areas of Boston, Albany, and Philadelphia.[16] The assumption was supported by results obtained in experimenting with a variety of prediction methods, almost all of which overpredicted the numbers of groups in smaller sized cities.[17]

Tabulations based on these data and assumptions indicate that there were approximately 119,000 disruptive youth groups in American cities in the 1970's and about 1.4 million group members. This figure represents approximately 18 percent of the male youth population of these cities during this period.[18]

Numbers of Gangs and Disruptive Youth Groups in the United States

The data provided in previous sections make it possible to present national-level figures for two major categories of law-violating youth groups—gangs and disruptive local groups. These categories include 5 of the 18 types of groups cited earlier as necessary to a comprehensive

enumeration of law-violating youth groups: turf gangs, predatory gangs, fighting gangs, regularly associating disruptive local groups, and solidary local cliques.

Although figures for these two categories fall short of providing a comprehensive enumeration, each is important; gangs because they are the traditional object of concern in the study of collective youth crime, and disruptive local groups because they are probably the most prevalent type of law-violating youth group. Presentation of figures for these two categories at the same time provides as complete an enumeration of law-violating youth groups as is possible on the basis of available information, and permits a direct comparison of the numbers of units and members for the two categories.

Table 4–6, like table 4–5, tabulates only cities and towns of 10,000 and over. The summary figures indicate that the 2,122 localities contained about 118,000 gangs and disruptive local groups with about 1.5 million members. Gangs made up about 2 percent of the number of units, and gang members about 7 percent of the number of members. The total number of members was equivalent to about one-fifth of the number of male youth in the 2,122 locales. There were approximately 56 law-violating youth groups in the average locale; the average gang-problem locale had about 8 gangs, and the average group-problem locale about 55 groups. The size of the average gang was about 43 members, and the average group about 12.

Table 4–6. Number of law-violating youth groups and group members in the United States, 1970–80

	N localities = 2,122[b]			Population = 109.3 million[a]				
	Number of localities with gangs or groups	Number of gangs or groups	% of all units	Number of members[c]	% of all members	Members as % of male youth	Average number of units per locality	Size of average u
Gangs	285	2,285	1.9	97.9	6.7	3.3	8.0	42.8
Groups	2,132	115,900	98.1	1,372.8	93.3	16.8	54.6	11.8
Gangs, groups	2,122[b]	118,185	100.0	1,470.7	100.0	20.1	55.7	12.4

[a] *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*, 1978.
[b] Gang localities included in group localities.
[c] In 1,000's.

Comparing the number of gangs with the number of disruptive youth groups yields the following figures. Seven-and-a-half times as many communities had problems with disruptive youth groups, but not with gangs, as had problems with gangs alone. There were seven times as many disruptive youth groups as gangs in the average locality. Nationwide, there were 14 times as many disruptive youth group members as gang members, and 52 times as many disruptive youth groups as gangs.

On the basis of these comparisons, it might appear that gangs represented only a small part of the total problem, however, their number appears small only by comparison with the extremely

large number of disruptive youth groups. The actual number of gang localities shown in the table, 286, is markedly larger than previous evidence has indicated. No more than 15 or 20 American cities are commonly thought to have gang problems. Insofar as the figures in this table are accurate, the number of cities with gang problems in the 1970's was well over 10 times the number commonly accepted by most observers. Both gangs and groups contribute importantly to the problem of youth crime.

Summary

Given the extensive participation of law-violating youth groups in serious criminal activity in the United States, it would seem that accurate information on their numbers, membership, and the proportion of youth who belong to such groups would be an essential element of any policy aimed at preventing, controlling, or reducing crime. Yet no such information has ever been compiled. The present chapter uses a combination of collected data and estimation procedures to produce the first known set of figures on the number of law-violating youth groups and group members in the United States.

These figures indicate that in the 1970's there were approximately 120,000 law-violating youth groups, with a membership of about 1.5 million, in the 2,100 American cities and towns of 10,000 and over. The number of group members was equivalent to about one-fifth of the number of adolescent males in these communities. These figures, while representing as comprehensive a presentation of the number of law-violating youth groups as is currently available, are still incomplete, in that they do not include figures for a number of highly prevalent types of groups such as larceny cliques, burglary rings, and robbery bands.

These summary figures combine data for two categories of groups—gangs, as defined earlier, and disruptive local groups. There were about 2,300 gangs with 98,000 members located in approximately 300 U.S. cities and towns. Gangs made up about 2 percent of the number of tabulated law-violating youth groups, and gang members about 7 percent of all group members. Although the number of gangs was small relative to the number of nongang groups, the number of gang members was approximately twice the total number of juveniles confined in all types of detention and correctional facilities, and the number of cities with gang problems was more than 10 times the number commonly recognized.

Gangs were disproportionately concentrated in the largest cities. The 10 largest gang-problem cities—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, San Diego, San Antonio, Phoenix, San Francisco, and Boston—with about 18 percent of the population of all cities of 10,000 and over, contain just about half of the Nation's gangs and two-thirds of its gang members. However, of the approximately 300 U.S. cities with gangs, the number found in the 10 largest was roughly proportional to their population (53 percent of the population, 51 percent of the gangs). This means that about half of all gangs, and about one-third of all gang members, were found in cities with populations of one-half million or less. These figures support earlier findings that indicate an increasing probability of finding gangs in cities of smaller size than has traditionally been the case.

Unexpectedly, the relationship between the size of a city and its numbers of gangs and gang members was not a simple one. Examining the statistical association between city size and various measures related to the number of gangs in the 10 largest cities (e.g., numbers of gangs and gang members; gangs/gang members per capita; average number of gangs per city; average size of gangs; gang members as a percent of the male adolescent population) shows, as was expected, good statistical association between city size and raw numbers—that is, larger cities had larger numbers of gangs and gang members. There is also good association between city size and average gang size; gangs were larger in larger cities. However, the statistical association between city size and gang members per capita is poor; when the size of cities is taken into account, the good associations found in the case of raw numbers disappear. It appears that the "density" of gang members in particular cities—that is, the number of members per unit population—had little relation to city size. The propensity of local youths to form gangs was different in different cities, and this propensity was related to factors other than the size of the city.

Extending the examination of the relation between city size and the numbers of gangs and gang members to the 286 cities with gang problems shows the situation was similar in most but not all respects to that of the largest cities. As in the case of the largest cities, the statistical association between city size and the numbers of gangs and gang members is good, and the association between size and per capita rates is poor. Dividing the cities into five categories based on size and location, however, shows that numbers of gangs and gang members were not directly proportionate to category populations. For example, numbers of gangs, but not gang members, were disproportionately high in the largest cities; numbers both of gangs and gang members were disproportionately high in smaller California cities, and disproportionately low in smaller cities outside of California.

Despite the fact that problems posed by law-violating youth groups other than gangs were far more prevalent than gang problems, and judged by many to be equally or more serious, even less information was available on their numbers and membership than was available for gangs. A nationwide enumeration of one of the most prevalent types of groups—disruptive local groups—was based on data collected in 13 cities reporting group problems. These are Dallas, San Antonio, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Boston, St. Louis, Denver, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Newark, Fort Worth, Miami, and St. Paul. These cities had a combined population of 6.9 million, and ranged in size from 290,000 to 800,000. Data based on reports by local respondents indicate that there were 9,200 disruptive local groups with a total membership of 107,000, in the 13 cities. The average city contained about 700 such groups and 8,250 group members. The number of group members for all 13 cities was equivalent to 17 percent of the male youths (10 to 19 years) population; percentages range from a low of 3 percent (Denver) to a high of 42 percent (Boston).

In contrast with the situation reported for gangs—a good relation between city size and numbers but a poor relation between size and per capita rates—neither numbers nor rates show any significant association with city size in the case of groups. Nor was there a significant association between city size and the size of the average group. The number of adolescent males

in these cities was also poorly associated with measures of the numbers of gangs and gang members. These findings were quite unexpected, since it would seem reasonable to suppose that there would be more groups and/or larger groups in cities with larger numbers of youth.

Data collected in the 13 cities, along with additional data obtained less systematically for about 60 additional communities, provided the basis for estimates of the total number of disruptive local groups and group members in the 2,100 U.S. cities and towns of 10,000 population and over. These figures indicate that there were approximately 116,000 disruptive local groups with 1.4 million members in the cities of the United States. The number of group members was equivalent to about 18 percent of the male youth population of these cities.

It should be borne in mind, however, that an evaluation of the seriousness of collective youth crime problems involves more than numbers alone. Because gangs are disproportionately concentrated in the largest cities, their activities are more likely to receive wider publicity, and to arouse higher levels of public concern. In addition, the kinds of illegal activity engaged in by gangs are generally much more serious than those engaged in by the average nongang group. This raises the issue of whether a very large volume of minor crime poses a greater or lesser crime problem than a smaller volume of more serious crime.

It should also be noted that while the number of gangs and gang members tabulated here may seem small when compared to the number of groups and group members, present data indicate that gangs in the 1970's were far more widespread than previously supposed. The presence of gangs in almost 300 cities—13 percent of all U.S. cities of 10,000 and over—and the activity in these cities of about 2,300 gangs with about 98,000 members, indicates that violence and other forms of illegal activity by youth gangs in the United States continued to pose a major crime problem.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. See W. Miller, 1975: 16.

2. Population figures are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1978, Washington, D.C., 1978, table 24, p.24.

3. F. Thrasher. The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs in Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1927.

4. Juvenile correctional facility population from U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Children in Custody: Advance Report on the 1977 Census of Public Juvenile Facilities." Washington, 1978.

5. Local usage resembles the definition used by Thrasher (note 3 above) to derive his figure of over 1,300 gangs in Chicago in the early 1920's. Using the broader definition would produce a figure of over 250 gangs for Boston.

6. Excluding Boston, the correlation between city size and number of gangs per capita is +.25, p. not significant. The correlational statistics even suggest the possibility that per capita rates may be higher in smaller cities; if the number of gangs per city is held constant, statistically significant negative relationships appear between city size and the number of gangs and gang members per capita. For 10 cities, first order partial correlations (controlling for number of gangs) are: for city size and gang members per capita, r=-.84, p=.01; for city size and gangs per capita, r=-.74, p=.05.

7. W. Miller, "White Gangs," in J. Short, Jr., ed., Modern Criminals, Chicago, Aldine, 1970: 50.

8. City size, average number of gangs per city, rho=+.90.

9. City size, gangs per capita, rho=-.30.

10. Since data on smaller cities outside California were sparse, it is possible that figures for this category are at least in part a function of the estimation procedures used here.

11. See footnote 10.

12. City population each category, number gang members, χ^2=29.9, d.f.=4, p<.001. Average city size each category, number gang members per capita, rho=-.10, not significant.

13. No. groups, no. group members, r=.88, p=.001; no. groups, groups per capita, r=.73, p=.005; no. groups, group members per capita, r=.77, p=.002; no. groups, group members as % of male youth, r=.73, p=.003; no. group members, groups per capita, r=.60, p=.03; no. group members, group members per capita, r=.86, p=.001; no group members, group members as % of male youth, r=.77, p=.002; groups per capita, group members per capita, r=.005, p=.001; group members per capita, group members as % of male youth, r=.97, p <.001.

14. City population, no. groups, r=.48, not significant; population, average group size, r=-.20, not significant; population, no. adolescent males, r=.98, p<.001; no. adolescent males, no. groups, r=.38, not significant; no. adolescent males, average group size, r=-.21, not significant; no. groups, average group size, r=.02, not significant.

15. Statistical Abstracts, 1978, Op. Cit..

16. Data on the numbers of groups in communities between 10,000 and 100,000 population were obtained through direct field observation and routine police reports collected over extended time periods in 3 metropolitan areas. Such information was collected for about 150 cities and towns in the Boston metropolitan area, about 100 cities and towns in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and about 50 cities and towns in the Albany metropolitan area. Some findings are reported in W. Miller, 1981, Op. Cit., page 312, W. Miller, Juvenile Delinquency in Boston Suburbs, report to the Joint Center for Urban Studies of M.I.T. and Harvard, May, 1968, and in a set of papers on Albany-area communities written by students in a graduate seminar on youth gangs, State University of New York at Albany, April 1972.

17. Regression analysis (least squares method) was used in an attempt to develop an equation that would estimate the number of groups in cities of different sizes, where data were available on some but not all cities. With y as the dependent variable (average numbers of groups per city) and x as the independent variable (size of average city in population category), equations were derived on the basis of Linear [$y=A+Bx$], Parabolic [$y=A+Bx=Cx^2$], Hyperbolic [$1=(y/A)^2-(x/B)^2$], Logarithmic [$y=A+Bn(x)$], Power [$y=Ax^B$], Exponential [$y=AB^x$], Cubic [$y=A+Bx+cx^2+Dx^3$], and Inverse [$y=A+B/x$] models. All of these estimating methods overpredicted the number of groups in cities in the smaller size categories, when compared to directly collected data. The exponential model produced the lowest overprediction, but even here the overprediction was substantial.

18. These figures differ from those presented in an earlier paper (W. Miller, "Gangs, Groups, and Serious Youth Crime," in D. Shichor and D. Kelly, eds., Critical Issue in Juvenile Delinquency, Lexington Books, 1980), which gave an estimate of 1.6 million for the number of group members and 25 percent for the proportion of male youth. Present estimates are lower primarily because of differences in estimating methods. Rather than dividing the cities into size categories and using different estimating ratios for each category, the earlier method utilized a single estimating ratio for cities of all sizes.

5. Social Characteristics of Youth Gang Members

Members of the many thousands of law-violating youth groups in the United States vary widely in their social characteristics. The groups contain males and females, preteens and young adults, the poverty-stricken and the economically comfortable, suburbanites and city dwellers, blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians. But despite the potential for wide variation in the social characteristics of group members, their actual characteristics fall within a surprisingly narrow range. If one looks at the typical rather than the atypical, and the common rather than the uncommon type of group, there is far more homogeneity than one would expect. This is especially true of youth gangs. The present chapter presents information on social characteristics of the approximately 65,000 gang members in the nine surveyed gang-problem cities, as obtained in the course of interviews with survey respondents.[1]

With few exceptions, studies of gangs and gang members conducted during the past 50 years have shown that the great majority of youth gang members shared a common set of social characteristics. Most gang members have resembled one another in four respects: sex, age, social class status, and residential locale. They have been predominantly male, ranging in age from about 12 to about 21, originating in families at the lower educational and occupational levels, and found primarily in the low-income or "slum" districts of central cities. In a fifth respect, ethnicity (national or racial background) gangs have shown wide variation, with membership during different historical periods reflecting the full range of national groups making up our society. Gangs of the 1970's differed in important respects from their predecessors; did these differences also affect their traditional social characteristics?

Table 5–1. Ages of gang members from respondents, nine cities

City	Age range	Average age
New York	10–22	17.5
Chicago	8–22	NR[b]
Los Angeles	10–22	17.5
Philadelphia	8–22	18
Detroit	12–20	NR
San Francisco	12–20	NR
San Antonio	13–20	16
Miami	10–19	16
Boston	12–22	16
Nine cities	**10.6–21[a]**	**16.8**

[a] Means of low and high figures.
[b] NR = not reported.

Renewed attention to gangs in the 1970's prompted some observers to question the contemporary applicability of each of the traditional of characteristics. Some claimed that the age of gang members had expanded upward or downward or both—that violent gang activity now involved 6- and 7-year-olds and that men in their 20's and 30's played a much larger role in gangs. Female gangs, traditionally infrequent, were said to have become common. Claims were made that city slums were no longer the primary habitat of gangs, with gangs now common in middle-class suburbs. Claims were also made that that the gang problem in the United States had become primarily a black phenomenon,

in contrast to the multiple ethnicities of gangs in the past. What are the findings of the survey?

Age of Gang Members

Larger gangs traditionally have had age-differentiated subdivisions or segments bearing names such as "Pee-Wees," "Midgets," "Juniors," "Old Heads," "Veteranos" and the like. Respondents in all nine gang-problem cities reported this phenomenon, with some reporting it as very prevalent.[2]

The notion that a substantial number of gang members are older ("Some are in their late 20's and even 30's") was particularly prevalent in New York. Some New Yorkers claimed that increased gang activity in the early 1970's was largely caused by returning Vietnam veterans, who, in resuming gang membership, brought with them the knowledge and weaponry of actual military combat. A second explanation involved a current version of the "Fagin" thesis (an older man using youths as criminal agents), which asserts that older gang members delegate specific crimes to juveniles who are liable to less severe penalties. In Los Angeles, claims of involvement of older men apply primarily to traditional Mexican communities, where barrio "veteranos" often maintain an affiliation with gang names well into their adult years. The notion that a substantial number of gang members were now younger ("6- and 7-year-olds are heavily into robbery and burglary") accords with the thesis that the age of violent criminality is becoming progressively lower (one New York respondent said, "The average offender used to be about 16, but is now 12 to 14.")

Similar claims of an expanded gang-member age range were also made in other cities. Undoubtedly some basis in fact exists for both types of claim, but present findings indicate that whatever age expansion has occurred does not represent a substantial development.

It is likely that claims of significant age-range expansion derive from overgeneralizations based on a relatively small number of striking but atypical cases. Available data indicate that the larger the gang populations for which age data are compiled, the closer do age distributions approximate "traditional" distributions. Table 5–1 presents pooled figures obtained in response to the questions—"What is your estimate of the age range of the bulk of gang members in this city?" and "How old is the average gang member?"

The ages shown in table 5–1 do not differ significantly from the traditional 12 to 21 range. For all nine cities, the average lower age limit was 10½, and the average upper limit 21. These figures offer more support to the "they are getting younger" than to "they are getting older" thesis. The average upper limit for the nine cities is identical with the traditional figure. The average lower figure, however, is about a year and a half lower than the traditional figure, with two cities, Chicago and Philadelphia, reporting 8 as the lower age limit.

The average age of gang members in the nine cities was about 17, close to the traditional figure. There is some indication that the age was higher in the larger cities, with New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia showing an average age of about 18, and San Antonio, Miami, and

Table 5–2. Ages of gang-member perpetrators and victims

Number of arrests = 807

Age category	New York 1971–74 n=215[a]	Chicago 1971–74 n=121[a]	Los Angeles 1970–75* n=171[a]	Philadelphia 1971–73 n=292[b]	4 Cities n=807
13 and younger	6.0%	3.3%	6.4%	1.7%	4.1%
14, 15	20.0	16.5	22.8	18.7	19.4
16, 17	33.5%	36.4%	35.1%	45.6%	37.7%
18, 19	24.7	30.6	18.7	24.5	25.3
20, 21	10.2	12.4	9.4	5.8	8.9
22	0.9	0.8	3.5	3.7	2.5
23, older	4.6	0.0	4.1	0.0	2.1
	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

= mode

* Through April.

[a] Perpetrators, victims reported in daily press from police sources.

[b] Assailants only, Pennsylvania Economy League Report, p. 10.

Boston an average of 16. Table 5–2 provides even less support to the "substantial age-expansion" thesis. These figures are derived from compilations of reported arrests of gang members in the four largest cities between 1970 and 1974. Of 807 reported gang-member arrests, 93 percent fell within the 14–21 age span and 82 percent within the 14–19 range. Only 6 percent of those whose arrests were reported were younger than 13 or older than 23. In all 4 cities the modal age was 16 to 17, a figure approximating respondents' reports of 16.8 as the average age for gang membership.

The low 4 percent for the "13 and below" category could be attributed at least in part to a general reluctance by police to arrest early and preteen youth, but this interpretation would also imply a greater willingness to arrest those at the higher age levels—a proposition not supported by the very low 2.1 percent figure for the 23-and-over age category. Distributions for the four cities are remarkably similar. For example, percentages of those 17 and under vary only about 5 percent among the four cities (60 to 66 percent).

Present evidence, then, does not support the notion of a significant expansion of the traditional age range of gang members. What is possible is the addition during the current period of perhaps a year or two at each end of the range.

Gender of Gang Members

Urban youth gang activity was and is a predominantly male enterprise. Traditionally females have been involved in gang activities in one of three ways; as "auxiliaries" or "branches" of male gangs, as essentially autonomous units, and as participants in sexually mixed gangs. Of these, the first has been by far the most common. The membership of female adjuncts or auxiliaries generally includes for the most part females related in some way to the male gang members—as girl friends, sisters, sisters of girl friends, friends of sisters, and so on. The auxiliary frequently bears a feminized version of the male gang name—Crips, Cripettes; Disciples, Lady Disciples. Autonomous female gangs have been relatively rare. Although stories are frequently told about seriously criminal or violent behavior by females, often undertaken to abet male crimes, arrests of female gang members have generally been far fewer than those of males, and their criminality substantially less serious.

No information collected during the survey indicates that the gangs of the 1970's differed significantly from their predecessors in this respect. Female auxiliaries of male gangs were reported for all nine gang-problem cities. In New York, police estimate that about one-half of the gangs they knew of had female branches. However, their number was estimated at only about 6 percent of the total known gang population. The number given for fully autonomous female gangs in all of the Bronx and Queens (1970 population, 3.4 million) was only 6. Outside of the largest cities, respondents were generally unable to identify more than one or two all-female gangs; in San Antonio, no female gangs were reported. A general estimate that gang members are 90 percent or more male is probably valid for all gang cities.

Survey data provided little support for claims that criminality by females, either in general or in connection with gangs, had become more prevalent and violent. For example, of 4,400 arrests of gang members recorded by Chicago police in 1974, about 400, under 10 percent, involved females. In Philadelphia, of approximately 40 female groups identified by the police, not one met their criteria of a "gang," nor did the municipal gang control agency classify a single girls' group as posing a "serious threat." Similarly, stories told about the nature of female participation in gang activities (weapons carriers, decoys for ambush killings, participants in individual or gang fighting) did not differ significantly from those told in the past. Frequently cited was a classic rationale for gang fighting—avenging the impugned honor of females. Most respondents, however, felt that the part played by females did not represent a particularly serious aspect of current gang problems.

Locales and Social Class Status

Law-violating youth groups are found in communities of all sizes, in all regions, and at all economic levels. However, the kinds of groups designated here as "gangs" have traditionally been found in greater numbers and have engaged in more violent activities in those sections of large cities whose populations fall in the lower educational and occupational categories. During the past 25 years a set of fundamental changes has affected both the distribution of urban populations and the subcultures of youth. In response to a complex set of processes including

racial and ethnic migrations and the development of extensive urban-area motor highway systems, there has been a massive movement of urban populations out of central city areas to outer city, ring-city, and suburban communities. While most of the emigrants have been middle and working class, many lower income populations have also been directly involved. At the same time there were significant changes in basic orientations of many middle-class youth respecting traditional morality, the legitimacy of official authority, the "work ethic," and other value issues.

Both these developments helped lay the groundwork for what could be a serious erosion of the demographic and cultural conditions that promote the concentration of gangs in inner-city areas. Indeed there has been considerable discussion of the spread of gang activities from the slums to the suburbs, and from lower-income to middle-class populations. Because of these changes and speculations, the survey asked:

> *Traditionally the largest numbers of gangs and the more serious forms of gang activities have been concentrated in the slum or ghetto areas of central cities. Recently there has been a great deal of movement of working class and other populations to outer-city and suburban areas, and considerable discussion of the rise of gangs among middle-class youth. In light of these developments, is there anything in the present situation of your city that would call for any significant modification in the traditional statement as to the concentration of gangs and gang violence?*

Fifty-four respondents provided codable answers. Of these, only one unequivocally rejected the traditional statement. Forty-five (83 percent) of the respondents gave definite answers, with the remaining 9 (17 percent) either uncertain or saying they had too little information. Of those providing definite answers, 43 (95 percent) stated that the traditional statement applied to their city without qualification or with some qualification. A Miami respondent said, "I agree 100 percent with (the traditional statement); this city could be a textbook example of the situation described by Chicago researchers in the 1920's. "The two respondents who claimed that the statement did not apply to their city were from Detroit (qualified rejection), and San Francisco (unqualified).

Some explanation is needed for the unexpected degree of consensus that the primary locus of serious gang activity in the 1970's, as in the past, was the slum areas of cities. Today the terms "inner-city" and "slum/ghetto" show considerably less correspondence in most cities than in the past. One good example is found in Chicago, where classic sociological studies of the 1920's and 1930's showed highest concentrations of gangs in the industrial/residential zones of the central city. Today, in Chicago as in other major metropolises, the central district of the city has become largely commercial (finance, retail) and service (food, entertainment) zones, often through deliberate urban planning. This results in at least two conditions inimical to the formation or maintenance of gangs—a dearth of residential family units with adolescent offspring and a policy of intensive police patrol of downtown, aimed to protect both daytime commercial activities and nighttime service activities.

What has happened, as in other cities, is that slums or ghettos have shifted away from the inner-city to outer-city, ring-city, or suburban areas—often to formerly middle- or working-class neighborhoods. Special concentration occurs in housing project areas. The gangs are still in the ghettos, but these are often at some remove from their traditional inner-city locations.

Surprisingly few respondents noted the development of problematic gangs in the suburbs (or "out in the county" for several cities) as a major development, despite a direct question inquiring as to such a development. Some stated flatly, "there are *no* gangs in the suburbs." This general impression seems to be inconsistent with statements that as ethnic slum populations have moved more widely throughout the metropolitan area they have taken their gangs with them. The situation in Los Angeles was particularly notable in this respect in light of data showing that there had been extensive movement by Mexicans and others from traditional central city districts, such as East Los Angeles and Watts, out into the Valley and other communities outside the city. One Los Angeles respondent acknowledged these developments but continued to maintain that "the gang problem diminishes the more you move away from the center city."

Some respondents in Washington claimed that there were gangs in the adjacent county areas. In part because of these claims, site visits were made to two counties whose southern and western sections comprise the northern and eastern portions of the Washington metropolitan area. These are Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland. Thirteen representatives of seven agencies in the two counties gave interviews. These respondents reported youth group problems very similar to those found in the cities (see table 3–5), but there was no evidence of youth gangs meeting the definition used in this report.

National Background of Gang Members

No accurate picture of the racial or ethnic picture of gangs and groups in major cities is possible without carefully collected information. However, the issue of race or ethnicity has significant policy implications, so it is important to make at least some general estimates of the ethnic or racial composition of urban youth groups.

Respondents in the nine gang-problem cities were asked first to identify the major racial, ethnic, or national background categories represented in local gangs, and second, to estimate their general proportions. Most respondents were reluctant to attempt such estimates and emphasized the speculative nature of those they did make. (One exception was Chicago, where four respondents gave identical percentage estimates.) The figures in table 5–3, then, can only be regarded as approximations.

Four national origin categories are delineated—African-American ("black"), Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Thai, Samoan, Native American), European origin except Hispanic (English, Italian, Irish, Slavic, Scandinavian, German, Albanian, others), and Hispanic (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central American, others). The Hispanic category differs from the others in that it is defined on the basic of language rather than continent of ancestral

Table 5—3. Background of gang members in nine gang-problem cities by ancestral origin (N gang members = 63,224)

City	African		Asian		Hispanic		Other European	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
New York	8,750	35%	1,250	5%	12,500	50%	2,500	10%
Chicago	6,750	60	337	3	3,375	30	787	7
Los Angeles	3,825	25	460	3	10,710	70	305	2
Philadelphia	6,300	90	—	—	350	5	350	5
Detroit	850	85	—	—	50	5	100	10
San Antonio	50	10	—	—	425	85	25	5
San Francisco	25	5	375	75	100	20	—	—
Boston	575	25	45	2	185	8	1,495	65
Miami	10	3	10	2	355	95	—	—
All cities	27,135	42.9%	2,477	3.9%	28,050	44.4%	5,562	8.8%

origin; moreover, Hispanics often represent complex racial and national mixtures (e.g., European Spanish, Native American, African). Despite this anthropological heterogeneity, Hispanic is a sociologically meaningful category in the contemporary United States.

Table 5-3 applies the respondents' estimates of the proportion of gang members of each ethnic status to the figures on the number of gang members in each of the nine gang-problem cities. Summary table 5-4 indicates that blacks and Hispanics each constituted something over 40 percent of the gang members in the nine cities, with the proportion of Hispanics somewhat higher (Hispanics, 44.4 percent; blacks, 42.9 percent). Non-Hispanic whites accounted for about 9 percent, and Asians 4 percent. On a city-by-city basis, percentages vary widely from the nine city totals. The percentage of black gangs ranged from 90 percent in Philadelphia to 3 percent in Miami. In three cities, Philadelphia, Detroit and Chicago, blacks made up half or more of all gang members; in four others, New York, Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Miami, Hispanics constituted half or more. Miami led in the proportion of Hispanic gang members—mostly Cuban, but including as well Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans—followed by San Antonio, most of whose gang members were of Mexican background.

Table 5-4. Major ethnic categories: gang members in nine cities

N gang members = 63,224

Category	Number	Percent
Hispanic	28,050	44.4%
Black	27,135	42.9
Non-Hispanic		
White	5,562	8.8
Asian	2,477	3.9
Total	63,224	100.0%

Asian gangs (also called Oriental), represent a relatively new development in U.S. cities. They made up the bulk of the gang problem in San Francisco, but appeared as well in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Boston, and other cities. While most attention was paid to what were called "Hong Kong Chinese," a rather surprising range of different Asian backgrounds was found. Filipino gangs were reported to be an increasing problem in San Francisco, and Los Angeles, in addition to Chinese and Filipino gangs, reported gangs of Korean, Samoan, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, and other Asian origins.

Some African-American gangs in New York were reported to derive from various parts of the West Indies and Central America as well as Africa via the American South. The few Native American gangs reported for Chicago are here classified as "Asian." White gangs in Chicago were reported to include Germans, English (Appalachian mountaineers), Scandinavians, and Poles, and in Detroit, Albanians and Maltese.

The bulk of youth gangs were homogeneous with respect to ethnic status; some white gangs included a few blacks; "multinational Catholic" (e.g., Irish, Italian, Polish) gangs were not uncommon among whites; some Puerto Rican gangs, often representing complex racial mixtures, included a few ancestrally African blacks; some Cuban gangs in Miami had a few Puerto Rican members. But in general the religion, race, and national background of gang members within particular gangs were similar.

Summary

The age, sex, social status, and locality characteristics of gang members in nine cities during the decade of the 1970's did not differ substantially from those of past eras. Information both from respondents and other sources indicated that some changes affected each of these characteristics, and some striking exceptions to each generalized conclusion can be cited. But overall changes were of considerably lesser magnitude than indicated through the consideration of relatively small numbers of extreme or atypical cases. Some expansion apparently occurred at both higher and low levels of the traditional age range of 12 to 21, but this probably does not exceed 1 or 2 years at the most at each end of the range. Present data indicate that 93 percent of gang-member assailants and victims were between 14 and 21, that the modal ages for arrests were 16 and 17, and that the peak age for gang membership was about 17.

Female gang members reportedly demonstrated more violent activity than in the past, but the actual proportion of male to female gang members showed little change, with males outnumbering females by about 10 to 1. Few "autonomous" girls' gangs exist, and those that do pose far less of a threat than their male counterparts.

More seriously criminal or violent gangs continued to be concentrated in slum or ghetto areas, but in many instances the actual locations of these districts shifted away from central or inner-city areas to outer-city or suburban communities outside city limits. There was little evidence of any substantial increase in the proportions of middle-class youth involved in seriously criminal or violent gangs, but data from the "group-problem" cities (see tables 4–4 and 4–5) suggest

increased development among many blue-collar and some middle-class youth of law-violating youth groups such as burglary rings and vandalism cliques in suburban or ring-city communities.

The ethnic or national background status of gangs showed both a clear resemblance to and clear differences from previous periods. The difference relates primarily to the actual ethnic composition of the bulk of gangs. In most past periods, the majority of gangs were white, of various European backgrounds. In the 1970's there was no majority ethnic category, but the bulk of gang members, about four-fifths, were either black or Hispanic. The rise in the proportion of Hispanic gangs to over two-fifths of the estimated totals, and their presence in all nine cities, represented a new development on the American scene. The rise in numbers of Asian gangs represented an even more marked departure from the past. Accepted doctrine for many years was that Oriental youth posed negligible problems in juvenile delinquency or gang activity; this accepted tenet was seriously undermined by events of the 1970's—not only by the violent activities of the newly immigrated "Hong Kong Chinese," but by the development in several cities of gangs of Filipinos, Japanese, and other Asian groups. The estimated number of Asian gangs in the 1970's was almost equal to that of white gangs, and may exceed their number in the near future. Gangs of non-Hispanic European origins—both the traditional white ethnics of the 1880–1920 period (Irish, Italians, Jews, Slavs) and the classic ethnics of the 1820–60 period (German, British, Scandinavian) are substantially underrepresented in contemporary urban gangs.

The similarity to the past inheres in the fact that the ethnic status and social class position of gang-producing populations have always been closely related. At different periods in its history the ethnic composition of the low-skilled laboring sectors of American cities comprised disproportionate numbers of the more recently migrated populations—either via external immigration (Germans, Irish, Poles, Italians) or internal migration (rural to urban, South to North).

The 1970's were no exception. Ethnic categories most heavily represented in gang populations are by and large the more recently migrated groups—blacks (South to North, rural to urban, or both); Hispanic (Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba); Asian (Hong Kong, Philippine Islands, Vietnam). There are some exceptions. The Los Angeles "gang barrios" go back three or more generations. Italian gangs in Northwest Chicago are often lineal descendants of their parental or grandparental progenitors. Black gangs in older sections of Philadelphia can point to long local gang traditions.

In general, however, the ethnic categories most heavily represented in gang populations are those whose educational and occupational status—due either to recency of immigration or other constraints—has not risen beyond the lower levels. Social observers of New York City in the 1880's, when the city was swarming with Irish gangs, would have been incredulous had they been told that within the century the police would be hard put to locate a single Irish gang in the five boroughs of the city.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. See Interview Guide in appendix A, Gang Information Topics 3, 8, 9, 15.

2. In Miami some respondents reported that age-graded subdivisions were not found in contemporary gangs but had been present in the previous generation of gangs.

6. Criminal Activity by Law-Violating Youth Groups

As a social phenomenon, youth gangs and other law-violating youth groups command considerable interest. Their dress, language, and characteristic behavior are colorful and distinctive in many settings. From the perspective of public policy, however, such groups are important not because they are interesting, but because they pose a serious social problem. At the core of this is criminal activity. These groups are far more likely than most to behave routinely as a serious threat to the welfare and security of others.

People familiar with law-violating youth groups as well as group members themselves often argue that viewing them exclusively or even primarily in terms of criminal proclivities is misleading at best, harmful at worst. The author shares this belief. Criminal activity as such makes up a relatively small part of the activities of law-violating youth groups; in common with other adolescent peer groups, most of their energies are devoted to activities such as socializing, recreation, mating, and the like. A strong case can be made that these groups serve very positive functions for their members, and over the long run for society at large, and that they are a valuable if not essential type of association in the communities where they are found.[1]

A balanced treatment of these groups would devote considerable attention to their beneficial features. But it is not the purpose of the present report to provide a balanced picture; the beneficial aspects of gangs are discussed elsewhere.[2] This report seeks to present as comprehensive as possible a picture of the contribution of law-violating youth groups to a central and serious problem of American society: its enormously high volume of crime.

This objective comes from the assumption that detailed and accurate information on the location, character, and volume of collective youth crime is essential to the development of effective methods for reducing its threat. The availability of such information in no way guarantees that more effective policies will be devised or necessary resources be allocated; such developments are far more directly influenced by complex political consideration.[3] Even when political circumstances support the development of specific types of anti-crime programs, however, if we lack the kind of information that makes it possible to gear programs to what is rather than to what is supposed, it is likely the development of effective policy will, for all practical purposes, fail.

In the present attempt to provide at least the beginnings of a sound and comprehensive body of information on collective youth crime, the following sections present information on three major topics: gang-related killings, gang member crime, and serious crime by all types of law-violating youth groups.

Gang-Related Killings

The archetypical form of violent crime is murder. Although murder is the least common serious crime, constituting only about 0.2 percent of the seven Index crimes reported to the FBI and providing the basis of about 1 percent of city arrests for these crimes, appraisals of its seriousness are based not on its frequency but on its social and moral significance. The unlawful taking of human life is regarded almost universally as the ultimate crime. The character and customary pursuits of youth gangs are such that they are far more likely than most other kinds of groups to engage recurrently in the killing of human beings by violent means, and this propensity justifies a special focus on murder as a form of gang crime.

Chapter 8 deals with the forms and circumstances of gang killings. The present chapter provides information on the numbers and locations of such killings, and trends in gang murders during the 1970's.

In the late 1960's, law enforcement officials, media writers, and others began to focus much more directly than they had in the past on the numbers of gang-related killings. The reasons for this are not at all clear. American youth gangs have always engaged in violent activity, and many people have been killed in the course of this violence. In the late 1960's, however, police departments and other agencies in the largest cities began to distinguish gang-related homicides from other killings and to present statistics on them as a separate category.

No one can say for certain whether this increased concern was due to the degree to which the number of gang killings had increased or whether social and political developments during this period engendered increased concern over gang killings.

Despite the increased attention to gang killings, however, only a small proportion of cities with gang problems routinely compile statistics of gang killings. During the 1970's, the collection of information on gang killings was adopted, resumed, or continued as a routine procedure in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. San Francisco and Detroit collected such statistics for some years but not others, or for some categories of gang killings but not for others. In such cities as Boston and Miami, even during periods of high gang violence, there was not and never has been any systematic collection of gang-killing data by official agencies.

Collecting and presenting reliable statistics on gang-related killings is difficult, and the highly uneven pattern of data collection from city to city is only a part of the information problem. The task of presenting accurate and comparable data from city to city involves all of the problems noted previously in connection with the enumeration of gangs, gang members, and related phenomena—and a few more besides.

A major problem concerns the identification of a killing as gang-related. Each city has its own terminologies and definitions, sometimes with explicit rationales and sometimes not. At least five terms for loss of life were used—murder, homicide, manslaughter, killing, and death—with little consistency of definition. The term "gang-related homicide" was used in New York and

Philadelphia; "youth-gang homicides" in Chicago. The cities used different criteria for determining whether a killing was "gang related."

One might suppose that a relatively simple criterion would suffice: killings would be considered as "gang related" if members of known gangs were either assailants or victims. But in Chicago, a killing was considered "gang related" only if it occurred in the course of an explicitly defined collective encounter between two or more gangs (a "gang fight"). Thus, the retaliatory killing of a single gang member by members of a rival gang in a passing car would not be counted as a "youth-gang homicide" by the Chicago police. At the other extreme, the Los Angeles police classified as a "gang-related death" any form of murder, homicide, or manslaughter in which gang members were in any way involved. A security guard killed in attempting to forestall a robbery by a single gang member would be tabulated as a gang-related death. Moreover, Los Angeles figures included not only what are commonly regarded as "youth gangs," but also members of motorcycle gangs and car or van clubs, many of whose members are well beyond the "youth" category. In addition to these differences among cities, city police could at any time decide to change their methods of reckoning whether a killing was "gang related" in response to what are essentially political pressures, so that even figures for two successive years may not be comparable.

Gang Killings in the United States

The quantitative findings on gang killings in this report are based primarily on the data in table 6–1, "Gang-related killings." The table presents the number of gang-related killings per year for the 13-year period between 1967 and 1980 for 12 locality categories—including the 9 gang-problem cities listed in table 6–3. Before examining the table, several points should be made with respect to the figures it contains.

Note first that the table is incomplete. Of its 156 cells, no data are entered in 39 cells, or 25 percent of the total—either because data were not available or because available data were not obtained due to constraints on time and resources. Empty cells are most frequent for the earliest years. Data for the category "other cities" are particularly poor; figures in the table are based on less than 10 percent of their number, and even for these cities data are spotty and incomplete. Of the 286 cities designated as gang-problem cities (chapter 4), the homicide statistics in table 6–1 are based on data from only about 60, or 20 percent of the total. The remaining 225 cities fall into 2 categories—those that reported problems with gangs but experienced no gang-related killings during the 14-year period, and those for which information on killings that did occur was not obtained. Without extensive additional data gathering, there is no way of knowing how many of the latter there were nor how many killings they experienced.

While it is possible that the actual value for some of the cells is zero, as may be the case for New York in 1968, it is much more likely that cells without figures represent unobtained data and that the figures in many cells *with* data are based on incomplete information. Insofar as this is the case, the table represents an undercount that could be quite substantial.

A second point concerns the selection of values entered in the data cells. In quite a few instances authorities provided more than one figure for the number of gang-related killings during a particular year. Several reasons for this can be cited. Because of inadequate information or delays in solving cases, homicides might not be identified as "gang related" for periods of up to three or four years following the initial reporting year; different agencies (e.g., police, municipal gang-control agencies) sometimes reported different figures, often because of differing definitions of "gang related"; differing sections within a police department (e.g., Youth Bureau, Homicide) might report different figures because of different definitional criteria or the availability of different information; victims of gang violence assaulted during one year might not die until the next, or even later, and thus not be recorded as homicide victims for the year in which the assault occurred (this latter situation has become more frequent as life-support systems have become more sophisticated). In those cases where two or more figures were reported for the same year, the highest is used in the table. This procedure was adopted on the basis of the assumption that it is much more likely that a killing that was in fact gang related would not be so identified than that a non-gang-related killing would be erroneously recorded as gang related.

A third point concerns the 10 locality categories with figures for 1980. At the time of writing, data for the full year were not available. Eight-month or 10-month data were obtained for these localities, and figures for the full year were extrapolated by dividing these figures by 8 or 10 and multiplying by 12. Actual figures for 1980 probably differ to some degree from those in the table.

Despite these data problems, it should be noted that table 6–1 represents the first known tabulation of the volume of gang-related homicides in a set of localities in all parts of the country over an extended time period. It thus provides for the first time a concrete notion of the magnitude of lethal crime perpetrated by youth gang members, and how this compares to the volume of lethal crime by other categories of persons. As in the case of other first-time tabulations in this report, the author hopes the presentation of these figures will encourage more systematic and comprehensive efforts to collect information of this kind.

The total number of gang-related killings shown in table 6–1 is 3,509. How is one to judge the magnitude of this figure? Viewed in its own terms, it appears as a very large number. An image of over 3,000 dead bodies, mostly males, struck down by violence in their early manhood, is sobering at the very least. But is important as well to have some idea of how these homicide statistics compare to other relevant sets of statistics. A variety of comparisons are possible.

One relatively indirect method compares the number of gang-related killings during a particular time period with the number of homicide arrests of juveniles and minors in all U.S. cities during the same period. Table 6-1 shows a total of 1,746 killings in approximately 60 cities during the 5-year period from 1974 through 1979. The combined population of these cities was about 26 million. During this same period FBI statistics show a total of 7,335 homicide arrests of juveniles, and 18,644 arrests of minors, in approximately 5,500 cities with a combined population of about 140 million. The number of gang killings is thus equal to about 24 percent

Table 6–1. Gang-related killings, 1967–80

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Total
New York	––	0	1	––	––	57	41	16	3	9	10	3	10	7	157
Chicago	150	76	69	70	60	45	33	37	37	34	27	24	69	32	763
Los Angeles	––	––	––	––	11	32	39	76	71	57	67	92	115	192	752
L.A. County	––	––	––	––	16	22	12	34	40	41	101	108	276	287	937
San Francisco	––	2	6	7	3	6	10	12	7	2	16	5	4	8	88
Other California	––	––	––	––	1	––	––	1	2	4	11	24	82	82	207
Philadelphia	21	30	45	47	43	39	44	43	15	6	10	1	3	2	349
Detroit	––	––	––	––	––	5	10	13	12	8	10	8	5	8	79
San Antonio	6	9	3	2	0	2	0	1	2	3	4	––	––	––	32
Boston	––	4	10	6	1	3	6	8	15	6	6	12	4	10	91
Miami	4	0	2	1	0	1	1	4	3	1	3	––	––	––	20
Other cities	––	––	––	6	6	4	––	1	3	1	5	3	––	5	34
	181	121	136	139	141	216	196	246	210	172	270	280	568	633	3,509
percent per year	5.16	3.45	3.88	3.96	4.02	6.16	5.59	7.01	5.98	4.90	7.69	7.98	16.19	18.04	100%

of the homicide arrests of juveniles, and about 9 percent of the arrest of minors. Since the population of the gang-data cities was about 19 percent of the population of the FBI arrest-data cities, the number of known gang killings was disproportionately high with respect to juvenile arrests, and disproportionately low with respect to arrests of minors.[4]

However, in 1979, the latest year for which national arrest figures were available, the number of known gang killings was equal to 17 percent of city homicide arrests of minors, and a surprisingly high 43 percent of arrests of juveniles. Due in large part to unprecedentedly high homicide levels in the Los Angeles area, the number of known gang killings was equal to almost half of all juvenile arrests in all cities in the United States.

Table 6–2. Gang-related killings and homicide arrests of male youths: Three largest cities,[a] 1972–79

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	8 years
Number of gang killings	134	113	129	111	100	104	119	194	1,004
Number of homicide arrests, males under 21	821	1,113	958	850	839	680	718	815	6,804
Number of homicide arrests, males under 18	426	462	455	338	333	307	307	337	2,965
Gang killings as a % of homicide arrests, males under 21	16.3	10.1	13.5	13.1	11.9	15.3	16.6	23.8	14.8
Gang killings as a % of homicide arrests, males under 18	31.5	24.5	28.4	32.8	30.0	33.9	38.8	57.6	33.9

[a] New York, Chicago, Los Angeles.

Comparing the number of gang killings and homicide arrests for particular cities produces even higher percentages than when comparing gang cities with all cities. Table 6–2 shows that during the 8-year period from 1972 through 1979, the number of gang killings reported for New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles was equal to about 15 percent of the number of homicide arrests of minors, and 34 percent of arrests of juveniles. In 1979, the latest year for which nonextrapolated data were available, gang killings equaled 24 percent of homicide arrests of minors and a striking 58 percent of homicide arrests of juveniles. Since the number of gang members was equal to about 6 percent of youths 10 to 19 (see table 6–6), the overcontribution of gang members to youthful homicides in the largest cities was indeed substantial.[5]

The data in table 6–1 make it possible to rank the nine site-surveyed cities (table 3–4) with respect to their rates of gang-related killings.

Table 6–3 shows, for each city, the number of years for which data were available, the average number of killings per year, the rate of killings per 100,000 males aged 10 to 19, and the rate per 100 population. The average number of killings per year for the 9 cities over a time-period averaging 12 years was 22. The all-city per capita rates during this period were 16 killings per 100,000 male youth, and 1 killing per 100,000 population.

Table 6–3. Gang-related killings in nine cities ranked by rates per number of male youths

City	Number of years with gang homicide data	Average number of killings per year	Rate per 100,000 males, 10–19, 1970	Rate per 100,000 population, 1976
Los Angeles	10	75.2	31.9	2.7
Chicago	14	54.5	18.5	1.8
Philadelphia	14	24.9	14.7	1.4
San Francisco	13	6.8	14.3	1.0
Boston	13	7.0	12.9	1.1
Miami	11	1.8	7.6	0.5
Detroit	9	8.8	6.3	0.7
San Antonio	11	2.9	4.3	0.4
New York	11	14.3	4.2	0.2
9-city average	11.8	22.0	16.0	1.2

Los Angeles gangs, quite clearly, were the most lethal, averaging 75 gang-related killings per year over a 10-year period, with a rate of 30 killings per 100,000 male youth. Most of the killings resulted from feuding among Hispanic gangs. Chicago, with a yearly average of 54 killings over a 14-year period, ranked second. Philadelphia, with an average of 25 killings per year, ranked third. San Francisco's high rank is due almost entirely to a series of killings by feuding Chinese extortion gangs, the first of which was recorded in 1968. Just about 85 percent of the 71 killings recorded for this city between 1968 and 1977 resulted from these feuds.

New York and San Antonio showed the lowest rates. There is little doubt, however, that New York's low rates were due in some undetermined degree to a substantial underreporting of gang-related killings between 1974 and 1980.

Trends in Gang-related Killings

The data in table 6-1 provide a basis for addressing the question of changes in the volume of gang-related killings during the period under study. What was the overall trend in numbers of killings during this period? How did different cities compare with respect to change trends? National level information on trends in gang crime is virtually non-existent, and the present examination provides the first known data on such trends.

Table 6-1 shows a total of 181 killings in all localities for the earliest year, 1967, and 609 for the latest—an increase of 236 percent, or almost three and one-half times in 13 years. For the 12-year period between 1967 and 1979, the latest year with non-extrapolated data, the increase was 208 percent, or more than threefold.

These changes appear to be quite substantial, but to know just how substantial they must be gauged against comparable trends during this same period. Data on homicide arrests of all categories of youths provide one basis of comparison. As noted, 1980 arrest data were not available at the time of writing, so that the longest usable comparison period was the 12 years between 1967 and 1979. During this period the number of juvenile homicide arrests in all U.S. cities increased from 705 to 1305, or 93 percent, while arrests of minors increased from 1642 to 3299, or 101 percent. During the same period, as just noted, gang killings in the 60 cities for which data were collected increased from 181 to 558, or 208 percent. It is clear that the volume of gang killings increased at a much faster rate than the volume of youthful homicide arrests.

When dealing with numbers of different magnitudes (e.g., 181 gang killings vs. 1,642 arrests of minors), it is important to guard against the danger that calculating the percentage change between two points in time will produce disproportionately higher change figures in the case of smaller numbers. In part to accommodate this possibility, the changes just noted were also calculated as rates—that is, differences in the size of the base populations as well as population changes were taken into account. On this basis, the differences over time between increases in gang killings and arrests of youth become even more pronounced. For the 1967 to 1979 period, homicide arrest rates for city juveniles increased by 40 percent and rates for minors by 51 percent, while rates of gang killings grew by 227 percent.[6]

An important question with respect to trends in gang-related killings is whether they represent real or apparent changes. Whenever data indicate changes of the magnitude reported here—for example, the more than threefold increase in the number of known killings between 1967 and 1979—reporting practices must be questioned. To what degree do the increases represent actual changes in the numbers of killings, and to what degree possible increases in reporting efficiency? The data from Los Angeles city and county, for example, raise the possibility that earlier increases in the number of gang killings served to sensitize local officials to such killings as a distinctive phenomenon and motivated them to be more conscientious in identifying and recording gang-related deaths.

There can be little doubt that in some municipalities, records were compiled more carefully during the later years of the study period. However, most of the available evidence indicates that most of the recorded increase reflected actual trends. First, the magnitude of the increases is sufficiently great so that even if some proportion of the change were due to better reporting, it would be unreasonable to attribute the bulk of the change to this factor. A second and more cogent reason is a considerable body of evidence pointing to an opposite trend—the deliberate suppression of information on the gang-related character of many homicides—producing, in effect, a deterioration rather than an improvement in reporting practices.

Three of the cities that made the largest contributions to the homicide statistics—New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia—adopted almost identical procedures during the study period. As gang homicide statistics derived from established recording practices rose to levels that became embarrassing to police and municipal officials, they introduced new definitional and reporting procedures that resulted in substantial and sometimes precipitous declines in the number of reported killings. Considerable detail on these procedures appears in appendix D. The statistics for New York from 1975 on are particularly suspect. Nonexhaustive examination of newspaper reports for particular years during this period produced homicide figures ranging from three to five times higher than those provided by the police.

The impact of these practices in all of the largest cities except Los Angeles appears to more than counterbalance the influence of improved recordkeeping in those cities where it did improve. The weight of evidence indicates that the very substantial increases in gang-related killings during the study period reflect changes in the practices of gang members to a far greater degree than in the practices of officials.

A final point on gang homicide trends: an examination of table 6–1 shows that the years during which each locality recorded its highest number of killings ("peak years") do not cluster at or near a particular point in time. On the contrary, the peak years are spread quite evenly throughout the decade. Chicago recorded its peak in 1968, Philadelphia in 1970, New York in 1972, Detroit in 1974, Boston in 1975, San Francisco in 1977, Los Angeles county in 1979, and Los Angeles in 1980. This finding has implications for explaining trends in gang killings. The fact that peak homicide years in different cities were spread quite evenly over the decade makes it impossible to attribute trends in gang homicides to national-level trends such as economic conditions, unemployment rates, patterns of drug or alcohol use, wartime or peacetime, and so on. Whatever conditions caused the increases and decreases in gang killings appear quite clearly to have been locality-specific rather than national.

Gang-member Crime

Gang-related killings are certainly the most violent and well-publicized form of gang crime. But despite the fact that their numbers are disproportionately high relative to the volume of killings by other categories of youth, killings in fact constitute only a very small part of volume of gang-member crime. The development of sound policy with respect to youth gang problems requires

as accurate and complete information as possible on the amounts and kinds of gang crime of all types.

Comprehensive information would include data on the actual number and kinds of offenses committed by members of all known gangs in the country. Such information was not available during the 1970's, and is not likely to be available in the future. Data presented here, as in other sections of the report, are based on indirect rather than direct measures, and provide partial rather than complete answers.

Two major questions are addressed: what proportion of the total volume of youth crime can be attributed to gang members, and how do the kinds of offenses committed by gang members compare with those committed by other categories of youth?

In the absence of direct measures of gang-member crime that are comparable from city to city, the present analysis uses the "arrest" as a surrogate measure. There are many problems with the arrest as a measure of criminal activity. There are no general compilations of crime statistics for specified populations wherein the numbers of reported arrests equal the actual number of crimes. For offenses such as arson and property destruction the number of arrests recorded in compilations such as the *Uniform Crime Reports* represents a very small proportion of the actual number of such crimes. For offenses such as murder the number of arrests is closer to the number of actual crimes, but actual murders still outnumber arrests for murder.

Arrest statistics are compiled by police departments, and in many cases political considerations significantly influence both the collection and presentation of these statistics. An arrest takes place when there is a particular conjunction of criminal activity, detection and/or complaint, and police behavior, as these relate to locally applicable legal statutes. The likelihood that a criminal act will become a recorded offense often depends as much on the willingness of victims to make complaints and of the police to take action as it does on the actions of offenders.[7]

Despite these and other problems with arrest statistics, they are the only available body of data suitable for addressing the questions at issue here. Victimization data provide an important alternative to arrest data but are available only for a limited number of cities and a limited number of offenses.[8] Information based on direct field observation and interviews, while generally more complete and accurate than arrest data, is available only for a few groups in a few localities for limited time periods, and has low comparability from locality to locality. With all their deficiencies, arrest data compiled in accord with a uniform set of offense categories and available for virtually all jurisdictions may, if these deficiencies are kept in mind, provide a relatively accurate picture of the forms and frequencies of those offenses that engage the criminal justice system and are of direct relevance to policy.

The arrest-based findings presented here on gang crimes and how they compare to crime by other categories of youth provide the first known body of national-level information on this topic.

Gang Member Arrests in the Three Largest Cities

Although approximately 300 U.S. cities reported youth gang problems during the 1970's, only three—New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles—routinely collected and reported statistics on arrests of gang members.[9] These three, however, were the nation's largest, containing 12 percent of the population of all cities over 10,000, 23 percent of the population of cities over 100,000, and about half the nation's gang members. Findings from these three cities thus apply to a substantial proportion of gang members and other youth. Tables 6–4 and 6–5 examine the numbers and rates of gang member arrests in the three cities, and compare these to equivalent figures for non-gang youth in the same cities as well as to figures for youth in all U.S. cities.

Table 6–4. Arrests of gang members in three cities, 1974

City	Number of arrests, all offenses	Rate/1000 males under 18	Number of arrests, violent crimes[b]	Rate/1,000 males under 18	Violent crime arrests as a % of all arrests
New York	4,648	13.5	2,441	7.1	52.5
Chicago	4,417	15.0	2,530[c]	8.6	57.3
Los Angeles	3,742[a]	15.8	2,052	8.7	54.8
3 cities	12,807	14.7	7,023	8.0	54.8

[a] Extrapolated; number of violent crimes times ratios for New York and Chicago.
[b] Murder, aggravated assault, forcible rape, robbery.
[c] Based partly on estimates.

Each of the cities used a somewhat different method of categorizing offenses, so that their tabulations are not comparable on an offense by offense basis. These differences, however, have little effect on the findings of tables 6–4 and 6–5, which differentiate offenses simply as violent or nonviolent. The "serious violent offenses" in these tables are those designated as "Part I violent crimes" in the Federal *Uniform Crime Reports*—murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.

Table 6–4 shows the number of gang member arrests in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles for the year 1974. It also shows per capita rates for all offenses and for violent offenses, and ratios of violent crime arrests to all arrests. The findings would be stronger if data for more than a single year had been available; arrest statistics for any single year may reflect temporarily deviant developments. However, the year for which data from all three cities were available does fall roughly in the middle of the time period covered in table 6–1 and there is no reason to suppose it is not fairly representative of this period.

The total number of gang member arrests for the three cities was 12,807, or 14.7 arrests per 1,000 males aged 10 to 19. The number of gang member arrests in the three cities thus was

equal to almost 1.5 percent of the number of male youth. The per capita rates for the three cities are quite similar, and the differences are not statistically significant. Rates for violent crime arrests, by contrast, do show significant differences. Comparing New York and Chicago shows a rate of 8.6 arrests per 1,000 male youth in Chicago and a rate of 7.1 for New York, a difference that is statistically significant.[10] (Los Angeles figures are omitted since they were extrapolated on the basis of figures from the other two cities.)

Comparing arrest figures for gang members with figures for nongang youth shows clearly that arrests for violent crimes accounted for a disproportionate percentage of gang member arrests. For the three cities, 55 percent of gang member arrests were for violent crimes; national data for the same year show that arrests for violent crimes of city youths under 18 made up 10.2 percent of arrests for the more serious (Part I) offenses, and 8.3 percent of arrests for all offenses. For youths under 21, the equivalent figures were 13.9 percent and 9.4 percent. All of these differences between gang and non-gang-member arrests are statistically significant.[11]

As in the case of per capita rates, Chicago led the other cities in the percentage of gang members arrested for violent crimes. Its figure of 57.3 percent is significantly higher than New York's 52.5 percent.[12]

The number of gang member arrests in the three cities during the year was equal to just about one-quarter of the total number of gang members, while for all youths under 18 the equivalent figure was 13 percent.[13] This provides additional evidence of the higher level of criminality among gang members.

Table 6-5 provides a more direct method of comparing gang member arrests to those of other youths by comparing gang-member and non-gang-member arrests in the same cities. The table provided figures for arrests of all males under 18 in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, for arrests of gang members, for gang-member arrests as a proportion of youth arrests, and for the number of gang members as a proportion of males 10 to 19.

Table 6-5, like 6-4, distinguishes violent and non-violent offense categories. Since gang-member and other arrest data were not available for the same year, the table compares gang-member figures for 1974 with general arrest figures for 1973. This introduces some possibility of distortion, but findings would probably be similar if data for the same year had been available. Also, data were obtained for arrests of youths under 18, but not for those under 21.

The table shows that there were about 115,000 arrests of juveniles and youthful offenders for all types of offenses in the three cities, and about 13,000 arrests of gang members. The number of gang-member arrests thus equals about 11 percent of arrests for all offenses. Since the number of gang members was about 6 percent of all youth 10 to 19, their arrest figures were disproportionately high. In the case of violent crimes, the overcontribution is even more pronounced, with gang-member arrests equaling 42 percent of youth arrests for these crimes. This reinforces the finding of table 6–4 showing that 55 percent of gang-member arrests in the

Table 6–5. Arrests of gang members and other male youths in three cities, 1973–74

City	Arrests, males under 18, 1973			Arrests, gang members, 1974			Gang member arrests as a % of arrests of males under 18		Numbers of gang arrests as a % of males, 10–19
	All offenses	Serious violent crimes*	% violent crime	All offenses	Serious violent crimes	% violent crimes	All offenses	Violent crimes	
New York	36,243	9,389	25.9%	4,648	2,441	52.5%	12.8%	25.9%	7.3%
Chicago	52,658	4,089	7.8	4,417	2,530	57.3	8.4	61.9	3.8
Los Angeles	26,426	3,393	12.8	3,742	2,052	34.8	14.2	60.5	6.5
	115.327	16,871	14.6%	12,807	7,073	54.8%	8.1%	41.6%	6.2%

* Murder, aggravated assault, forcible rape, robbery.

three cities were for violent offenses, compared to the 10.2 percent figure cited above for arrests on all U.S. cities of persons under 18.

The percentage of arrests for violent crimes of all youths in the three cities, 14.6, is considerably higher than the 10.2 percent figure for all cities nationwide. But both these figures pale by comparison with the 55-percent figure shown by gang members in the largest cities.[14]

The finding that Chicago gangs were more violent than those in New York and Los Angeles emerges even more clearly from these data than from those in table 6–4. Arrests for violent crimes made up 8 percent of arrests of Chicago youth, but for gang members the equivalent figure, as noted earlier, was 57 percent. Note also that the number of violent crime arrests of Chicago gang members was equal to 62 percent of the violent crime arrests of all youths. This is especially striking in light of the fact that the number of gang members was equal to about 4 percent of the city youths ages 10 to 19, the lowest percentage of the three cities. The 62-percent figure is also substantially higher than the equivalent figure for New York, which was 26 percent.[15]

Arrests by Offense Category

The kinds of offenses for which youth have been arrested and the proportions of these arrests for particular offenses have shown little change in the past several decades. Among the more serious offenses (*UCR* Part I), larceny has provided the largest number of arrests by a substantial margin, with burglary ranking second. Among the less serious offenses (*UCR* Part II), youth have been arrested in largest numbers for alcohol and drug-related violations, disorder and loitering, runaway, and vandalism.

A description of criminal activity by gang members should include the kinds of offenses they are arrested for, those offenses that are more common and those that are less so, and how the distribution of gang-member arrests compares with that of nongang youth. Ideally such information should be derived from a broad data base, but in the 1970's available data were quite limited. As noted, each of the three largest cities used different offense classifications, and while these classifications made it possible to distinguish between violent and nonviolent offenses, they were not sufficiently comparable to permit tabulations that combined data for all three cities.

Of the three cities, the offense classifications that corresponded most closely to those of *UCR* were those used in New York. For this reason gang-member arrest data from New York are used for comparing gang crime with that of other youth. As in the case of tables 6–4 and 6–5, findings are based on figures for 1974. For this year, eight offense categories used by the New York police and *UCR* were sufficiently similar to permit direct comparisons.[16] These were the Part I offenses of murder, rape, robbery, felonious assault, and burglary, and the Part II offenses of weapons possession, drug violations, and disorderly conduct. Table 6–6 compares the percentage of arrests for each of the eight offenses (number of arrests for the eight offenses

equals 100 percent) for New York City gang members and for youths 16 to 20 in all other cities in the United States.

Table 6-6. Arrests of gang members and other youths by offense category, 1974

	Arrests of New York City gang members;[a] n arrests = 8,103	Arrests of youths 16-20, all U.S. cities[b] except New York[a] n arrests = 497,648
	% all arrests, eight offenses	% all arrests, eight offenses
Part I:		
Murder	0.5%	0.4%
Forcible rape	2.3 **	0.7
Robbery	29.6 **	6.6 **
Felony assault	13.2 **	5.1
Burglary	20.0	20.6
Part II:		
Possession of dangerous weapon	13.4% **	5.1%
Drug violations	5.5 **	33.6 *
Disorderly conduct	15.1 **	27.0

** Chi square, 7 d.f., $p<.001$.
* Chi square, 7 d.f., $p<.05$.

[a] Youth Aid Division, New York Police Department, 1974.
[b] *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1974, table 40.

The table shows that robbery was the basis for the largest proportion of arrests of gang members—30 percent. Next most common was burglary (20 percent), followed by disorderly conduct (15 percent), weapons possession (13 percent), and felony assault (13 percent). Rape, drug violations, and homicides showed the lowest percentages. Arrests for larceny, the most common basis of arrests of youths nationwide, were sufficiently infrequent that they did not merit a separate category, being included instead under "other offenses."

For youths in other cities, drug-law violations were the basis for the largest proportion of arrests (34 percent) in these 8 categories, followed by disorderly conduct (27 percent), and burglary (21 percent). Arrests for felony assault and weapons possession each accounted for about 5 percent of arrests.

Comparing the two sets of percentages shows marked contrasts. Six of the eight offense categories show highly significant statistical differences. Percentages for gang members are significantly higher for rape (2.3 percent vs. 0.7 percent), robbery (29.6 percent vs. 6.6 percent), assault (13.2 percent vs. 5.1 percent), and weapons violations (13.4 percent vs. 5.1 percent). All of these offenses involve or are related to violence. Percentages of gang arrests are significantly lower in the case of drug violations (5.5 percent vs. 33.6 percent) and disorderly conduct (13.4 percent vs. 5.1 percent). The bulk of arrests for these offenses are based on relatively mild infractions such as marijuana use and noisy congregation.

The proportion of gang member arrests does not differ significantly from those of other city youth for two offenses—homicide (0.5 percent vs. 0.4 percent) and burglary (20.0 percent vs. 20.6 percent). The finding that gang members are arrested for burglary in about the same proportion as other youths is not surprising; burglary is the one Part I crime in table 6–6 that does not involve violence, and there is no apparent reason why the special characteristics of gang members should have any particular effect on their participation in this offense.

The finding that the two groups are similar in the percentage of homicide arrests is the one finding not consistent with the rest of the table. One reason for this is that the numbers of homicide arrests for both groups are very small relative to most of the other offense categories, making this statistic relatively less stable, and particularly in the case of the gang members, more susceptible to fluctuations in any given year. As shown in table 6–1, the number of homicide arrests of New York gang members in 1974 was 16, compared to 41 in 1973. The police department's new method of determining whether homicides were gang related, which resulted in markedly lower homicide arrest figures for subsequent years, was adopted between 1973 and 1974. If 1973 tabulations had been used here, the percentage of homicide arrests of gang members would have been significantly higher. Similarly, if figures for 1975 had been used, the percentage of such arrests would have been significantly lower.

With the exception of the homicide data, table 6–6 dramatically illustrates the differences between the arrest patterns of gang offenders and those of other offenders. The crux of the difference lies in the greater propensity of gang members to commit crimes that involve violence or the threat of violence. Of particular interest is the preeminence of robbery among gang members; robbery ranks first as a basis for arrest, and makes up 30 percent of all gang member arrests, compared to 7 percent for other youth (recall that burglary percentages for gang members and nongang members were almost identical.)

Also of interest are differences with respect to drug violations. For all city youths, arrests for this offense ranked first, 34 percent of all arrests, while for gang members drug arrests ranked sixth, at 6 percent. These data support findings that drug use did not appear to be a dominant

form of illegal activity among gang members in the 1970's, especially when compared to other forms of crime. The evidence indicates that while gang members were becoming increasingly involved in the drug trade, their own use of drugs appeared to be sufficiently limited as to provide an infrequent basis for arrest.

Volume of Collective Youth Crime

Data presented thus far have shown clearly that members of youth gangs in the 1970's engaged in those forms of crime that resulted in high arrest rates relative to rates for other youths. Gang-member overcontribution to arrests was especially marked in the case of serious violent crimes. For example, as shown in table 6-5, gang members whose numbers equalled about 6 percent of males 10 to 19 in the three largest cities accounted for about 11 percent of arrests of male youth, and 42 percent of arrests for serious violent crimes.

However, despite the overcontribution by gang members, it is important to note that arrests of youths *not* identified as gang members substantially exceeded arrests of those who were. Thus, according to table 6–5, youths not identified as gang members accounted for about 90 percent of arrests for all offenses and 60 percent of arrests for serious violent offenses. Initially it might appear that most of these nongang offenders were unaffiliated individuals, but on further consideration this seems most unlikely. The nongang offenders fell into three logical categories: those who were actually gang members but were not so identified; those who were in fact unaffiliated with any group; and those who were affiliated with types of groups other than recognized gangs. The present section attempts to provide some notion of the volume of serious crime attributable to the latter two categories.

How much youth crime *can* be attributed to members of groups other than gangs? For policy purposes, this question is probably at least as important as the question of gang crime, since law-violating youth groups other than gangs are so much more numerous than gangs (see table 4–6 for example). Unfortunately, the data needed to answer this question are virtually nonexistent.

For gang-member crime, despite the fact that available information in the 1970's suffered from major gaps and other inadequacies, some statistics at least were gathered on a routine basis in the three largest cities; moreover, as noted earlier, these cities contained approximately 55 percent of all members of recognized gangs. By contrast, no city or other agency routinely collects crime data on the basis of group membership. Because of this, it is necessary to develop findings on the volume of nongang crime from different kinds of data, and to use different methods.

Gang-member arrest statistics are based on lists of the names of gang members compiled by the police or other agencies. When the name of a youth who is arrested appears on such a list, the offense is recorded as one committed by a gang member. This means that crimes committed by gang members acting alone or with one or two others may be categorized as "gang-related." Since no such lists are compiled for groups, this method cannot be used to categorize crimes as "group-related."[17]

What can be done with existing data is to derive estimates of how much youth crime is *collectively executed*. This is not the same as the amount of crime committed by members of groups.

A substantial amount of crime by gang and group members is actually committed by individuals or pairs, and although such crimes may occur "with the cooperation and/or moral support" of the group,[18] there is no way of knowing on the basis of routine records whether or not these individuals or pairs are affiliated with groups. The present section will attempt to estimate first how much youth crime involves collective participation, and then use these figures as a basis for estimating how much of this crime, whether or not collectively executed, may reasonably be attributed to persons affiliated with groups.

Before presenting such estimates, however, it will be useful simply to cite, without elaboration, the *kinds* of offenses most commonly committed by members of groups. These are petty theft (e.g., minor burglaries, robberies, larcenies); serious theft (e.g., major burglaries, robberies, larcenies); looting; small-scale extortion; disorderly congregation; drunkenness and illegal drinking; drug use; drug dealing; simple assault (e.g., fighting, brawling, assault by missiles); aggravated assault; vandalism (including damage by missiles and fire-setting); harassment; exclusionary occupancy of public facilities; illegal gambling; disruption by violence of public gatherings; and rape.[19]

These offenses range from those generally considered to be low in seriousness (e.g., disorderly congregation) to those considered to be extremely serious (e.g., armed robbery). In general, there is a rough inverse relationship between frequency and seriousness; the less serious offenses are most common, the more serious least.[20]

To derive estimates of the volume of crime by groups other than gangs, it is necessary to identify offense categories that meet two criteria; first, they must be offenses whose customary participation patterns are indicated by available research, and second, they must correspond to classifications used in the *Uniform Crime Reports*. It is also necessary for present purposes to confine consideration to the more serious forms of crime. Present findings are based on five offense categories that meet these criteria--robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, motor vehicle theft, and forcible rape. These five include all but two (homicide and larceny) of the seven Part I offenses of the *UCR*, and on this basis may be considered as more serious forms.[21]

Table 6–7. Estimated volume of serious crimes committed collectively by youth in U.S. cities, 1976

Offense category	Number offenses reported, all cities over 2,500[a,b]	% arrests, persons under 21	Estimated number of offenses, persons under 21[b]	% youth offenses estimated to be collective[c]	Number of youth offenses estimated to be collective[b]	% all reported offenses estimated to be collective youth offenses
Rape	37.5	35.8%	13.4	21%	2.8	7.5%
Robbery	392.5	56.5	221.8	60	133.1	33.9
Aggr. assault	297.3	31.6	93.9	55	51.6	17.4
Burglary	1,946.4	71.4	1,389.7	80	1,111.8	57.1
Theft of motor vehicle	639.2	71.6	457.7	75	343.3	53.7
Totals	**3,312.9**	**65.7%**	**2,176.5**	**75.5%**	**1,642.6**	**49.6%**

[a] *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1976, table 10. All persons, all ages, 7,448 cities, population 138.5 million.
[b] In 1,000's.
[c] For sources of percentage figures, see note 23 at end of chapter.

Table 6–7 shows the results of the analysis, and also the method used to derive the estimates. In 1976 about 3.3 million crimes in these five categories were reported for American cities of 25,000. Approximately 65 percent of those arrested for these crimes were aged 20 or under. Assuming that the ages of those who committed the crimes were the same as those arrested for them produces a figure of 2.2 million offenses by city youths.[22]

Studies have been conducted to ascertain the number of youths that customarily engage in various offenses such as car theft and robbery. Those offenses that customarily involve two or more participants may be designated "collective" offenses. For each offense category, percentages have been developed that indicate how often a specified offense involves two or more participants (e.g., 75 percent of car thefts are committed collectively). Percentages used here were obtained from a variety of sources, principally the Victimization Reports compiled by the Census Bureau.[23] The percentages are: burglary 80, motor vehicle theft 75, robbery 60, aggravated assault 55, rape 21. Applying these percentages to the number of youths estimated to have committed these crimes produces a figure of 1.6 million collectively executed offenses, or almost exactly one-half of all offenses reported for the five categories. These calculations thus provide one basis for estimating that just about half of the more serious crimes were collectively executed by youth.

What is needed here, however, is not just the number of "collectively executed" offenses, but the number of offenses committed by members of law-violating youth groups. Collectively executed crimes are not the same as youth group crimes, because the "two or more" criterion used as the basis of most of the collective participation percentages includes pairs, some of which are not affiliated with any larger group. However, it is possible to derive an estimate of the number of offenses committed by members of groups as defined here by making the following assumptions:

1. One-third of the single offenders were affiliated with at least two others.

2. Two-thirds of all collectively executed youth crimes were executed by pairs, one-third by three or more.

3. Three-quarters of all pairs were affiliated with at least one other person.

4. All crimes executed jointly by three or more youths are by definition group crimes.[24]

These assumptions applied to the figures just presented produce the following: approximately 1.6 million of the 3.3 million serious offenses reported for cities over 25,000 were committed by members of law-violating youth groups other than gangs. This is equivalent to 47 percent of all these offenses, and 71 percent of youth offenses. The estimates for "group-member" offenses and "collectively executed" offenses are thus quite close; just about half of the offenses were collectively executed, while something under half were executed by members of groups.

It is important to note once again that the data necessary for accurate answers to most of the questions addressed in this section are simply not available, but that it is sufficiently important to gain some notion, however rough, of the contribution of youth groups to the total volume of serious crime to justify the use of estimates based on what data are available. At each stage of the estimation process assumptions have been made, most of which are supported at least by partial information, and each of these assumptions has been made explicit. However, the conclusions presented here are valid only insofar as the assumptions are valid. If future research demonstrates the invalidity of one or more of the assumptions, the conclusions will have to be modified accordingly.

Summary

Information on the amount and kinds of crime attributable to gangs and other types of law-violating youth groups should be an essential component of any general strategy for coping with crime problems in the United States. It would be extremely useful, for example, to know just how much violent crime is committed by unaffiliated individuals and how much by members of groups. But while information of this kind can be seen as vital for purposes of policy formulation, it has not been so considered by most of criminal justice practitioners and researchers. Because the issue of how much youth crime and what kinds of youth crime are committed by groups is generally regarded as having little relevance for most practical and theoretical purposes, the amount of information on this topic included in the vast body of data generated by criminal justice agencies is pitifully small.[25]

Because of this, the statistical findings in this chapter on the volume and kinds of crime engaged in by gangs and other types of law-violating youth groups derive from a body of information that is far less substantial and far less reliable than criteria for sound conclusions would call for..

Killings play a major role in the criminal activities of gang members. Although official attention to homicides involving gang members increased during the 1970's, data are still rare and collected systematically only by a few of the largest cities. Despite this and other difficulties in obtaining and utilizing information, this report presents the first set of statistics on gang homicides based on national coverage over an extended time period. At least some data were obtained for about 60 of the country's approximately 300 gang-problem cities. During the 13 years from 1967 through 1980, approximately 3,400 gang-related killings were recorded for these localities. It is virtually certain that this figure represents a substantial undercount.

Comparing gang homicides with homicide arrests of male juveniles (under 18) and minors (under 21) in all U.S. cities for the 5-year period from 1975 through 1979 shows that the number of known gang killings was equal to about 9 percent of homicide arrests of minors and 23 percent of homicide arrests of juveniles. In 1979, the latest year for which both gang killing and homicide arrest figures were available, gang killings equaled 17 percent of homicide arrests of minors and 43 percent of arrests of juveniles in all U.S. cities. For the three largest cities during the eight-year period from 1972 through 1979, the number of gang killings was equal to 15 percent of homicide arrests of minors, and 34 percent of arrests of juveniles. In 1979 gang

killings equaled 24 percent of homicide arrests of minors and a striking 58 percent of arrests of juveniles. Since the number of gang members in these cities was equal to about 6 percent of the number of males 10 to 18, their overcontribution to the volume of homicide was substantial indeed.

Data for nine major gang-problem cities—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, San Antonio, San Francisco, Boston, and Miami—show that the average city reported 22 gang-related killings per year over an average time period of 12 years—a rate of 16 killings per year per 100,000 male youth. Los Angeles ranked first in both numbers and rates of killings, showing an average of 75 per year over a 10-year period, and an average yearly rate of 32 killings per 100,000 male youth. Chicago ranked second with an average of 54 and a rate of 18. Philadelphia ranked third with an average of 25 and a rate of 15. San Antonio and New York showed the lowest rates, with some evidence indicating that New York's standing was due in part to official underreporting.

The number of reported killings in cities for which data were available increased by 208 percent or about three times between 1967 and 1979, and 236 percent or about 3½ times between 1967 and 1980. By comparison, homicide arrests of juveniles in all U.S. cities between 1967 and 1979 increased by 93 percent and arrests of minors by 101 percent. Adjusting these percentages for population size and changes shows even greater differences between trends in gang killings and youthful homicide arrests. Population-adjusted figures show that between 1967 and 1979, homicide arrests of juveniles increased by 40 percent and of minors by 51 percent, while rates of gang killings increased by approximately 227 percent.

Despite indications that some part of the increase in gang-killing rates may have resulted from improved reporting and recording procedures, the bulk of evidence indicates that there were real increases in the numbers and rates of gang killings. A major finding of the trend analysis was that peak years for gang killings in the various cities were spread quite evenly over the decade, rather than clustering around limited periods. This makes it very difficult to explain trends in gang violence on the basis of any set of nationwide developments such as changing economic conditions, unemployment rates, or patterns of drug use.

The distribution of offenses for which gang members were arrested differed markedly from that of nongang youth. Comparing arrests of New York gang members with those of other New York youths city showed that gang members were arrested in significantly higher proportions for robbery, rape, assault, and weapons violations, and in significantly lower proportions for drug violations and disorderly conduct. Robbery ranked first as a basis of gang member arrests, with 30 percent of arrests for this offense compared to 7 percent for nongang youth. For nongang youth, drug use provided the major basis of arrests, comprising 34 percent of their arrests compared to 5 percent for gang members. These findings support other data showing that the paramount difference between the criminal activity of gang members and that of other youth is the far greater tendency of gang members to engage in violent forms of crime.

Present findings indicate clearly that the amount of criminal activity attributable to gang members was substantially disproportionate to their numbers, particularly in the case of violent crime. But since gang members made up only a small proportion of all youth—fewer than 10 percent in most localities—they were not responsible for the bulk of youth crime. In the three largest cities, youth other than gang members accounted for 60 percent of arrests for violent crimes and 90 percent of arrests for all offenses. It is evident that the bulk of conventional or street crime was committed by unaffiliated individuals or members of groups other than gangs, but information in this area is so poor that is impossible to determine how much crime was committed by gangs, other types of groups, and unaffiliated individuals.

In the 1970's law-violating youth groups other than gangs were responsible for an enormous amount of crime, and were particularly active in offenses such as larceny, burglary, robbery, drug and alcohol violations, assault, disruption, disorderly conduct, vandalism, and arson. In order to provide a rough idea of the volume of crime attributable to law-violating youth groups, available data on reported offenses, arrest rates, and the collective nature of particular offenses were used to derive an initial set of estimates. These estimates indicate that approximately 47 percent of all serious crimes committed by individuals and groups of all ages, and approximately 71 percent of all serious crimes committed by youths, were the product of law-violating youth groups.

The data on the amount and character of collective youth crime thus indicate that gangs and other types of groups during the 1970's made a very substantial contribution to criminal activity in the United States—both to its volume and to its seriousness.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Discussions of positive functions of youth gangs are contained in W. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," Journal of Social Issues, 14, 5(1958); W. Miller, "Implications of Lower Class Subculture for Social Work," Social Service Review, 33, 3, (September 1959); W. Miller, H. Geertz, and Henry S.G. Cutter, "Aggression in a Boys' Street Corner Group," Psychiatry, 24, 4, (November 1961); W. Miller, "Adolescent Subculture and Drug Use," in P. Lejins, ed., Sociocultural Factors in Non-Medical Drug Use, Institute of Criminal Justice, University of Maryland, September 1976.

2. See note 1 above.

3. An excellent discussion of how political processes affect crime control policy appears in A. Turk, "Science and the Politics of Legal Control," delivered to Social Policy Seminar on Penal Policy in the Eighties, American Sociological Society, New York, August 28, 1980.

4. Arrest and jurisdiction population statistics from Uniform Crime Reports, 1975 through 1979 ("City Arrests of Persons Under 15, 18, 21, and 25," table 42 in 1975, table 38 1976-79). Note that two different kinds of units are being compared here: "gang killings," which involve youths of all age categories, and homicides for which arrests were not made as well as those for which arrests were made; and "arrests," where the age of perpetrators was known and which did not include homicides for which no arrests were made. However, since it is not possible to use directly-equivalent measures to address the question, "What proportion of youth homicides are gang related?" the measures used here provide the closest approximation available.

5. The number of reported gang-related killings during the 5-year period was equal to approximately 2 percent of the number of gang members in the three cities, while the number of homicide arrests of males under 21 was equal to approximately 0.6 percent of males 10 to 21.

6. At the time of writing, population figures for 1979 were not available for all gang-problem cities and 1980 figures were available for only 16 of the 41 large gang-problem cities. Changes in city populations between 1969 and 1979 were calculated on the assumption of equal yearly changes during the period 1969-79 and the period 1969-80, and figures were extrapolated for those years where no figures were available. Over the whole period, the total population of cities representing about 90 percent of the population of all cities with gang-homicide data

remained almost stable, since losses in Frostbelt cities almost exactly equaled gains in Sunbelt cities.

7. Problems with arrests as a measure of crime are discussed in great detail in numerous publications. See, for example, L. Savitz, "Official Police Statistics and their Limitations," in L. Savitz and N. Johnson, eds., Crime in Society, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1978: 69-81; and D. Black, "Production of Crime Rates," American Sociological Review, 35, 4 (1970).

8. Victimization studies represent a major advance in the effort to ascertain the complex relationship between arrest statistics and the actual volume of crime. The program for collecting victimization statistics, the National Crime Survey, was developed by what became the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, through an interagency agreement with the Census Bureau. Methods are based on survey research techniques. See, for example, Criminal Victimization in the United States: 1975, December 1977, and numerous city-specific Criminal Victimization Surveys. While the victimization studies provide an extremely valuable alternative to the arrest and reported crime figures contained in the Uniform Crime Reports, they too have been criticized on methodological grounds. (See, for example, J. Levine, "The Potential for Crime Overreporting in Criminal Victimization Surveys," Criminology 14, 3 (1976). Methodological problems both of conventional crime statistics and victimization studies are discussed in B. Cohen, "Reporting Crime: The Limits of Statistical and Field Data," in A. Blumberg, 1981, cited earlier.)

9. The character of available arrest statistics makes it important to point up the distinction between "gang crime" and "gang-member crime." In the present report, statistical tabulations of gang-related crime utilize as their basic unit "gang-member crime"—defined as any illegal activity engaged in by an individual identified as a member of a gang, whatever the character or context of the offense. Some authors (e.g., B. Cohen, "The Delinquency of Gangs and Spontaneous Groups," in T. Sellin and M. Wolfgang, eds., Delinquency: Selected Studies, New York, Wiley, 1969,) prefer to use "gang crime" as the major unit—that is, illegal activity in which all or some substantial proportion of members of a gang participate jointly—and not to consider as "gang-related" offenses committed by one or a few gang members. As in all cases involving collective participation in crime, definitional issues are complex, with choices often related to the character of available information. Some of these issues are discussed briefly in chapter 1. Given the kind of arrest data available here, using gang-member crime as the basic unit was the only feasible alternative, since when decisions on whether crimes are "gang related" depend on context they require detailed information on specific offenses—information not available to this survey. One method of categorizing gang-related offenses is presented in W. Sanders, "Forms of Gang Violence," unpublished paper, San Diego State University, 1981.

10. Per capita rates, gang member arrests, all offenses, difference among 3 cities χ^2= 0.05, d.f.=2, p not significant. Per capita rates, gang member arrests, violent crimes, difference between 2 cities, χ^2=42.6, d.f.=1, p<.001.

11. Proportion of arrests for violent crimes to arrests for Part I crimes, males under 18, all U.S. cities except 3 largest, 10.2 percent; 3 largest cities except gang members, 9.6 percent; gang members, 3 largest cities, 54.9 percent. χ^2=25.3, d.f.=2, p<.001. Proportion of arrests for violent crimes to arrests for all offenses, males under 18, all U.S. cities except three largest, 7.8 percent; 3 largest cities except gang members, 9.6 percent; gang members, 3 cities 54.8 percent, χ^2=36.9, d.f.=2, p<.001. Equivalent arrest figures for males under 21 were not available for the 3 cities, but proportions appear to be similar to those of males under 18.

12. χ^2=20.7, d.f.=1, p<.001.

13. χ^2=56.6, d.f.=1, p<.001.

14. Proportion of arrests for violent crimes to arrests for all offenses, three cities, all youth under 18 vs. proportion arrests gang members, χ^2=18.5, d.f.=1, p<.001. The 14.6 percent figure includes gang member arrests; the significance test separates gang members and nongang members, making the assumption that arrested gang members were under 18.

15. Arrests of gang members for violent crimes as a percentage of violent crime arrests of all youth under 18, New York vs. Chicago, χ^2=15.7, d.f.=1, p<.001. Significance test based on same assumption as in footnote 14.

16. Offense categories used by the UCR that could not be matched to a corresponding or related category used by the NYPD Gang Unit were not used. For example, "larceny," a major UCR category, was not used by the New York police (see text). Where there was general but not exact correspondence, New York categories were subsumed under the closest corresponding UCR category. For example, New York's "rioting" and "unlawful assembly" were included under UCR's "disorderly conduct."

17. The only known exception is the Group Identification Program of the St. Louis Police Department conducted during the 1960's and 1970's—in conjunction, during its later years, with a team counseling program for groups of delinquents. Officers filled out several forms relating to youth groups, including a detailed Field Investigation Report (FIR), which included information of the group affiliation of offenders. The data were analyzed using a computer program that detected and identified the major law-violating youth groups in the city. Police and treatment program officials thus had access to currently updated membership lists of active groups. This program is described in City of St. Louis, Metropolitan Police Department, Field Interview Report Information Manual, 1972, Group Identification Program, n.d., and in other reports.

18. See the definitional discussion of law-violating youth groups, chapter 1.

19. Detailed discussions of each of these offense categories are included in W. Miller, "Law-Violating Youth Groups: A New Typology," unpublished paper, Harvard University, 1980.

20. Further discussion of this relationship, and the criteria used to rate "seriousness," are included in W. Miller, 1980, previous note.

21. The offense categories designated "Index Crimes" in Uniform Crime Reports are considered to be the most serious. Prior to 1979 these comprised seven categories: criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. In 1979 an eighth category, arson, was designated as an Index Crime.

22. There are grounds for questioning this assumption. For example, some evidence indicates that youth who commit crimes such as robbery or burglary are more likely to be arrested than adults who are more experienced in avoiding arrest. However, the likelihood of a close correspondence in age between those arrested for crimes and those who commit them is good, and in the absence of substantial evidence to the contrary, the assumption seems tenable.

23. Sources for these percentages include U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Victimization in the United States, various years, and Criminal Victimization Surveys, SD-NCS-C-7 through 19; M. Hindelang, 1976, cited previously: C. Pope, Crime-Specific Analysis: An Empirical Examination of Burglary Offender Characteristics, Analytic Report, Utilization of Criminal Justice Statistics Project: 11, SD-AR-11, U.S. Department of Justice, Government Printing Office, 1977; and arrest printouts of several urban police departments.

24. Reliable information concerning these assumptions is rare. For the most part they represent estimates based on over 20 years of research on collective youth crime by the author. Some of the data are reported in W. Miller, City Gangs, unpublished manuscript, in those chapters using field observation of Boston gangs to analyze patterns of collective participation in illegal activity. For example, table 7, ch. 11, "The Collectivity of Theft," shows that of 184 incidents of burglary, robbery, and larceny engaged in by members of seven gangs, participants were single individuals in 39 percent, pairs in 13 percent, and in groups of three or more in 48 percent of the incidents. Since all participants were known to be members of gangs, and since evidence indicated that the bulk of thefts in the study area was committed by gang members [W. Miller. "White Gangs," Transaction 6, (September 1969)], the 39 percent figure provides one basis for the one-third estimate in the first assumption.

25. See, for example, the comprehensive Sourcebook for Criminal Statistics (M. Hindelang, M. Gottfredson, T. Flanagan, Eds. Sourcebook for Criminal Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington, D.C., 1974-80). The 1980 edition, which contains over 540 pages of detailed statistics on numerous characteristics of crime, criminals, and criminal processing, includes virtually no information on the collective character of crime. The section entitled "Characteristics and Distribution of Persons Arrested," with 48 tables, does not include a single table that distinguishes between individual and collective crime, let alone specifying the numbers of offenders engaged in particular kinds of crime.

7. Gang-Member Violence

Information on topics such as the distribution and amount of gang-member crime requires statistical data, but statistics do not convey much of the flavor of gang violence and other illegal activities. The present chapter deals with gang violence primarily on a qualitative level, so as to provide a clearer picture of certain characteristic gang activities. It discusses assaultive behavior and other forms of violent crime engaged in by gang members either collectively or as individuals. The character of violent gang crime often determines whether or not youth gangs are perceived as a "problem" in particular communities and how seriously that problem is perceived.

Most gang activity is noncriminal, and most criminal behavior by most gang members is not particularly serious.[1] While the kinds of disorderly congregation, public drinking, and similar activities characteristic of so many gangs may seem problematic in smaller or wealthier communities, such behavior would scarcely give rise to the "high seriousness" estimates ascribed to gang problems by respondents in the largest cities.

It is the practice of *violence* by youth gangs, and particularly lethal violence, that provides the most crucial element in perceptions by city officials that youth gangs present a problem. On a very gross level, one can distinguish four kinds of gang-member violence; these will be cited in order of their increasing capacity to engender perceptions that gangs pose a serious problem.

The first is often regarded "normal" gang violence—attacks in which both assailants and victims are gang members. With the partial exception of unusually bloody, large scale, or protracted intergang conflict, this type has the lowest capacity to engender a sense of problem. This is documented by the fact that continuing intergang violence during the 1960's in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia (150 reported gang-related killings in Chicago in 1967) went almost totally unremarked by the New York- and Washington-based media. Even more striking is the fact that the unprecedented explosion of lethal gang feuding in the Los Angeles area in the late 1970's and early 1980's received virtually no national attention, getting only limited and sporadic media coverage even in the areas most directly affected.[2] Some secretly or openly espouse the cynical position that such violence is a solution rather than a problem; the more gang members kill one another off, the fewer will be left to present problems. This sentiment was forwarded openly by some survey respondents.

A second level of concern results when gang members victimize nongang members whose social characteristics are similar to their own. Often gang members will erroneously identify a target for violent retaliation, and just as often kill or injure a bystander or passer-by because of bad marksmanship or ricochets. When such victims are seen as innocent, there is increased concern, but to the degree that victims share the same age, sex, ethnic, and neighborhood characteristics as gang members, a similar kind of "let them kill each other off" attitude often prevails.

Practitioners working in slum communities frequently complain that gang violence is seen as a problem only when outsiders are victimized.

A third level of concern becomes evident when gang member crime is directed against the property of the general public—in house burglaries, store robberies, arson, vandalism of homes, schools, public facilities, and the like. The highest level of concern often results from a real or perceived increase in gang victimization of persons with different social characteristics—young children, females, the elderly, noncommunity members—through mugging, robbery, rape, murder. In the 1970's, public and editorial concern over gang violence rose when gang members in some cities began systematically to victimize elderly persons—accosting them on the street or in their dwellings, stealing their Social Security checks and other possessions, and frequently beating them, sometimes fatally.[3]

Given the capacity of this type of gang violence to intensify perceptions of danger, it is significant that respondents in several cities—New York and Los Angeles in particular—cited as a major new development of the 1970's the increasing tendency of gang members to victimize nongang adults and children, with some claiming that this had become the dominant form of gang violence.

What does the survey evidence show? Following sections examine gang violence under four headings: forms of gang-member engagement, victims of gang violence, weaponry, and motives for violence.

Forms of Assault

According to a common misconception the dominant form of hostile encounter among gangs is the "gang fight" or rumble—conceived as a pre-arranged massed encounter between rival forces. Along with the notion that without gang fighting there are no true gangs goes the notion that without rumbles there is no true gang conflict. The widespread attention accorded the prearranged rumble as a form of encounter in the 1950's reinforced the idea that it was the major or even exclusive form of gang conflict. In fact, gang members in the past have commonly engaged one another in hostile encounters in a wide variety of ways, and the gangs of the 1970's were no exception.

Survey information on assaultive behavior provided a basis for delineating 15 different types of gang-member assault. These were collapsed into eight categories (chart 7-1)—the planned rumble, the rumble, the feud, the foray, the hit, the fair fight, the execution, and the punitive assault. The chart characterizes six of the nine site-surveyed problem cities according to the presence or absence of each of the eight forms.[4] It does not specify the prevalence or frequency of these forms, but indicates simply whether a particular form was reported either by a respondent or some other source (written reports, newspaper accounts) during the survey period.

Chart 7–1. Major forms of assaultive encounters: Gang-member participants, 1973–75

Form	New York	Chicago	Los Angeles	Phila-delphia	Detroit	San Fran-cisco	Number of cities reporting
"Planned Rumble": prearranged encounter between sizable rival groups	R	R	R	O	R	——	5
"Rumble": encounter between rival groups, generally sizable	O	R	R	R	R	R	6
"Feud": continuing pattern of retaliatory engagements by members of rival groups; various forms	O	R	O	R	O	R	6
"Foray": smaller bands engage rival bands	R	R	R	R	O	O	6
"Hit": smaller bands attack one or two gang rivals	O	R	R	R	R	O	6
"Fair Fight"/"Execution": single gang member engages single rival	——	R	R	R	R	O	6
"Punitive Assault": gang members assault or kill present or potential members of own gang	O	O	O	R	——	——	4
Number of Forms Reported Per City	6	7	7	7	6	5	

R = Reported by respondent
O = Reported by other source
—— = Not reported

The table shows that most forms were found in all six cities, evidence that during the 1970's, as in the past, violent encounters among gang members took a variety of forms rather than one or a few. All but 4 of 42 possible forms (7 forms, 6 cities) were reported. Not reported were the planned rumble in San Francisco; the fair fight/execution in New York; punitive assault in Detroit and San Francisco. This does not necessarily mean that these forms were absentin these cities, but rather that available information did not indicate their presence.

The forms of encounter in chart 7-1 are not mutually exclusive categories, but rather elements or episodes that can combine in many ways under varying circumstances. The fact that the planned rumble was reported in five of the six cities contradicts the fairly widespread notion that it was the dominant form of gang conflict in the 1950's but disappeared in the 1970's. Five of the six cities recorded detailed accounts of classic, full-scale mass engagements. However, the notion that the planned rumble was relatively uncommon, rather than having disappeared, gains support by the fact that respondents in three cities, New York, Los Angeles, and Detroit, reported this type as extant but rare, and that one city, San Francisco, did not report it at all.[5] Respondents in Chicago said that the planned rumble was fairly common among Latin gangs, but not among others.

The "rumble"—an engagement between gangs resulting from unplanned encounters between fairly large numbers (20 to 50) of rival gang members or from raids by one large group into rival territory—was reported for all six cities. There is no uniformly accepted terminology for the forms of gang engagement cited here, but there was some overlap among cities in terms used for either or both planned and unplanned rumbles. The term "rumble" was used in New York, Chicago, and Detroit; "gang-banging" in Chicago and Los Angeles; "gang warring" in Philadelphia. The term "gang warfare," to refer either to specific engagements or a continuing series of engagements, was used in Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Terms such as "jitterbugging," "jamming," and others used during the 1950's were not used in the 1970's.

The term "feud" as used here applies to a continuing series of engagements between rival gangs or among coalitions of gangs. The actual kinds of engagements involved in the feuding pattern may include any combination of rumbles, planned rumbles, forays, hits, fair fights, and executions, often in logical sequences ("foray" leads to retaliatory "hit," leads to "rumble," leads to retaliatory "execution," and so on). The essential element of feuding is that of retaliation or revenge, with an initiating incident leading to a series of retaliations, counter-retaliations, and so on (among New Guinea tribes, this type of engagement is known as the "pay-back" pattern).

During the 1970's youth gangs were actively involved in feuding in eight of the nine site-surveyed gang problem cities. In four cities—New York, Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Miami—most of the gangs participating in the feuding pattern were Hispanic (Puerto Rican in New York, Chicano in Los Angeles and San Antonio, Cuban in Miami). In three other cities—Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit—most of the feuding gangs were black, although in Chicago, Hispanic gangs (primarily Puerto Rican) also participated actively in feuding. In San Francisco, most of the feuding gangs were Asian—Chinese, Filipino, and others. Only in Boston, where most gang violence continued to take the traditional form of assaults on individuals or groups seen as turf-trespassers, was the feuding pattern absent or poorly developed.

In most of the feuding-pattern cities, particular gangs or sets of gang names became paired with those of others as feuding enemies, with the period of active feuding sometimes brief, sometimes lasting. Examples are: Latin Kings and Gaylords (Chicago); Bishops and Chains (Detroit); Savage Skulls and Roman Kings (Bronx); Crips and Piru, Sangra and Lomas (Los Angeles); Hwa Ching and Chung Ching Yee (San Francisco).

Some respondents called the foray the dominant form of gang engagement. This pattern, locally called "guerilla warfare" and by other terms, involves relatively small raiding parties (5 to 10 persons), frequently motorized, reconnoitering in search of rivals and engaging in combat if contact is made. Forays are seldom announced; they count on surprise for their success. Raiding parties are almost always armed, and tactics are mobile, fluid, and often intricate. Since the raiding parties usually carry firearms, such engagements often involve serious injuries and sometimes death. Motorized forays are called "drive-bys" in some areas. The hit resembles the foray in that it involves a small band of gang members, generally in automobiles, scouting out individual members of rival gangs, finding one or two, and blasting away at them with shotguns, rifles, or other firearms. In a variant of a hit, members of the marauding band leave the auto once a rival is located and engage him on foot.

Chicago respondents reported a pattern of engagement that combines several of the forms just cited, with high consensus as to details. A carload of gang members cruises the area of a rival gang, looking for rival members. If one is found, they attack him in one of several ways. Gang members will remain in the car and shoot the victim, or will leave the car and beat or stab him. If the victim is wearing a gang sweater, the attackers take this as a trophy, and, in fact, this kind of coup-counting is often given as the reason for the hit expedition. This type of initiatory incident (called a "preemptive strike" by one respondent) is followed by a retaliatory attack in numbers by the gangmates of the "strike" victim, generally in the form of an unannounced excursion into rival gang territory, although in some instances retaliation may take the form of a planned rumble. The latter form, respondents said, is more common for conflict occurring in school environments and among Latino gangs.

One respondent stated that while motorized forays or hits were common in Chicago, their consequences were less lethal than in Philadelphia, since the major type of weapons used, .22-caliber pistols or rifles, were less likely to produce death or serious injury than the sawed-off shotguns favored in Philadelphia. A Philadelphia respondent reported that local gang members often conducted an initial reconnoitering excursion on bicycles, and returned with cars once gang rivals were located.

The fair fight and execution share in common only the fact that they involve only two antagonists. The former type involves two rival gang members who engage in one-to-one combat as representatives of their respective gangs. While never particularly common in the past, this form appears to have become virtually extinct in the 1970's, although its presence was reported in one instance. One respondent explained the demise of the fair fight on the grounds that contemporary gangs have abandoned the traditional sense of gang honor, which required that rival gangs accept as binding the victory or defeat achieved by their designated champion. Today, he said, a defeat in a fair fight would at once be followed by an attack by the losing side, dishonorably refusing to accept its outcome. In Detroit, a respondent said that one-to-one fights between members of rival gangs most often serve as the initiatory incident that triggers a series of larger scale engagements.

In the execution, a gang selects a particular member of a rival gang for assassination on the basis of behavior for which he is responsible as an individual or as a representative of his gang—for example, making advances to a girl associated with the offended gang. A single gang member acts as a hit man, seeks out the target, and attempts to kill him, generally by shooting. A punitive assault involves actual or potential members of the same gang. A gang member may be subject to a disciplinary beating or in rare instances be killed for violating gang rules; in some cases local youths who refuse to join a gang, or having joined wish to leave, are subject to attack on these grounds. Evidence as to the prevalence of punitive assault is unavailable, but it is in all probability the least prevalent of the forms noted here; it has rarely been reported for previous periods and may represent one of the newer developments of the 1970's.

Property Destruction

An earlier paper on gang violence included damage to property as one form of violent crime; the present report omits vandalism from the analysis.[6] It should be noted, however, that destruction of property is a very serious form of gang crime in some areas. Gangs in some suburban or outer-city communities engage actively in damaging automobiles and other property, with costs totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. In some slum communities, gangs have almost complete destroyed community recreational facilities and have participated in extensive destruction of school facilities. Another extremely serious manifestation of property damage is gang involvement in arson. Burning of hundreds of structures—residential and business, abandoned or occupied—has become increasingly prevalent in slum-area communities throughout the Nation. In many instances gang members are the agents of these conflagrations—sometimes accidentally, more often, deliberately.[7]

Victims of Gang Violence

Findings presented above convey some notion of the character of gang violence in major American cities, but do not include information on two important related issues; what was the relative *prevalence* of the various forms during the 1970's, and what categories of persons were the primary victims? The latter question is of particular importance in light of widespread claims that nongang members—particularly adults—had become the primary victims of gang violence. The kinds of data necessary for accurate and reliable answers were unavailable. However, particularly with respect to the victims issue, it is important to attempt some sort of approximation, however tentative, because respondents' estimates of the proportion of nongang victims varies so widely. One stated, for example, that over 80 percent of victims were nongang members, while another claimed that nongang victims made up only a small minority, and even here, victimization was accidental. Not only were these two respondents referring to the same city, but they were members of the same police department.

One of the few available sources of routine identification of the victims of gang violence that is amenable to quantitative treatment are incidents of gang violence reported in the daily press in sufficient detail to permit analytic categorization. Methodologically, the use of newspaper reports involves obvious problems, particularly with respect to issues of representativeness and selection

criteria. However, the importance of analyzing some fairly large population of events to derive numerical findings counterbalances to some degree the obvious limitations of the data source. Moreover, as will be seen, a surprising degree of regularity in the results obtained seems to indicate a higher level of adequacy for these data than one might expect.

Table 7–1. Victims of gang violence: Four cities

N incidents = 301: 1973 – 1975[a]

	New York N = 80		Chicago N = 58		Los Angeles N = 108		Philadelphia N = 55		4 cities N = 301	
Type of victim										
Gang member	51.2%		56.9		66.7		65.5		60.5%	
Via rumble		36.2		22.4		35.2		28.2		31.9
Via band, individual assault		15.0		34.5		31.5		36.2		28.6
Nongang	48.8%		43.1		33.3		34.6		39.5%	
Peers		11.5		8.6		11.1		18.2		11.9
Children, adults		37.5		34.5		22.2		16.4		27.6
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

[a] First 6 months.

Table 7–1 is based on an analysis of 301 incidents of gang violence reported in the press of the four largest cities between January 1973 and June 1975. Two major categories of victims are distinguished—gang members and nongang members, as well as two subcategories of each: for gang members, whether victimization occurred in the context of larger-scale rumbles or smaller-scale band/individual assaults; for nongang members, whether victims were peers—generally males of similar age, ethnic status, and residential area—or nonpeers, mostly adults, though sometimes children.

One surprising feature of the table is the degree of similarity among the four cities in the proportions of reported victims in the several categories. Four-city totals show that just about 60 percent of reported victims were gang members, and 40 percent nongang members. None of the four cities varies by more than 10 percentage points from these figures. These findings weaken assertions that the majority of victims of gang violence in the 1970's were nongang members. It should be noted that in addition to estimates reported earlier, which diverge sharply from these figures, figures given by other respondents, sometimes in the same cities, were very close to those shown here. A probation worker in the city where police officials gave

diametrically opposed estimates reckoned that "about 60 percent of gang victims are other gang members."

Of the four victim subcategories, gang members involved in rumbles made up the highest percentage of victims, gang members assaulted in the course of individual or smaller band encounters ranked second, adults or children not affiliated with gangs ranked third, and nongang peers fourth.

While these figures do appear to weaken assertions that the primary victims of 1970's gangs were uninvolved "outsiders" rather than other gang members or local peers, they provide no basis for determining whether these figures differ substantially from those of the past. The 28-percent four-city figure for nongang, nonpeer victims might represent a major development if equivalent percentages in the past were, say, in the neighborhood of 5 percent. Directly comparable data for past periods were not available. However, data were available that made possible an indirect comparison. These were gathered in the course of a 3-year gang study in Boston in the 1950's, in which all known incidents of gang assault involving members of seven gangs in one city district were recorded by field workers, analyzed, and reported.[8]

Table 7–2 compares proportions of three categories of victims obtained through the four-city analysis with those of the single-community study 20 years earlier. In the face of differences of time, methods, and locations, proportions are surprisingly similar. Gang members were victims in 61 percent of reported incidents in the 1970's compared to 57 percent in the 1950's. Nongang adults and children were victims in 28 percent of the 1970's incidents, 22 percent in the 1950's. The nongang-peer category showed less similarity, with such persons being victimized by gangs only about half as often during the earlier period. Even so, the proportions fall within 10 percent of each other.

Table 7–2. Three categories of gang-member victims: Two studies compared, 1955–1957, 1973–1975

Type of victim	301 press-reported incidents, 4 cities, 1973–75	77 field-recorded incidents, one community, 1955–57[a]
Gang member	60.5%	57.1%
Nongang child, adult	27.6	22.0
Nongang peer	11.9	20.9
Three categories	100.0%	100.0%

[a] W. Miller, *Violent Crimes in City Gangs*, 1966, table 5: 109.

Comparing victimization figures by category for the four major cities clarifies the issue of nongang-member victimization. The four-city average of victimization of children and adults, 28 percent, is somewhat higher but not much, than the 22 percent figure of the earlier study. On this basis, such victimization does not appear as a particularly distinctive practice of the gangs of the 1970's. However, looking at city-by-city percentages, it is apparent that the children and

adult victimization figures in the two largest cities (New York 38 percent, Chicago 35 percent) were substantially higher than those for the next largest (Los Angeles 22 percent, Philadelphia 16 percent), as well as the 1950's figure (21 percent). This suggests that there was considerable substance to claims by New Yorkers and Chicagoans that victimization of children and adults had increased, but that similar claims by Los Angelenos and Philadelphians were questionable.

Weaponry

How destructive was the violence of gangs in the 1970's? Data in chapter 6 show that the numbers and rates of gang-related killings reached unprecedented levels during the latter years of the decade. No statistical data are presented here on the numbers of gang-related injuries and maimings, or cases of intimidation, extortion, arson, vandalism, and other forms of violent activity by gangs, but it is apparent that the gangs of the 1970's were responsible for a great deal of serious violence. There are no generally accepted explanations either for the causes of this violence or the reasons for its periodic increases and decreases. However, any discussion of gang violence in the 1970's requires at least some attention to one major element in violent victimization—the role of weaponry.

On October 27, 1919, a Chicago newspaper ran a story on the killing of a member of the Elston youth gang by a 15-year-old member of the Belmonts—a Northwest Side gang—in the course of a continuing turf war. The story used these words: "[The Elston gang member] was killed by a bullet from a .22-caliber rifle. In the last two years, when the two gangs realized the impotency of using bare knuckles and ragged stones, each turned to firearms."[9]

This statement, incorporating the basic notion that gangs until recently have engaged in violence by means other than guns but that today have turned to guns, has been forwarded repeatedly in almost identical form during every decade of the 60 years since the Belmont-Elston killing. Most often the time period cited for the reported recourse to guns is "2 or 3 years ago"; a less frequent version of the statement uses the period "15 or 20 years ago"—often corresponding to the gang-member age-period or the reporter's life.[10]

Given the almost ritualized nature of the claim that gangs of the past used fists, clubs, knives, missiles, and the like, but have "only recently" turned to guns, claims of increasing use and prevalence of guns must be approached with particular caution. Statements regarding guns made both by survey respondents and in other sources were subject to particularly careful appraisal. Approaching the factual accuracy of such statements with an attitude of skepticism, one conclusion nonetheless seems inescapable. The prevalence, use, quality, and sophistication of weaponry in the gangs of the 1970's far surpassed anything known in the past, and is probably the single most significant characteristic distinguishing the gangs of the 1970's from their predecessors.

Why has information on gang-related killings, of the kind presented in table 6–1, not been reported on a routine basis in past studies of youth gangs? One probable reason is that in the past actual killings as an outcome of assaultive activities by gangs were relatively rare. Admitting the

dangers of generalizations in the absence of reliable information from the past, the weight of evidence would seem to support the conclusion that the consequences of assaultive activities by gangs in the 1970's were markedly more lethal than during any previous period. Data just presented on the forms and victims of gang violence show some departures from the practices of previous periods, but by and large these differences are not large enough to account for the reported increases in the amount of lethality. It would appear that the major differentiating factor was that of weaponry. This raises several questions: how prevalent were firearms, what was the character of gang weaponry, and how can one account for increases in its prevalence and quality?

Questions as to the use of firearms in the several cities typically elicited answers such as "*Everybody's* got them; they have them either on their persons or in their homes" (New York); "Guns are now available all over; they are a prime target of burglaries" (Chicago); "In this city a gang is judged by the number and quality of weapons they have; the most heavily armed gang is the most feared; for our gangs, firepower is the name of the game" (Los Angeles); "The most dramatic change in the gang situation here lies in the use of firearms" (Philadelphia).

There is little doubt that such statements involve elements of exaggeration; when pressed, some of these who claimed that "everybody" now has guns said that in a typical gang of 40 persons, perhaps 20 own guns, compared to 2 or 3 in the past. Others stated that the gangs did not actually own all the guns they used, but borrowed or rented arms from other gangs or persons. In the absence of more careful analysis of the weaponry data, the possibility of such exaggeration remains. Even so, there was virtually unanimous agreement by respondents in all cities that guns of many kinds were extremely prevalent in the community, easy to obtain, and used extensively by gang members.

Arrest data provide a rough notion of the prevalence of weapons. New York police reported approximately 1,500 arrests of gang members for "possession of dangerous weapons" between 1972 and 1974 (all "dangerous weapons" are not firearms, but most are); Chicago recorded 700 gang-member arrests for "possession of firearms" in 1974 alone; in the same year Los Angeles reported 1,100 gang-member arrests for "assault with a deadly weapon," and 115 more for "shooting at inhabited dwellings." Philadelphia reported about 500 shooting incidents involving gang members between 1971 and 1973. These figures substantially underrepresent the actual number of guns in circulation, since they record only gun use or possession that comes to official notice.

Probably the most careful accounting of gang weaponry in major cities was that of the Bronx Division of the New York City Police Department's Gang Intelligence Unit. Lists compiled in the mid-1970's included 25 categories of weapons used by gang members. Of these, weapons in 17 of the categories utilize gunpowder or some other explosive. The categories included "rifles, all calibers"; "shotguns, all calibers"; handguns (revolvers and automatics), .22, .25, .32, .38, .45 caliber; "semiautomatic rifles converted to automatic"; "homemade mortars"; "homemade bazookas"; "Molotov cocktails"; "pipe bombs." In only one of the six cities in table 7–1, San Francisco, was the "Saturday Night Special" (a cheap, short-barreled .22-caliber

revolver) cited as the major kind of gang weapon; in the other cities respondents claimed that the majority of guns used were at the level of high-quality police weapons; the Smith and Wesson .38 caliber, one then-common police weapon, was mentioned several times. Homemade "zip guns," reported prevalent in the 1950's, were said to be still used by some younger gang members, but several respondents said such crude weaponry was held in contempt by most gang members.

Accurate information on the role of weaponry is important not only because of its obvious bearing on the capacity of gang members to pose a lethal threat to one another and to nongang members, but because such information bears directly on the controversial issue of the causes or origins of gang violence. One of the most popular explanations of the 1970's centered on the notion that contemporary gang members, in common with other violent youthful offenders, simply lack the capacity to conceive the taking of human life as wrongful. This position, frequently forwarded in the past in connection with conceptions of "psychopathic" or "sociopathic" personalities, was given substance in the media images of the 1970's through televised or quoted statements by youthful killers such as, "What do I feel when I kill somebody? Nothing at all. It's no more to me than brushing off a fly."

These images served to symbolize a theory that basic changes had occurred in the moral capacity of many youth, whereby the act of killing was seen simply as a means to an end, unaccompanied by any sense of moral wrongness or remorse, and that the spread of such amorality engendered increases in lethal violence by gang members and others.

Without exploring the plausibility, supportive evidence, or other implications of this position, it seems to me that of the two explanations for increases in violence—a basic personality change in American youth and an increased availability of firearms—the latter is more plausible. The fact that guns were readily available, far more prevalent, and far more widely used than in the past seems well established, while the postulated changes in basic moral conceptions remain highly conjectural. This would suggest that theories based on changes in technology or social arrangements show a more obvious relationship to changes in patterns of gang violence than theories based on changes in human nature. This point may also be illustrated in connection with a development noted earlier.

Data just presented indicate that the motorized foray has become more prevalent relative to the rumble as a form of intergang conflict. One reason clearly involves technology. The classic rumble could be and can be executed with combatants proceeding by foot to the battle site and engaging each other with fists, clubs, chains, and possibly knives—logistical and technological means available to combatants throughout recorded history. By contrast, the foray, in one of its major forms, requires two technological devices—the automobile and the gun. While both have been in existence for some time, neither has been readily available in large numbers to urban adolescents until relatively recently. In the 1970's, for reasons not well understood, the conjoint use of guns and cars increased substantially.

The technological and economic factors governing the availability to adolescents of firearms and automobiles thus played a major role in changing the character of major forms of gang violence.

Motives for Gang Violence

Analysis of the reasons for acts of violence by gang members is part of the larger issue of the motivation for gang behavior in general, an issue that is not treated in this report. However, one aspect of this issue is relevant to the present discussion. Of four distinguishable motives for engaging in gang violence—honor, local turf defense, control, and gain—all four were operative in the past, and all four continued to be operative in the 1970's. However, it appears that violent acts in the service of the latter two objectives—control and gain—have been increasing at the expense of the former. Many of the forms of gang violence reported here—intimidation of possible court witnesses, claims of control over the facilities and educational/disciplinary policies of the schools, claims of complete hegemony over parks and other recreational areas—reflect an increased use of violence for purposes of control.

Similarly, reports of the extension of extortion or "shakedown" operations from peers to adult merchants, robbery of "easy" victims such as elderly people, predatory excursions by smaller bands for mugging or otherwise robbing the general citizenry, appear to reflect an increased use of violence as a method of acquiring money and salable goods. All of these issues—motives for gang violence, possible changes in the character of such motives, and possible reason for such changes—call for additional information and analysis.

Summary

A common propensity to exaggerate and sensationalize the prevalence and severity of gang violence makes it particularly important to approach this topic with care, caution, and skepticism. Claims that "gangs of today" are far more violent than their predecessors must be regarded with particular caution, since such claims have been made so often in the past. In reviewing academic studies of gang problems in the 1950's and 1960's, it appears that the more careful and scholarly the study, the less the emphasis on violence as an important form of gang activity. In a comprehensive review of the gang studies of this period, Malcolm Klien, one of the foremost scholars of gangs at this time, consistently played down the saliency and seriousness of violence as a form of gang behavior, and concluded his review with the statement, "Gang violence, it must be admitted, is *not* now a major social concern."[11]

Starting from the assumption that gang violence during the past several decades was less severe than represented by most contemporary reporters, and recognizing that the tendency to exaggerate such severity is equally characteristic of the present period, the following conclusions on gang violence in the 1970's seem warranted.

Violent acts by youth gangs in in the 1970's, as in the past, took many different forms. Of these, violence that victimized persons outside the immediate orbit of gang members—primarily adults and children in similar or different communities—had the greatest capacity to cause fear and

perceptions that gangs posed a serious crime problem. Eight forms of inter- and intragang conflict may be distinguished—the planned rumble, the rumble, the feud, the foray, the hit, the fair fight, the execution, and the punitive assault. While there was some evidence of specialization in different cities, most of the above forms were reported for all six cities for which relevant data were collected.

The notion that the rumble, in either its planned or spontaneous form, had disappeared, was not supported by available evidence; however, it did appear that the foray—an excursion by smaller bands, generally armed and often motorized—had become more common than the rumble. The notion that nongang adults and children had become the primary victims of gang violence was not supported; of identifiable victims, gang members totaled about 60 percent, adults and children about 28 percent, and nongang peers about 12 percent. The 60 percent gang, 40 percent nongang ratio based on four-city averages did not differ substantially from figures obtained in the past. However, when cities were considered separately, the notion that nongang-member victimization was increasing was supported for the nation's two largest cities, where nongang members appeared as victims in almost half of the reported incidents and nongang children and adults in over one-third.

A major development of the 1970's was a substantial increase in the availability, sophistication, and use of firearms as instruments of gang violence. This may well be the single most significant feature of contemporary gang activity with respect to its seriousness as a crime problem. The increased use of firearms to effect violent crimes (often in concert with motorized transport) substantially increased the likelihood that violence directed both to other gang members and the general citizenry would have lethal consequences.

Participation in destructive acts by gang members involving property destruction also appeared to be on the rise. Major manifestations were extensive vandalism of school facilities, destruction of parks, recreational and other public facilities, and the destruction of buildings through arson.

Changes in the forms and victim categories of gang-member violence were reflected in changes in motives for violence. Insofar as gang violence is played out in the arena of intergang conflict, motives arising out of "honor" and defense of local turf play a major role. As muggings, robberies, and extortion of community residents become relatively more prevalent, and as efforts to intimidate witnesses, dictate school policies, and dominate public facilities become more widespread, the motives of "gain" and "control" play a larger role.

In sum, allowing for tendencies to exaggerate the scope and seriousness of gang violence and to represent the "gang of today" as far more violent than its predecessors, evidence for the 1970's supports the conclusion that the amount of lethal violence directed by youth gangs both against one another and against the general public was without precedent. Youth gangs during the decade posed a greater threat to the public order and greater danger to the safety of the citizenry than at any time during the past.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. W. Miller, "Violent Crimes in City Gangs," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 364 (March 1966): 96-112.

2. See B. Baker "L.A. Gang Violence Still Taking Its Toll: Agencies Don't Respond," Los Angeles Times, July 7, 1980. One factor influencing media coverage of gangs is the status of victims. In general, the media are far more likely to publicize gang or group violence when victims are eminent. However, even this principle had little effect in Los Angeles. When a Los Angeles Herald Examiner editorial writer who was also the niece of a U.S. Senator was shot and killed in the course of a robbery by two members of the Shoreline Cripe gang of Venice, media accounts did not identify the killers as gang members (United Press International, "Senator Ribicoff's Niece Killed in Robbery," November 13, 1980, and subsequent UPI stories).

3. See "Statement of Irwin Silverman, Bronx Senior Citizen Robbery Unit, New York Police Department, New York, N.Y." in Serious Youth Crime, 1978 (previously cited): 22-27 passim.

4. Data from the other three cities, Boston, Miami, and San Antonio, are not included in the table.

5. The rumble, in either its prearranged or spontaneous manifestations, was probably not nearly as common in the 1960's as generally supposed. One study that reported prevalence data on forms of gang engagement in the 1950's states, "The most common form (of gang-member assault) was the collective engagement between members of different gangs...(but) few of these were full-scale massed-encounter gang fights; most were brief strike-and-fall-back forays by small guerrilla bands." (W. Miller, 1966 (previously cited): 107.

6. W. Miller, 1966 (previous note).

7. See, for example, F. Shapiro, "Raking the Ashes of the Epidemic Flame," New York Times Magazine, July 13, 1975: 16: "We know it's the work of a juvenile gang. They're waiting for us (the firemen) when we get there, all wearing their uniform jackets."

8. W. Miller, 1966. (notes above).

9. F. Thrasher, The Gang, 1927 (previously cited): 180.

10. A typical statement of this type from the 1980's is quoted in M. Barker, "Gang Warfare, Terror on Rise," Los Angeles Times, September 28, 1980, part XI: 2.

11. M. Klein, "Violence in American Juvenile Gangs," in Mulvihill and Tumin, Crimes of Violence, National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, vol. 13, 1969: 1457.

8. Gang Activities and the Public Schools

Most youth gang members are approximately 10 to 21 years old. Youth in the United States are required by law to attend a public or private school for 7 of these 12 years. Chapter 5 showed that about 60 percent of gang-member arrests involve persons aged 17 and below. These facts would lead us to expect that whenever one finds serious gang problems, one would also find serious gang problems in schools.

Strangely enough, this apparently has not been the case in the past. Literature on gangs in the 1950's and 1960's paid very little attention to this area. Frederick Thrasher, whose study of gangs in the 1910's and 1920's is the most comprehensive ever produced, does not even include a separate chapter on gangs and the schools.[1] Yet, in the 1970's, gang activities were widely seen as a major problem in the nation's schools. In a nationwide Gallup Poll in 1974, a surprising 60 percent of respondents who provided seriousness estimates felt that "student gangs that disrupt the school or bother other students" constituted either a very serious or moderately serious problem in their local schools. In 1975, witnesses testifying before a Senate subcommittee investigating violence in the school repeatedly pointed to youth gang activity as a major contributor to student violence.[2]

What was the character of gang activities in the public schools in the 1970's, and why did they arouse so much more concern than in the past?

Gang Activities in the Schools

The critical circumstance of the 1970's was the fact that identifiable youth gangs were operating *inside* as well as outside of many schools in major cities, and the nature of gang operations not only posed serious obstacles to the education of students but also a serious threat to the physical safety of students and teachers. Chart 8–1 lists 10 kinds of gang activity or responses for 6 of the site-surveyed gang-problem cities.

As in the case of chart 7–1, failure to report that a particular activity was present does not necessarily mean that it was absent, but rather than no respondent or other source indicated its presence.

The chart indicates differences between the four largest cities on the one hand, and the remaining two on the other. Of 40 potentially reportable activities for the 4 largest cities, 36 (90 percent) are reported, whereas for Detroit and San Francisco, 8 of 20 possible activities are reported (40 percent). In the absence of prevalence figures, this would suggest that problems with gangs in schools were considerably less serious in the latter two cities.

Nonetheless, the table shows clearly that the schools were a major arena for gang activity in all six of these gang-problem cities. All reported three important features—identified gangs

Table 8–1. School-related forms of gang activity in six cities

Form of Activity	New York	Chicago	Los Angeles	Philadelphia	Detroit	San Francisco	Number of Cities Reporting
Identified gangs operating operating in elementary, junior high, or senior high Schools	R	R	R	R	R	R	6
Several identified gangs attending same school	O	R	R	R	O	—	5
Gang assaults, shootings inside schools (corridors, classrooms, etc.): teachers, other gang members, nongang students	R	R	R	R	R	R	6
Gang fights, attacks, shootings, outside schools (playgrounds, environs)	R	R	R	R	R	R	6
Gang members wearing "colors" (jackets, sweaters) in school	R	R	—	—	—	—	2
Intimidation of teachers by gang members (over reporting gang activities to police, school authorities, appearing as court witnesses, etc.)	R	R	R	—	—	—	3
Gang members claiming schoolrooms, environs, as "gang-controlled" territory	R	R	R	R	—	—	4
Gang members collecting "protection" money from nongang students	R	R	R	R	—	—	4
Gang members inflicting major damage on school buildings, facilities	—	R	R	R	—	—	3
Gang problems requiring special security arrangements; public/private security personnel patrol school interiors, exteriors	R	R	R	R	R	—	5
Number of Activities Reported per City	8	10	9	8	4	3	

R = Reported by respondent
O = Reported by other source
— = Not reported

operating in the schools; stabbings, shootings, beatings, and other kinds of assaults on teachers, other students, and rival gang members inside the schools; similar kinds of assaults in the school environs. All cities but one, San Francisco, had instituted special security arrangements either primarily or partly in response to gang violence. Statements by informants in each of the six cities convey some notion of local perceptions of gang problems:

> The schools of this city have sold out to the gangs. A major development here is the intent by gangs to gain control of the schools, their intimidation of school personnel, and their extortion of children on a large scale. The gangs have browbeaten the school administrators. They have been bought off by being permitted to use the schools as recruiting grounds. ***New York.***
>
> The schools have become an arena of expression for the gangs; high schools in some districts have become houses for the gangs, and students are being victimized through extortion; gangs recruit openly in school areas. ***Chicago.***
>
> The gang situation in the schools is frantic. Of the inner-city schools, *all* of them have large gang populations within the schools. Gangs have completely taken over individual classrooms, and would have taken over whole schools if police had not intervened. Once the number of gang members in a class reaches a certain level, the teacher is powerless to enforce discipline. ***Los Angeles.***
>
> The schools in this city are citadels of fear; there is gang fighting in the halls; there is no alternative but to set up safety zones where fighting will be prevented through force. There is no point in trying to exaggerate the situation; the truth by itself is devastating. ***Philadelphia.***
>
> The gang problem here is serious—especially around the schools; every member of these gangs is involved in all sorts of crimes, from larceny through murder. Gangs are active both inside and outside the schools. The police have been meeting continuously with school and community people, and at every meeting they come up with a new name for a new gang. ***Detroit.***
>
> There has been fighting between black and white and black and Chinese gangs in several high schools—thus far on a relatively small scale. But if they move ahead with plans to integrate the high schools, the gang conflict will make what is happening now look like a picnic! ***San Francisco.***

In all probability these statements contain elements of exaggeration. No adequate prevalence data were available for gang activities in the schools, and there were undoubtedly some or many schools in each of the six cities where gangs presented few or no problems. In huge cities of the kind under consideration here, there may be very substantial differences in the severity of gang-related problems among different sections or neighborhoods. But even when these qualifications are considered, the statements quoted accurately reflect the perceptions of those professionals

who were closest to the gang-school situation in the several cities, and it is these perceptions, in cases where more systematic information is unavailable, that serve as the informational underpinning of policy formulation.

No information was obtained on the number of schools in each of the six cities in which at least one gang was operating, but problems appeared to be most widespread or serious in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Los Angeles respondents said, "The problem is so out of hand at all three levels (elementary, junior, senior) that it can't be coped with." "We have had years of violence and killing in the schools with no real action by the authorities. . ." "*All* the schools in the inner city have large gang populations." Chicago respondents said "School officials feel the gang problem is citywide." "The teachers feel that gangs are their biggest problem." Philadelphia during a 6-year period ran special workshops to instruct schoolteachers in methods of coping with gangs, and set up special crisis intervention teams to be dispatched to the schools during the many times that gang violence erupted or was threatened. One of the few urban communities that collected detailed information on gangs in the schools is the Bronx, which reported that named gangs were operating in at least 32 schools in 1972. A year later, however, gang activity was reported to have lessened, with gang activity having become at least less visible.

In both Detroit and San Francisco gang violence in the schools seemed less widespread than in the four largest cities. Even so, a Detroit respondent said, "On a scale of 10, I would rate the seriousness of gang problems in the schools at 11!" The more serious problems in San Francisco affected schools with substantial Chinese populations, but several respondents expressed fears that gangs in largely black schools were in the process of becoming more active.

Correspondence between elementary school districts and neighborhood boundaries, as pointed out by a Chicago respondent, creates a probability that gangs will form around elementary schools, and in fact the feeder process by which students from a larger number of elementary schools attend a smaller number of middle or junior high schools, and then an even smaller number of high schools, resulted in throwing together gangs from different areas into the same junior or senior high schools. Of the 32 Bronx schools containing at least 1 gang, 26 (81 percent) contained 2 or more. Los Angeles respondents reported that it was not at all uncommon for 5 or 6 gangs from different junior high schools to converge on a single high school, and 1 high school reportedly contained 10 different gangs. Seven different gangs were reported to be in attendance at one middle school (junior high) in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, and other schools contained similar numbers. Since the gangs coming into the higher level schools frequently were rivals, a high potential for serious violence was created.[3]

Despite increasing attempts to strengthen school security, much of this violence occurred within the schools themselves. Victims of gang attacks included other gang members, nongang students, and teachers. In all four of the largest cities, respondents provided vivid accounts of gangs prowling the school corridors in search of possible rivals and preventing orderly movement through the hallways. All four cities reported open gang fighting in the hallways—in some cases with considerable frequency. The shooting and killing of teachers by gang members was reported

for Chicago and Philadelphia, and of nongang students in Chicago and Los Angeles. Shootings and other assaults were reported in school cafeterias, auditoriums, and other internal locations.[4]

Violence also occurred in the immediate environs of the schools, with gang fighting taking place in schoolyards, athletic areas, and adjoining streets. Such conflict often involved gang members who dropped out of school or passed the compulsory school attendance age, but who congregated in school areas because the "action" was there. One respondent said, "They spend more time around the school after they are no longer enrolled than they ever did when they were." In some cities, notably Chicago, increased security measures made it difficult or impossible for these nonstudent or former student gang members to gain entry to the school buildings themselves, so they waited until student gang members left the building and used the surrounding areas as arenas of conflict.

The four largest cities reported claims of control by gang members over specific rooms, zones, and facilities within the schools, as well as over schoolyards, athletic facilities, and other external areas. This aspect of school-related gang activity is of particular importance, since it appears to represent a major departure from past practice. Most cities reported a tradition whereby schools had been seen as neutral territory by rival gangs, a clearly recognized physical zone within whose limits enmities, vendettas, retaliatory obligations—however strongly maintained on the "outside"—were by agreement or convention held in suspension (one respondent referred to the "medieval concept of sanctuary.")

In the 1970's this convention seemed to have eroded radically in major cities. The traditional youth gang practice of making claims of special rights of ownership and control over particular areas and facilities in the community ("turf," "territorialization") had in many instances been extended not only to school environs but to the schools themselves. The notion of "control" as applied by gangs to the schools includes claimed rights to exclusive use of facilities such as cafeterias, basketball courts, and the like, claims of exclusive rights to exercise authority (including the administration of discipline) in the classrooms, rights to collect fees for passage through school hallways as well as for permission to enter and remain in school buildings, and the designation of particular interior and/or exterior locales as exclusive congregating areas ("turf") for specific gangs.

Concern over gang control in the schools was greatest in Los Angeles and Chicago. Los Angeles respondents said that gangs had territorialized whole high school districts, with "ownership" of particular high schools the victory prize in gang combats. They told also of gangs gradually increasing their numbers in particular classrooms until they have achieved a "critical mass"—a strength past which the teacher no longer can exercise discipline. A Chicago respondent said, "The gangs have simply taken over the schools"; a New Yorker, "The schools have sold out to the gang." Philadelphia had to close cafeterias in several major high schools because gangs claimed the right to control access, seating areas, and other arrangements.

Intimidation of teachers and other school personnel was reported for New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The major form of intimidation was threats by gang members that teachers would

be beaten or killed if they reported violations of school regulations or legal statutes, or appeared as witnesses in court against gang members. Another form was the refusal by gang members to accept the authority of the teacher and concomitant claims of the right to exercise classroom authority. A respondent in New York, where the school system had been partially decentralized, claimed that the local semiautonomous school districts had sold out to the gangs, granting them the privilege of recruiting members from the student body in return for promises to refrain from violence. A Chicago respondent, a former teacher, claimed that the teachers were frightened of reporting gang violations not only because of threats by the gang members, but because they had no assurance that their claims would be supported by school principals who were anxious to conceal evidence of violence in their schools (the "concealment" issue will be discussed shortly). He added that 3 or 4 teachers in a school might be willing to take a stand, but, unable to enlist the support of the other 100, felt powerless to act.

A similar situation was reported by a Los Angeles respondent who described how the presence of a sufficient number of gang members in a class effectively rendered the teacher powerless. The gang members would establish a beachhead of control in one classroom and from there attempt to extend their control to the entire school. A Philadelphia respondent, denying the existence of "intimidation" by gang members, admitted that they *did* threaten teachers, but claimed that the teachers' refusal to press charges against gang members arose from a "natural reluctance to testify" rather than fear of retaliatory violence.

One of the traditional activities of urban youth gangs in the community is that of extortion—a demand for payment for the privilege of not being assaulted. In the past, the primary victims of this practice were younger adolescents or children in the local community, and sums of extorted money were generally small. Most authorities tended to regard this as a relatively innocuous practice, referred to as a "lunch-money shakedown" or some similar term. In the 1970's, as in the case of turf-control claims, the shakedown was imported from the community into the schools.

Extortion in the schools takes two major forms, one being the traditional payment to forestall threatened beatings or worse. There is also a second type, not traditionally noted—one related to the claims of ownership of school facilities made by gangs. This is the collection of money for what one respondent called "the privilege of attending school." On the basis of the premise that they own the school, its facilities, or both, gangs levy fees for the right to enter the building, traverse its passageways, use its cafeterias and gyms, and so on. A Los Angeles respondent said that the line between this type of "exchange" and outright robbery was extremely thin.

Figures were not obtained on the extent of these practices and the amounts of money involved. Quarters and dollars were the sums most frequently mentioned; a Philadelphia respondent said many students customarily kept their extortion money in an accessible place, but hid additional sums in their shoes or elsewhere so as to avoid losing all their money to the gangs. Several respondents said that the sums demanded were getting larger, and since the schoolchildren were reluctant to tell their parents why they needed the money, they were forced to steal from their

parents and others to come up with the required amounts. In one case, gang members kept raising protection fees until they reached a point where the parents came to the school in bewilderment, inquiring as to the reasons for the ever-increasing amounts their son was requesting.

The wearing of gang "colors" (jackets or sweaters bearing the gang name) within the schools was reported for the two largest cities. This practice is a particularly pointed way of flaunting gang membership, since it at the same time defies school rules and proclaims the power and threat of the gang. Fashions concerning the wearing of colors are quite changeable, and some New Yorkers reported that the practice of wearing colors in schools had waxed and waned. It should be noted, however, that gang members in those schools where colors are not worn openly do not thereby forgo the opportunity to indicate their gang identity. In Philadelphia, for example, there has never been any real tradition of gang colors, but in this city, as well as in Los Angeles, gang members availed themselves of a very wide variety of what some respondents called "distinctive forms of apparel," that readily reveal their gang identity to the initiated. They include broad-brimmed hats, ("brims"), caps of particular colors, a single earring, one white sneaker, special satin trousers, and many others. Wishing at the same time to reveal their gang identity to some and to forestall ready identification by others, gang members frequently change from one of these esoteric forms of clothing or adornment to another.

Gang members undoubtedly participated in the monumental amount of property damage inflicted upon the schools, but the largely secretive nature of such activity made it difficult to identify specifically those acts of vandalism, arson, and defacement executed primarily by gang members. One exception, of course, applies to a relatively mild form of property defacement, graffiti. Gang members in Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and elsewhere covered the walls in and around the schools with names of their gangs and their members. One particularly spectacular instance of property destruction occcurred in Los Angeles; after $1.5 million was spent on the complete modernization of a city high school in 1974, gang members broke into the school and "completely demolished everything." Gang members in New York used explosives such as pipe bombs and Molotov cocktails to burn and damage public facilities, and it is likely that some of the extensive damage to city schools was carried out in this manner.

One very concrete indication of how gang violence can disrupt the schools is the unprecedented extent to which authorities had to institute and augment school security. Five of the six gang-problem cities in chart 8-1 reported the establishment of special security arrangements involving municipal police, private or school-system security guards, and citizen security personnel, in various combinations. While it is impossible to determine exactly how much school violence to attribute to gangs, gang activity undoubtedly was a principal reason for these increased security arrangements.

Two of the gang-problem cities, Chicago and Philadelphia, used all three types of security personnel—municipal police, school guards (sometimes off duty municipal policemen), and civilian security personnel. Philadelphia added a fourth kind of arrangement—city-supported

emergency response teams summoned in cases of gang violence. While the teams themselves did not include police officers, they carried mobile communications equipment for radio contact with city police.

New York used both city police assigned to the schools and a separate school security force but did not use civilian security personnel. The only gang-problem city in chart 8–1 that did not report special security arrangements was San Francisco. In late 1974, after a series of violent confrontations between gangs in several schools, criminal justice authorities initiated proposals for the institution of such measures. However, these were rejected by the school department, which took the position that "having policemen in the schools" would disrupt the educational climate.

No statistics were obtained on the actual members of school security personnel and the costs of security operations, but a rough notion of the scope of such operations is conveyed by the fact that in Los Angeles the money allocated to school security was higher than that of any other security operation in the city except the municipal police department itself.

Police officials claimed that putting officers in the schools made it far more difficult for gang members to engage in gang fighting and other forms of assault, and that the presence of uniformed or plainclothes police within a school in fact kept the situation from becoming worse. Others claimed that police in the schools and the kind of "no outsiders allowed" rules found in Chicago simply shifted the violence from inside the schools to the outside. In any event, data just presented on the kinds of gang activity in schools indicate that while police presence may well exert a restraining influence, violent and other criminal activities by gangs continued to present a formidable problem.

The information presented here on gang activity in the schools is derived primarily from the experiences of the largest cities in the early and middle 1970's, though similar conditions were present in many smaller cities as well—particularly those affected by the spread of feuding gangs throughout California in the middle and later years of the decade. In Garden Grove, California, an Orange County city of approximately 125,000, the situation in the schools in the late 1970's closely resembled the circumstances of cities such as New York and Los Angeles earlier in the decade. Garden Grove contained five feuding gangs, with names and colors, whose members attended schools at all levels—elementary, junior high, and senior high. Gang members began to wear colors to school starting in the fifth and sixth grades. As in larger cities, a local feeder system funneled gang members from a larger number of schools at lower levels to a smaller number at higher levels, thus placing members of feuding gangs in direct contact in the junior and senior high schools. The police department had to set up a special school security squad whose members attempted to forestall shootings and stabbings by gang members within the schools. In 1979 the special squad operated only in the high schools, but plans were being made to extend operations to the junior high level when personnel became available. Respondents in Garden Grove reported similar developments in neighboring Orange County cities such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Westminster.

Other Gang-School Issues

Additional issues relevant to gangs in schools concern the extent to which school principals conceal or admit problems of violence in their schools, the use by gangs of student populations as recruitment sources, racial aspects of gang-school violence, and what lies behind the severity of gang/school problems.

Many respondents questioned the policies of school authorities on disseminating information about their gang problems. Most New York respondents described the local situation in almost identical terms. In the past, they said, school principals had been extremely reluctant to admit that gang problems existed in their schools—seeing such problems as a direct reflection on their ability to maintain discipline. Police complained that concealment and denial by school authorities unduly delayed necessary control measures. Many schools, respondents said, still pursued a policy of concealment, but in an increasing number of cases problems had become so overwhelming that principals were compelled not only to admit that a severe problem existed, but also to cooperate with and use the services of other agencies to a far greater degree. The sentiment "the schools are finally beginning to admit the seriousness of the problem" was also expressed in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Detroit, but in other cities, Chicago in particular, respondents described a contrasting situation.

Far from trying to conceal their gang problems, they reported, the schools were deliberately exaggerating them, in effect scapegoating the gangs in an attempt to cover up the schools' own inadequacies in handling problems of security, race relations, and so on. These contrasting pictures were in some cases reported by respondents in the same city.

The practice by gangs of using student bodies as a recruitment pool was reported for the two largest cities. In New York, as noted earlier, a respondent claimed the schools had "sold out" to the gangs, promising them free rein in recruiting students in return for pledges of nonviolence. In Chicago the problem of gang recruitment is seen as so serious that not only is recruitment into gangs banned by statute, the offense is classified as a felony. As in the case of the "concealment" issue, information on forced conscription and other aspects of gang recruitment is extremely fragmentary.

One might suppose that racial antagonism and its role in gang-related school violence would have been a major subject of concern. Somewhat surprisingly, none of the respondents in the four largest cities raised the race issue in connection with gang/school problems. The issue was raised, however, in Detroit and San Francisco, where gang problems were less serious. In both cities, concerns centered on the possibility of compulsory busing to solve problems of racial segregation. Respondents who raised this issue seemed convinced that additional mixing of racial or ethnic groups would spur gang formation. One position projected the likelihood that "defensive" gangs would form in schools now without gangs if students of different races were assigned to these schools. Evidence respecting such predictions is scanty, and it could also be argued that busing might serve to lessen the danger of gang problems in that it would weaken the territorial basis of gang formation and conflict.

The most detailed information on the impact on youth gang violence of cross-racial school busing was collected for the city of Boston—one of the nine site-surveyed gang-problem cities listed in table 6–3. In 1974, a Federal court ordered a program of citywide busing to achieve racial integration of the public schools. The program began that fall, was implemented in phases, and continued beyond the end of the decade. Intensive study of gang activity in Boston for the period between 1968 and 1980 focused on the relationship between the busing program and gang violence.[5]

The research failed to provide evidence for any simple or direct relationship between the busing program and gang violence. The program did affect group violence, but it did not spur formation of defensive gangs, as predicted by San Francisco respondents.

One reason for this, as well for the fact that Boston does not provide a generalizable case study of the impact of busing on gangs, is that Boston differed from most of the other major gang-problem cities in two respects: Its youth gangs were predominantly white, and feuding among named gangs was poorly developed. Most of Boston's gangs were neighborhood turf gangs rather than feuding gangs, and gang violence had traditionally consisted primarily of attacks on individuals or small groups seen as outsiders trespassing on gang turf rather than taking the form of inter-gang fighting.

The advent of the busing program intensified an already existing climate of racial antagonism. There was a marked increase in cross-racial collective violence by people at all age levels, not only by gang-aged youths. Hundreds of cross-racial confrontations occurred in and near the schools during the initial years of the busing program, forcing some schools to close down repeatedly, with many confrontations outside the schools. Schoolbuses were stoned. Racial fighting broke out in school hallways and playgrounds, and many people were hurt.

An analysis of about 200 reported incidents of collective violence in Boston during the 1970's showed a statistically significant increase over time in cross-racial incidents. During the first 5 years of the study period, about 35 percent of reported incidents involved antagonists of a different racial or ethnic status; during the second 5 years the figure was about 60 percent.[6]

But when one turns from the consideration of collective violence in general to the specific case of lethal violence by gangs and other types of law-violating youth groups, quite a different picture emerges. For the period between 1968 and 1980 all homicides were analyzed in which assailants, victims, or both were members of gangs or other types of law-violating youth groups[7]. For 68 of the killings, information was available on the racial or ethnic status of victims and assailants.[8] For the 6 years preceding the busing program, 45 percent of these incidents involved assailants and victims of different racial or ethnic status. For the next 6 years the figure was 51 percent. This increase of 6 percentage points in the proportion of cross-racial/ethnic killings is not statistically significant. Furthermore, of the 55 gang- or group-related killings recorded for the years 1975 to 1980, only one, a stabbing, actually occurred within a school building itself. A few more occurred in the immediate vicinity of the schools, but this was not a prevalent pattern. When one considers the large number of racially motivated beatings,

stabbings, and slashings that occurred in the schools, the fact that only one of these violent incidents resulted in death seems quite remarkable.

The analyses of incidents of collective violence and of gang-related killings thus indicate that the busing program produced an increase in cross-racial violence both within and outside the schools, but that it did not produce an increased development of named feuding gangs in the city and had little impact on the racial identity of victims or assailants in gang-related killings.

The reasons for this are not clear. As noted, the pattern of named feuding gangs is poorly developed in the city. Another important factor relates to school security. The busing program could not have been implemented without what local respondents called "a massive police presence" in the schools. During the first year of the program 50 heavily armed State troopers were stationed in one city high school. Under these circumstances, the likelihood that gangs could form and become active was low. This also explains why so much of the antagonism engendered by the busing program took the form of violence in local neighborhoods rather than in the schools.

Whatever the reasons, however, the evidence from Boston does not support contentions that a program of cross-racial busing would lead to the formation of new gangs and an increase in violence. If the school desegregation did have an effect on Boston's youth gangs, it was not readily discernable.

A final issue concerning gangs and schools is that of explanations for the activities and practices described here. The present report presents no systematic analysis of this very fundamental issue, and the reasons for increased gang problems in the schools constitute only one aspect of the larger problem of explaining changes in gang behavior.[9] However, it might be useful at this point simply to report some of the kinds of explanations forwarded by respondents, without attempting to relate them to one another or to any larger scheme. Most explanations concerned two issues: reasons for gang violence in the schools and the role of the schools in engendering the formation of gangs.

A New York respondent claimed that as the schools increasingly lost their capacity to control students, the students were forced out onto the streets, where they then formed into gangs as a natural development. Respondents in New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia also attributed the spread of gangs to school policies; when schools transferred particularly difficult students who were also gang members to other schools, the transferred students then formed new gangs or branches of gangs, thus spreading rather than confining gang problems. In Chicago respondents explained the erosion of teacher authority over gang members in racial or ethnic terms, but described different processes for black and Hispanic gang members. A black ex-teacher claimed that black nationalism had undermined the legitimacy of institutional authority, and particularly school authority, for black youth, without replacing it with any alternative basis of authority. A worker with Hispanic gangs claimed that Hispanic notions of honor made it impossible for a gang member to accept the authority of the teacher without suffering a serious loss of face in the eyes of his gangmates.

School policies were widely blamed for contributing to gang formation. Some said classes were so large that teachers could not possibly exert effective discipline. Others claimed that the training of teachers equipped them very poorly to deal with persons of different ethnic or subcultural backgrounds. Others said teachers had become too permissive, and that students mistook kindness for weakness. Several respondents enunciated a strong indictment of the schools on the grounds that educational policies had failed to inculcate gang members with any sense of identification with or allegiance to the larger social order, thus providing no basis for transcending the immediate perceptions, values, and bases of prestige delineated by the subculture of the gang.

Explanations in this area, as in others, showed little mutual articulation, and in some instances were contradictory.

Local respondents failed to address directly the question of why gang-school problems seemed to be a more serious in the 1970's than in the past, and even tentative answers would require further analysis. One speculative answer concerns the theory of the New York respondent who claimed that the schools' "holding power" had weakened, thus forcing adolescents onto the streets and into gangs. It appears equally likely that the public schools in the 1970's were "holding" more rather than fewer gang-prone youth. Prior to the rights movement of the 1960's, the schools controlled a variety of methods for extruding youth who posed the most serious discipline problems—among whom gang members rank high. These methods included early release for work-related purposes, "continuation" or disciplinary schools, and of course, expulsion.

During the 1970's there was increasing pressure on the schools to "hold" the maximum number of school-aged adolescents—particularly those from minority or low-income communities. Many of the methods by which the schools had been able to extrude problem youth became less available. This chapter has presented examples of gang activities (extortion, gang fighting) that formerly were practiced primarily in the community rather than in the privileged sanctuary of the schools. It is not unreasonable to speculate that as more gang members are constrained to spend more of their waking hours *within* the spatial orbit of the public schools, they become more likely to bring into that orbit those patterns of behavior whose practice had formerly been confined to the outside.

Summary

Gang violence and other gang activities in the public schools commanded an unprecedented degree of attention and concern in the 1970's. One reason was the range and character of such activities both in school buildings and their environs. Gangs in gang-problem cities were operating at all three public school levels—elementary, junior high or middle school, and senior high. In many instances, several gangs, often rivals, operated within the same school—often two or three gangs, and in extreme cases, eight or more—creating a high potential for intergang conflict. Gangs engaged in serious assaultive behavior within the schools—shootings, stabbings, beatings—with other gang members, teachers, and fellow students as victims.

Gang members above school age or out of school for other reasons customarily frequented school environs, impeding or interdicting passage or entry by nongang students, attacking rival gang members leaving or going to school, engaging in gang combat, and defacing and destroying school property. In some cities, gang members in school openly wore jackets or sweaters bearing their gang names, and in other cities assumed some distinctive form of dress or adornment. Through threats of violence, in some instances carried out, gang members so terrorized many teachers that they were afraid to report their illegal activities to school authorities, let alone lodge formal complaints with the police or appear as witnesses in court.

To a degree never before reported, gang members "territorialized" school buildings and their environs—making claims of ownership of particular classrooms, gyms, cafeterias, sports facilities, and the like—in some cases applying ownership claims to the entire school. As "owners" of school facilities, gang members assumed the right to collect "fees" from other students for a variety of "privileges"—attending school at all, passing through hallways, using gym facilities, and, perhaps most common, that of protection, the privilege of not being assaulted while in school. Gang members covered the walls of school facilities with the names and membership of their gangs and engaged in serious destruction of school property, ranging from breaking out windows to wholesale damage and looting of schools and school equipment. In the two largest cities, gang members reportedly used the student bodies of particular schools as recruitment pools, in some instances with the complicity of schools authorities—fearful lest their refusal to permit this practice would provoke gang attacks.

In the face of such activities, many cities were forced to institute substantially increased security measures—including stationing uniformed policemen in the schools, use of special school security forces, enlistment of citizen volunteers to perform security functions, and the use of citywide mobile emergency response teams, ready to move rapidly to city schools when violent incidents occurred. No cost figures for such security measures are available, but in one city the cost of security for the schools was second only to that of the entire municipal police force.

Traditionally, school principals and other administrators have been extremely reluctant to admit to outsiders the existence of violence within the schools, seeing such violence as a reflection on their own capacity to maintain discipline and control. In the 1970's, however, gang-related crime and violence became so severe that many principals were forced to admit the gravity of the problem and their inability to cope with it, and enlisted the help of outside agencies. In some instances principals reversed the traditional policy of concealment and in fact exaggerated the severity of violent incidents in their schools, in an effort to persuade outsiders of the seriousness of their needs.

Authorities in cities facing the prospect of court-ordered busing to achieve increased ethnic or racial mixing of student bodies expected such policies to aggravate existing gang problems, fearing that newcomers from communities with gang traditions would either import these traditions to new schools, force the formation of defensive gangs in new schools, or both. Evidence on the impact of such busing programs on gang activity was not collected on a systematic basis. However, evidence from one city, Boston, does not support the notion that

implementing this type of busing program in a metropolitan area with a tradition of youth gangs will produce a significant increase in the number of gangs or lethal gang violence.

Reasons for an apparently unprecedented proliferation of gangs, gang violence, and other illegal gang activities in urban schools in the 1970's are poorly understood. Professionals, taken unaware by the intensity of these developments, had not developed generally accepted explanations. Reasons they did present were fragmentary, poorly articulated, and sometimes contradictory. One possible explanation is that gang members in the 1970's imported into the formerly "neutral-ground" school environment activities such as gang fighting and extortion whose practice was previously confined primarily to the community. This suggests that the schools were "holding" within their confines a considerably larger number of youth from communities with gang traditions than formerly was the case, and that these youths, their opportunities to engage in gang activities in the community thus curtailed, transferred them to the school milieu.

Other explanations center on the notion of a societywide and/or ethnically specific diminution in the acceptance by youth of official authority, including educational authority; increased anger and frustration by minority youth against the institutions of the dominant society; and failure by the schools to inculcate a sense of social responsibility or affiliation with the larger society.

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Most of the 10 rather brief references to gangs and the schools in Thrasher (F. Thrasher, 1927, previously cited) illustrate vividly the contrast between the gangs of the 1920's and the 1970's. One gang "dared not openly defy" school authorities: the author notes the sanctity of the school as "neutral territory." M. Klein, Street Gangs and Street Workers, Prentice Hall, 1971, incudes two brief discussions of gangs and schools, focused primarily on methods of behavior change rather than descriptions of gang activities.

2. U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, Challenge for the Third Century: Education in a Safe Environment. Final Report on the Nature and Prevention of School Violence and Vandalism, Report by Senator Birch Bayh, Chairman, to the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, February 1977.

3. A chart listing the names and sizes of gangs around senior high schools in Los Angeles appears in the report cited in note 2 above.

4. See report cited above, pp. 41-43.

5. See W. Miller, July 1979, cited previously.

6. Information was tabulated on 192 incidents of collective violence involving youths that occurred between the years 1968 and 1977. Incidents were coded according to location, racial/ethnic status of participants, character of violence, and other characteristics, and divided into time periods for phase analysis.

7. See chart 1-3, chapter 1, for a typology of law-violating youth groups.

8. Categorization according to racial/ethnic status followed the usage of the 1970's rather than those of earlier periods. Thus, persons of European and other origins were classified as "white" rather than according to country of origin. Asians were categorized according to country of origin (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese), persons of African origin as "black," and persons with Spanish-language background as "Hispanic" regardless of country of origin.

9. See U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, report cited above (pp. 21-37) for a discussion of causes.

9. Collective Youth Crime: Character and Prospects

Street crime—the victimization of the citizenry by directly inflicted violence and theft—ranked among the most serious domestic problems of the 1970's. As in past decades, there was some disagreement among professionals on the actual amount and rate of increase in street crime, but there was little disagreement with a widespread perception that the level of such crime, whatever its exact volume, was simply unacceptable in one of the world's richest and most powerful nations.

Despite extensive media coverage of street crime and volumes of statistics produced by criminal justice agencies, substantial gaps remain in our knowledge of this critical problem. Among the more conspicuous of these gaps is information on the role of groups of youths in the commission of street crimes. Although most criminal justice professionals accept the notion that adolescents acting together are responsible for a significant portion of street crime—a notion shared by many citizens—there is very little substantiated information on just how much crime these groups commit, the kinds of crime they commit, the forms of the groups, how many there are, and where they are located.

Not only is accurate information on collective youth crime in short supply, a surprising amount of what is accepted as accurate, by both professionals and the public, is simply wrong. An excellent example of this appears in official assessments of crime problems posed by street gangs—a major type of law-violating youth group. In the late 1960's and the early 1970's, three multivolume reports, each presenting comprehensive reviews of a wide range of major crime problems in the United States, were prepared by the staffs of Federal commissions. The commissions were The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967), The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (1969), and The National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973). While the reports varied in the nature and degree of attention devoted to youth gangs, all three conveyed a similar message: youth gangs are not now and should not become a major object of concern; violence by youth gangs does not pose a significant threat; what violence may exist or develop can quite readily be diverted into constructive channels, primarily through services provided by community-based agencies. The problem of crime by groups other than gangs was almost entirely ignored.[1]

The findings of the present report diverge radically from those of the Federal commissions. Gang problems were indeed less serious in some localities during the period covered by the commission reports, but gang violence had by no means disappeared as a national problem. Tabulations presented here show that there were a minimum of 1,300 gang-related killings in U.S. cities between 1967 and 1973—the period covered by the Federal reports. These data do not support the commissions' conclusion that problems of gang violence were negligible.

In the 1970's there was growing recognition of the severity of the problem of street crime and the need for more effective methods of dealing with it. This report has shown that law-violating youth groups, including gangs, are responsible for an enormous amount of such crime. One might suppose that a body of accurate and detailed national-level information on such groups would be an absolutely indispensable element of any national policy aimed at the prevention and control of street crime. Yet no such information has ever been collected by any public agency.

The present report represents the first attempt to assemble national-level information on the character and extent of collective youth crime. The substance of the report will be summarized by presenting, in condensed form, its major findings on the prevalence, location, numbers, criminal activities, and social characteristics of law-violating youth groups during the 1970's. But before proceeding to this summary, it is necessary to discuss briefly several of its major terms, whose meaning, as used here, either differs from or is not part of common usage.

The principal object of examination in this report is "collective youth crime," defined as illegal activity engaged in by groups of youths, or by individuals affiliated with such groups. The most general term for these groups is "law-violating group," defined as an association of three or more youths whose members engage recurrently in illegal activities with the cooperation and/or moral support of their companions. There are many different kinds of law-violating youth groups in the United States, distinguishable on the basis of their most characteristic form of illegal activity and other features. They include robbery bands, burglary rings, larceny cliques, disruptive local groups, and others.

Particular attention is paid to a type of group most frequently referred to as a "youth gang" or "street gang." The term youth gang is used here, and is defined on the basis of characteristics provided by about 300 criminal justice and youth service workers located in all parts of the country. Youth gangs are defined as self-formed associations of peers, united by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership and internal organization, who act collectively or as individuals to achieve specific purposes, including the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or enterprise.

Summary of Survey Findings

Estimates based on information from a selected group of cities indicate that there were approximately 120,000 law-violating youth groups in the 2,100 U.S. cities and towns of 10,000 and over. These groups contained about 1.5 million members—a number equal to about one-fifth the number of male adolescents in these communities.

Problems with youth gangs were widespread. Gang problems were reported for half of the nation's large (over 1 million) metropolitan areas, containing about 63 percent of the population of such areas. Among large (over one million) cities, gang problems were reported for 41—over one-quarter their number with over half their population. Of the six largest cities, gang problems were reported for five, containing 92 percent of their population.

The West contained the highest number of large gang-problem cities, with over one-half of all such cities, while the Northeast ranked first in the total population of large gang-problem cities, with 42 percent of the population of such cities. The West ranked second in gang-city population, taking over this position from the Midwest.

Among States, the highest concentration of gang-problem localities was found in California. With 13 percent of the nation's large cities, it contained about half of its large gang-problem cities. Gang problems were reported for 11 of the State's 17 metropolitan areas, and for 103 cities and towns containing half the State's population and 60 percent of the metropolitan area population. The heaviest concentration of gang problems was found in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, where 80 cities containing 87 percent of the urban population reported such problems.

Gang problems in California were found in an unexpectedly large number of smaller cities and towns; 80 percent of the gang-problem cities were smaller than 100,000 and 20 percent smaller than 20,000. Because gangs traditionally have been found primarily in the largest cities, their presence in so many smaller communities represented a new development.

Indeed, in the 1970's, the 10 largest gang-problem cities, with about one-fifth the large-city population, contained just about half the gangs. However, the other half, with about one-third of all gang members, were found in cities smaller than 500,000, reflecting the situation in California.

As to the numbers of gangs and gang members, there were about 2,300 youth gangs with almost 100,000 members in approximately 300 U.S. cities and towns. Gangs made up about 2 percent of the number of law-violating youth groups, and gang members about 7 percent of the number of all group members. Although small relative to the membership of all groups, the number of gang members was just about twice the number of juveniles confined in all jails and detention facilities in the country. The number of cities with gang problems was about 10 times the number commonly recognized.

Contrary to expectations, there was no simple relationship between the size of cities and numbers of gangs and gang members. Analysis of the 10 largest gang cities as well as the total of 286 gang cities showed that larger cities did tend to have larger numbers of gangs and gang members, but that the association between per capita rates and city size was poor. The proportionate numbers of gangs, or the "density" of gangs in a particular city was related to factors other than city size as such.

Information on the presence and seriousness of problems with gangs was obtained through interviews in 23 large U.S. cities containing over half the population of all such cities. Problems with youth gangs were reported in 22 of the 23, and problems with groups other than gangs in all 23. In five cities (Newark, Dallas, Milwaukee, St. Louis, New Orleans), a minority of respondents reported gang problems; in eight cities (Washington, Cleveland, St. Paul, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Denver, Minneapolis, Fort Worth), a majority but less than 90 percent

reported such problems; in nine cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Miami, Detroit, San Antonio, Boston), 90 percent or more reported gang problems. These nine were designated "gang-problem" cities. The other 14 cities were not so designated. The one city where no respondent reported gang problems was Houston, but developments subsequent to the site-visit period suggested the emergence of such problems.

Asked to rate the seriousness of gang problems on a 1-to-10 scale, with the 8-10 range representing the most serious local crime problems (e.g., high homicide rates), respondents in all nine gang-problem cities rated the seriousness of youth gang crime at 5 or higher.

Although estimates indicated that law-violating youth groups other than gangs were about 50 times as common as gangs, and group members about 15 times as numerous as gang members, even less information was available on such groups. The numbers of these groups was approximated by collecting information on the numbers and sizes of one of the most common types of group—the disruptive local group—in 13 major U.S. cities, and using these figures as a basis for estimating their numbers nationally. The 13 cities, ranging in size from 300,000 to 800,000, were Dallas, San Antonio, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Boston, St. Louis, Denver, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Newark, Fort Worth, Miami, and St. Paul. Figures provided by local respondents indicated the presence in these cities of about 9,200 disruptive local groups with about 107,000 members—an average of 700 groups and 8,250 group members per city.

These figures, along with additional data from a group of smaller cities, provided the basis for estimating that there were about 116,000 disruptive local groups with about 1.4 million members in the 2,100 U.S. cities of 10,000 and over. Group membership was equal to about 18 percent of the male youth population.

Unlike the situation for gangs, where there was some relation between numbers of gangs and the size of the cities, there was virtually no relationship between city size and the number of groups, number of group members, or group size. The numbers and sizes of the groups were related to community characteristics other than size.

Also unlike the situation for gangs, where problems were reported by under 90 percent of local respondents in 14 of 23 cities, respondents in all 23 cities as well as in 2 urban-area counties were virtually unanimous in reporting problems with groups other than gangs. Moreover, the degree of seriousness accorded group problems in the average city was higher than that accorded gang problems in the nine gang-problem cities.

These findings indicate that problems with law-violating youth groups other than gangs—a crime problem almost totally excluded from systematic consideration by criminal justice researchers and practitioners—were far more widespread than problems with gangs and regarded by many as more serious.

This does not mean, however, that they did in fact pose a more serious crime problem. Gang crime is generally much more violent, gangs are larger and concentrated in the largest cities, and

their presence in almost 300 U.S. cities and towns in the 1970's indicates that gangs were far more prevalent than previously supposed. Groups accounted for a larger volume of less serious crime, gangs for a smaller volume of more serious crime. Which of the two posed the greater problem is a policy issue.

The presence of youth gangs in hundreds of cities, and of youth groups in thousands, does not in itself pose a serious problem. The problem lies in the criminal activity of these groups and the severity of its threat to the citizenry. As already noted, no public agency collects national-level information on collective youth crime. Findings presented here on the volume and character of such crime, and how these compare to the volume and character of nongroup crime, are based on the best data available, but the spotty quality of much of the data as well as major gaps in the information place limits on the reliability of the findings.

Crime by youth gangs, as just noted, is generally more serious than crime by nongang groups. Findings on gang crime will be reviewed first. Murder is the most serious form of street crime, and murder plays a major role in the criminal activity of gangs. Although gang-related homicides were accorded more publicity during the 1970's than during any previous period, Federal compilations of crime statistics have not maintained a separate category for gang-related killings. This report presents the first national-level compilation of gang-related homicides for an extended time period; however, because of major gaps in the data, present figures probably represent a substantial undercount.

Approximately 3,400 gang-related killings were reported for about 60 cities during the 13-year period preceding 1980. Between 1972 and 1979, the number of reported gang killings in the Nation's three largest cities was equal to about 15 percent of the homicide arrests of minors and 34 percent of arrests of juveniles. Because gang members totaled about 6 percent of the male adolescent population of these cities, their overcontribution to homicide was substantial. In 1979, the latest year for which comparative data were available, the number of gang-related killings nationally was equal to 17 percent of the homicide arrests of minors in all U.S. cities, and a striking 43 percent of the arrests of juveniles.

The 9 site-surveyed gang-problem cities averaged 22 gang-related killings a year during the period from 1969 through 1979, or 16 killings a year per 100,000 male youth. Los Angeles ranked highest in both numbers and rates of homicides, with a yearly average of 75 killings and a rate of 32 killings per 100,000 male youth. Chicago ranked second and Philadelphia third.

While there was a good deal of fluctuation in the yearly number of gang killings in each of the nine cities, there was no pattern of fluctuation common to all cities. The peak years for killings in the various cities were spread out over the decade rather than clustering around particular years. Killings peaked in New York in 1972; in Philadelphia in 1970; in Chicago in 1967 and 1979. This makes it difficult to show any relation between fluctuations in gang killings and fluctuations in national conditions such as unemployment, income levels, housing, race relations, or patterns of alcohol/drug use.

For all 60 cities with gang-homicide data, however, the general trend during the study period was quite clear. Numbers and rates of gang-related homicides increased substantially. During a 13-year period when homicide arrests of juveniles and minors in all U.S. cities doubled, the number of gang-related homicides increased by 3 to 3½ times. Adjusting these figures for population size and changes shows an even greater difference; homicide arrests of juveniles increased by 40 percent, and arrests of minors by 50 percent during a period when gang homicides rose by over 200 percent. While it is possible that recorded increases in some locations may have been due in part to better reporting, the bulk of evidence nationwide indicates that the increases were real.

The pattern of offenses for which gang members were arrested differed markedly from that of nongang youth. New York data showed that gang members were arrested in significantly higher proportions for robbery, rape, assault, and weapons violations, and in significantly lower proportions for drug violations and disorderly conduct. Robbery ranked first as a basis of gang member arrests, while drug use ranked first for nongang members. These and other findings demonstrate that gang members are distinguished from other youths by the high level of their involvement in the most serious forms of violent crime.

The proportion of youth crime committed by gang members is substantially greater than their numbers, and their offenses are substantially more violent than those of other youth. But because the number of gang members is small relative to that of all youths who commit crimes—well under 10 percent in most communities—they are not responsible for most youth crime, or even for most collective youth crime. In the three largest cities youth other than gang members accounted for 60 percent of arrests for violent crime and 90 percent of arrests for all offenses.

Most youth crime is committed by unaffiliated youths or by members of groups other than gangs. Just how much is committed by group members is not known, because information in this area is very poor. However, it is important for policy purposes to provide some estimate of the amount of crime committed by members of law-violating youth groups. Estimates based on available statistics indicate that group members are responsible for about half of all street crime, and almost three-quarters of crimes by juveniles. Both gangs and other types of youth groups make a very substantial contribution to the amount and seriousness of street crime in the United States.

Violence by gang members in the 1970's took many forms. The classic "rumble" continued to play a part in gang feuding, but forays by small bands, armed and often motorized, appeared to have become the dominant form of intergang violence. A prevalent belief that nongang members had become the major victims of gang violence was not supported by available evidence; however, there did appear to be a definite trend toward increased victimization of adults and children, particularly in the largest cities. Gang member violence appeared as well to be increasingly motivated by a desire for material gain and a related desire to exert control over public facilities and resources.

Probably the single most significant development affecting gang violence was an extraordinary increase in the availability of firearms. This, in all likelihood, was the major reason behind the increasingly lethal nature of gang violence.

The 1970's were unique in the degree to which gang activities were found within the public schools. Gangs were active in schools at all three levels—elementary, junior, and senior high. In some city schools gangs claimed control over the school itself or over various rooms and facilities, with such control involving the right to set disciplinary policy; the right to collect fees from fellow students for such privileges as attending school, traversing the corridors, and not being subject to gang beatings; and the right to forbid teachers and other school staff from reporting their illegal activities to authorities. Largely as a consequence of such gang activities, many city schools were forced to adopt security measures of unprecedented scope and to abandon a traditional policy of handling student discipline as an internal problem.

Social characteristics of gang members resembled those reported for earlier periods, although some changes were reported. As in the past, gang members were predominantly male; ranged in age from about 10 to 21; originated in slum, ghetto, and barrio districts; and belonged to those ethnic groups most heavily represented in the lowest educational and occupational categories. Members of groups other than gangs showed wider variation in their gender, locality, and social class backgrounds.

During the 1970's the age range of gang members showed some expansion both at lower and upper levels. Most group members were in their early and middle teens. Low-income districts remained the primary location of gangs, but many of these were located in "outer" as well as "inner" city areas, and some in suburbs and smaller communities as well. Groups other than gangs were found in a wide range of communities, varying greatly in size, location, and social class composition. The social class status of many group members was higher than that of most gang members, with groups containing many working-class youths and some from middle-class backgrounds.

There was no majority ethnic category for gangs. Hispanics and blacks made up the bulk of the gang population, but the number of Asian gangs—Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, and others—was on the increase. Group members encompassed a wider range of ethnic backgrounds, with Anglos, in particular, being much more heavily represented in groups than in gangs.

A General Evaluation of Collective Youth Crime

A large number of specific findings on the character of collective youth crime in the United States during the period of the national survey has just been summarized; the final section of this report will use these findings to construct a more general picture of collective youth crime, compare it to the past, and speculate on its future.

Comparing more recent circumstances with those of the past is very risky, primarily because there is so little good information. Data on many of the topics covered here simply were not

collected in the past, and information on other topics is fragmentary, limited in scope, or both. Furthermore, the tendency to use mythicized images of the past in making comparisons with the present is unusually well-developed in this area. The character and activities of gangs and groups in past generations is distorted through a process of image building and dramatization, often based on romanticized recollections of the youthful experiences of the observer. These processes lead some to play up the seriousness of past circumstances, and others to play it down. The overplay process centers on the sentiment, "These kids today think they are tough; in *my* day . . . "; the more common underplay process on the notion, "We may have gotten into some trouble now and then, but it was nothing compared to kids today. . ."

Despite these informational problems, it is important for policy purposes to make some sort of judgment on how more recent problems of collective crime compare to those of the past. Were they better? Worse? About the same? Acknowledging the risk in making comparisons based on inadequate data and the perpetual tendency to view with shock and horror the moral deterioration of "today's youth," the following conclusions seem justified.

- Crime by members of youth gangs and other youth groups during the 1970's was more serious, more widespread, and more violent than at any time in the history of the Republic.

- There were more law-violating youth groups and group members in the United States than at any time in the past.

- Youth gangs were active in more cities than at any other time.

- There was a higher concentration of gangs in a single metropolitan area than ever before.

- Gang crime was more lethal than any time in history; more people were shot, stabbed, and beaten to death in gang-related incidents than during any previous decade.

- The amount of street crime committed by members of gangs and other kinds of groups reached an all-time high.

- The scope and variety of collective youth crime was greater than at any time during the past; there was an unprecedented proliferation of predatory activities by groups other than gangs—particularly robbery, looting, burglary, larceny, and extortion.

- Members of gangs and other groups were more heavily armed than any time in the past. Such groups have always used weapons, but the prevalence and sophistication of firearms used in the 1970's was unprecedented.

- The amount of property destruction by gangs and groups through vandalism and arson of schools, residential and commercial buildings, and automobiles was more extensive and costly than in any previous decade.

- Criminal activity by gangs and groups in and around the public schools—assault, intimidation, extortion, vandalism—reached unprecedented levels in the 1970's.

Change and Continuity

It seems clear that the law-violating youth groups of the 1970's differed from those of the past in that the crime problems they posed were more serious. But that does not mean that the general character of the groups and their activities represented a definitive new development. Comparing collective youth crime in the 1970's with that of previous periods shows a complex pattern of change and continuity rather than a sharp break with the past. Some of the components of this pattern will be reviewed briefly.

As in the past, most members of youth gangs were male. Despite some potential for increased female involvement in crime related to the emphasis of the women's movement during this period and apparent increase in female participation in some of the smaller types of predatory groups, gangs retained their traditionally male character, with females continuing to play their traditional roles of auxiliaries and supporters of largely male-run enterprises.

The age span of youth gang members remained close to its traditional range of about 10 to 21. There were, however, developments involving participation of both younger and older persons. Participation by younger persons was affected by a practice adopted by a fair number of predatory groups—that of assigning the actual execution of certain crimes (e.g., drug pickups, housebreaks) to persons classified as "juveniles" (below 15, 16, or 17) to take advantage of the milder penalties customarily meted out to such persons. There were also indications that the average age of members of predatory groups such as burglary rings and robbery bands was lower (14 or 15) than in the past.

Among developments affecting participation at older ages was an apparent increase in the tendency for some members of Hispanic gangs ("Veteranos" in some areas) to maintain an explicit gang affiliation well into adulthood. Some localities also reported increases in the proportion of gang crime committed by gang members in the older age categories. Other age changes involved two kinds of groups traditionally differentiated from youth gangs—motorcycle gangs and prison gangs. The line between the predominantly adolescent youth gangs and the predominantly adult cycle gangs (members generally in their twenties, thirties, and forties) appeared to have blurred in the 1970's with some youth gangs becoming motorized, and some cycle gangs accepting younger members.

A major development of the 1970's in several States was the burgeoning of named prison gangs, some of which acquired an unusual amount of power. Most members of these gangs were in

their twenties and older. The relation of the prison gangs to youth gangs is not well understood. In some areas (e.g., Illinois), the prison gangs were closely related to, and clearly originated from, well-known community youth gangs. In other areas (e.g., California), the origins of the powerful prison gangs cannot be readily traced to preexisting youth gangs in particular communities.

The ethnic or national background of gang members in the 1970's appears at first glance to represent a marked change from the past. In the 1920's and 1930's most youth gang members were of Irish, Italian, Jewish, Slavic, and other religious or ethnic European backgrounds; in the 1970's most gang members were of African, Asian, and non-European Hispanic backgrounds. But despite the differences in the actual ethnic identities of gang members, their ethnic status during both periods reflected the same principle; gangs were composed primarily of those ethnic categories designated as minorities during that period. Except for blacks, these were the more recently arrived, less assimilated national groups.

During the 1970's, Hispanics moved into first place as the ethnic category with the largest number of gang members; blacks ranked second, and Anglos third. The number of Asians, while still the lowest of the ethnic groups, was rapidly increasing. As in the past, the members of most gangs shared the same ethnic status, and rivals in most gang fighting belonged to the same ethnic category.

The 1970's saw both changes and continuities in the numbers, kinds, and locations of communities where law-violating youth groups were found. As in the past, most of the more seriously criminal youth gangs were located in the slums, ghettos, and barrios of large cities. But, as noted, these districts were increasingly found in "outer" city and suburban locales. The 1970's also witnessed an unprecedented spread of gangs to smaller cities, particularly in California. What appeared to many as an even greater spread was in all probability a consequence of the proliferation of nongang groups such as burglary rings, disruptive local groups, and larceny cliques in communities of all kinds—urban, suburban, and rural.

Despite perennial reports of middle-class gangs, such groups continued to be very rare. An increased likelihood of finding group members of higher social status was due primarily to the presence of nongang groups in many working-class and even some middle-class communities.

Patterns of drug and alcohol use showed more continuity than change. Traditionally, gang members have used a mix of alcoholic and narcotic substances; this practice continued. During the 1960's the use of drugs increased relative to alcohol; the 1970's saw an upturn in the popularity of drinking, and the use of alcohol increased relative to drugs. Marijuana remained the major type of drug used by group members; its increased availability has conventionalized its use. As in the past, the use of "hard" drugs by group members was relatively limited; however, the extensive market in these substances has increasingly drawn in gang members as participants in drug distribution networks.

Turning from a consideration of collective youth crime itself to a consideration of efforts by the larger community to contain such crime, it would appear that developments of the 1970's showed more continuity than change. In past decades efforts to understand and alleviate the problem of criminal activity by law-violating youth groups have, by and large, been unsuccessful, and this tradition continued in the 1970's. In some respects the quality of remedial efforts became worse rather than better. A brief review will focus on developments in three areas—information, explanations, and programs.

The amount and quality of information on collective youth crime, as noted repeatedly in this report, was poor in the past and remained poor in the 1970's. With the partial exception of a limited number of localities experiencing unusually severe or protracted gang problems, systematic data collection by either public or private agencies was almost nonexistent. There were no provisions for centralized reporting to Federal agencies; the most comprehensive Federal compilation of crime statistics, the *Uniform Crime Reports*, provided no information on how much crime is collectively executed, let alone specifying what types of groups commit what types of crimes.

Among the few agencies that do collect statistics on gang crime, there is little uniformity in data-collection categories, making cross-jurisdictional comparisons difficult. Even figures released by different sections of the same agency, or by the same agency at different times, often show substantial divergences. As for information on nongang groups, no known agency, public or private, collects systematic information on the numbers, types, and criminal activities of the many thousands of such groups.

The criminal justice system was, and remains, focused almost exclusively on the individual as the unit for record keeping as well as processing. It has been unable or unwilling to accommodate its informational systems to the fact that most youth crime, and a substantial proportion of all crime, is collectively executed.

The possibility of developing effective programs for coping with collective youth crime is closely linked to the possibility of finding supportable answers to the question "Why is there so much collective youth crime in the United States?" But the amount of effort devoted to the task of developing comprehensive and well-grounded explanations was, in the 1970's, negligible. In this respect the decade represents a step backward, since researchers devoted considerably more attention to explanation in past decades.

The most conspicuous characteristic of explanational efforts during the 1970's was that of controversy. Reflecting a long-standing debate over the causes of crime in general, the explanational arena was peopled largely by champions of two competing doctrines—the "root-cause" and the "moral breakdown" positions. The former ascribed collective youth crime to basic societal conditions such as poverty, bigotry, discriminatory policies of criminal-justice agencies, inequality, unemployment, blocked opportunity, and meager outlays for social services. The latter put the blame on a progressive deterioration in the moral climate—reflected in a

dangerous weakening of individual responsibility, self-discipline, family solidarity, sexual mores, and religious ethics.

Most of the explanations forwarded by proponents of these positions grew out of the premises of established ideological positions rather than out of evidence provided by systematic information gathering. Thus, during the 1970's, the bulk of the intellectual energy devoted to explaining collective youth crime was consumed by a series of running ideological debates, and not by the collection and analysis of information specifically designed to enhance understanding of the reasons behind the contemporary character of such crime.

Although an examination of policies and programs is not included in this report, a general summary would be incomplete without some consideration of this critical issue. In the past, most programs and policies aimed at the reduction of collective youth crime have been ineffective, with results ranging from limited success to spectacular failure. This tradition continued during the 1970's.

One reason for this was a continuing set of controversies over what methods to use. Paralleling the dispute between "root-cause" and "moral breakdown" advocates, a major controversy pitted proponents of "hard" and "soft" approaches against each other. Hard-line advocates called for intensified arrests, swift and certain penalties, eliminating legal differences between adults and juveniles for crimes of equal seriousness, and assured incarceration of offenders in secure facilities for extended periods. Soft-line proponents advocated diverting the criminal energies of group members into constructive channels; enhanced provision of educational, occupational, therapeutic, and recreational services; and minimizing offender contacts with criminal justice agencies, preferably through treatment in the community.

Very few attempts were made in the 1970's to bring about any sort of working accommodation between proponents of these opposing positions, or to devise methods that utilized a mix of "hard" and "soft" methods adapted to the specific circumstances of particular communities.

Another reason involves the quality of personnel. There can be little doubt that the task of bringing about reductions in collective youth crime is not an easy one. The history of failures experienced by gang control programs—some of them sizable and well-financed—attests to the complexity and intransigence of the problem. Because the task is so difficult, effective programs would require highly capable personnel both for planning and for implementation. Unfortunately, the control of collective youth crime has attracted few persons of this caliber. Many workers are dedicated and conscientious, but the overall quality of personnel compares poorly, for example, with the quality of those who plan and execute programs to cope with problems in fields such as technology, economics, and health care.

With some exceptions, most of the programs of the 1970's were pedestrian and unimaginative; more than in many fields, a surprisingly high proportion of programmatic efforts utilized methods that have consistently failed to produce results for over half a century. Many program

planners ignored available research showing that these methods have had little or no favorable impact.

Prospects for more effective remedial programs would be greatly enhanced if the field were able to attract workers with the creativity to devise imaginative new approaches, the ingenuity to outwit the street-wise group members, and the courage to attempt innovative programs in the face of certain political risk. Unless the field can somehow bring in and keep workers at higher levels of competence, increased program effectiveness seems unlikely.

Despite the scarcity of effective programs, there were in the 1970's as in past decades, marked reductions in the seriousness of collective youth crime, and particularly of gang violence, in some U.S. communities. Traditionally, when the number of gang killings or group robberies decreases, law enforcement agencies, citing their hard-line tactics, claim the credit, and social service agencies, citing their service programs, claim the credit. This tradition continued in the 1970's.

During the decade, gang violence in New York and Philadelphia decreased substantially. Unfortunately, the reasons for this remain a mystery. Conflicting claims were forwarded by various service and criminal justice agencies, but there was little solid evidence to back them up.

A major reason for this was the failure of almost all remedial enterprises in the 1970's to include in their operations well-designed programs of evaluative research, using comparison groups and other elements of what has become a refined and sophisticated set of evaluation techniques. This was another backward step, because carefully designed evaluative research was included as part of gang-control programs in past decades. Had such research been conducted, the sharp local declines in gang violence might have produced a valuable legacy of information on just what factors, general and specific, were associated with the reductions, including information on which methods were more effective and which less. Such information could be of great value in the development of potentially more successful programs and policies.

Prospects for Collective Youth Crime

The findings of this report indicate that collective youth crime was more serious and more widespread in the 1970's than at any previous time in the Nation's history. Is there anything in these findings that can furnish clues to the future? What are prospects for coming decades?

Predicting trends in crime, as in other forms of human behavior, is risky. A major reason is that even the most knowledgeable experts are a long way from being able to forecast with any accuracy trends in the economy, in technology, in demography, in government, and in politics. But even if prediction in such areas were far better than it is, there would be little reduction in the risks of predicting trends in crime. This is because present knowledge about the relationship between crime and social conditions is extremely primitive.

There is no dearth of claims about what affects trends in criminal activity. Commonly cited are unemployment, permissive judicial policies, poverty, a decline of discipline in homes and schools, racial and ethnic discrimination, media violence, inadequate social services, general moral deterioration, unjust criminal justice practices, and more. Unfortunately, there is very little solid evidence that links any of these factors, singly or in combination, to changes in youth crime.

But despite the risks, it is important to make some appraisal of the prospects of collective youth crime. A major objective of this report is to provide an informational base for policy decisions. Despite considerable continuity in the general character of such crime, changes do occur, and effective policy should be geared as closely as possible to the circumstances of the next five years rather than those of the last five.

A possible starting point is the findings of this report on the conditions associated with serious gang problems. Despite the generally low level of consensus on what factors affect trends in youth crime in general, there was good consensus among survey respondents on what conditions were associated with serious gang crime. The most serious gang problems were found in low-income residential areas containing substantial numbers of adolescent males who belonged to the more recently immigrated ethnic groups or were black. Also associated with serious problems was a widespread availability of firearms and the use of motorized transport.

There was considerably less consensus on conditions associated with crime problems by youth groups other than gangs; however, there was some evidence that their activities were also facilitated by motorized transport and the availability of firearms, and many groups were located in communities whose characteristics resembled those associated with gangs.

Insofar as these findings are supportable, the question becomes—"Are there any reasonable grounds for expecting that the social conditions associated with the more serious kinds of collective youth crime in the 1970's will change so as to bring about a reduction in such crime?" The answer would seem to be "no."

Although some demographic evidence indicates a reduction both in the numbers and the proportions of adolescent males in coming years (the "baby boom" supposedly having ended) the predicted trends apply to the youth population as a whole, rather than specific subpopulations. Other projections indicate that the numbers of low-status minority youth will not decrease, and may even increase.[2] One factor that does not figure prominently in the baby bust projections is the growing number of "undocumented" immigrants in the slums, ghettos, and barrios of the United States. These populations do not play a major part in official population statistics, but they do swell the ranks of gangs and other law-violating youth groups. The fact that many of these immigrants are Hispanic, the ethnic category with the largest number of gang members in the 1970's, does not augur well for a reduction in the number of gangs. The spread of Hispanic gangs from larger to smaller cities in California is a major reason behind the increased number of smaller communities with gang problems.

As to the availability of firearms and motorized transport, there is little likelihood of any significant reduction in either. Despite continuing efforts by some to legislate increased gun control, this movement commands relatively little support among the majority of citizens, and the likelihood that fewer pistols, rifles, and shotguns will fall into the hands of youth group members seems poor. Nor does much reduction in the use of motorized transport appear in the offing; in fact, the opposite seems more likely. In addition to automobiles, motorized two-wheeled vehicles such as mopeds and smaller motorcycles are becoming more prevalent and are already being used by some gangs and local groups to facilitate crime.

Given the low likelihood of any significant changes in the major conditions associated with collective youth crime, members of gangs and other youth groups will almost certainly continue to contribute heavily to the volume of serious crime in the United States. Is there anything that could upset this pessimistic forecast?

A major Federal initiative directed specifically at the prevention and control of collective youth crime is one of the few logical policy options. The key term here is "initiative," not "Federal." The prevention and control of street crime has been and remains primarily a local responsibility. But local agencies, public and private, have been conspicuously unsuccessful in conceiving and mounting the kinds of efforts needed to alleviate collective youth crime; the ineffectiveness of the great majority of local programs stands as evidence.

If the national government does not take the initiative, chances for any significant reduction in collective youth crime are poor. This does not mean that Federal agencies should play a major role in implementing community programs; on the contrary, local agencies should continue to take major operational responsibilities. The Federal role should be that of initiation, program development, monitoring, and support of local efforts. This would require an explicit and clearly defined relationship between Federal, State, and local agencies.

The critical element, an element that cannot be provided locally, is a specific national commitment to the prevention and control of collective youth crime, implemented by a planning body with the capacity to develop imaginative programs, the flexibility to abandon unsuccessful approaches and try new ones, and the responsibility for careful evaluation of a range of remedial efforts. The likelihood that local agencies could develop such a policy is just about zero; the likelihood of such a development within the Federal Government is only slightly higher, but it *is* higher.

In the 1980's, resources to support domestic programs will be severely limited, both for Federal and local agencies. The allocation of these limited resources must be made on the basis of decisions on what is more and less crucial to the survival and well-being of the Nation.

The costs to our citizens of continuing or increasing levels of street crime are high and getting higher. An initiative with a good potential for reducing a major component of street crime—criminal activity by gangs and other groups—would be highly cost effective, both in human and economic terms. Without such an initiative, our country will continue to suffer the tragic

consequences of theft, violence, and disruption by its many thousands of law-violating youth groups.

Notes to Chapter 9

1. The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society and accompanying Task Force reports, The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967; Crimes of Violence, staff reports submitted to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969; Report on Community Crime Prevention, National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

2. See W. Miller 1975, cited previously, chapter 7, pp. 70-72, and F. Zimring, "Dealing With Youth Crime: National Needs and Priorities," report to the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Unpublished), October 1975.

Appendix A. Survey Interview Guide

Section I: Information with respect to local situation re: existence of gangs, nature of gang/youth activities, seriousness of problem, recent developments.

Section II: Information with respect to modes of dealing with gang and/or youth problems, including prevention programs.

I.1. What is your personal judgment as to whether there is a gang problem in this city?

I.1.A. If yes. How would you rate the seriousness of the problem on a scale from not serious at all through moderately serious, quite serious, extremely serious? If you prefer, use a 10-point scale with 1 representing the "least serious" point and 10 the "most serious." I would like you to rate the seriousness of the gang problem with respect to two problem areas:

I.1.A.1. With respect to other kinds of crime problems—e.g., robbery, burglary, mugging, drugs, rape, etc.

I.1.A.2. With respect to other kinds of noncrime problems faced by the city—e.g., housing, transportation, schools, unemployment, race relations, fiscal, etc.

I.1.A.3, 4,5,6,7
(optional) What is your judgment as to whether the 3. Police/ 4. Municipal Government/ 5. Schools/ 6. Social Agencies/ 7. Residents of the city/ feel that there is a gang problem?

I.1.B. If no. Are there problems with groups of youths? Street corner groups? Troublesome youth groups? Youth/juvenile burglary rings? Collective youth violence?

I.1.B.1. If yes. Rate seriousness as in I.1.A.

I.1.C. ("No gang problem.") Why not? (Cite existence of problem in nearest major and/or most comparable city.)

I.1.C.1. Are there any agencies or individuals in this city who do feel that there is a gang problem?

Probe: Agencies cited in I.1.A.3-7.

I.1.D. Was there ever a gang problem in this city? If so, when? How serious?

I.2. How would you define a "gang"?

I.3. (Possibly later, if appropriate.) Are there available through your agency/organization any reports or documents which contain information as to youth gangs/juvenile delinquency/local youth problems?

For Police: Annual report of PD? Your division?

For Social Service: Information re: your agency/service caseload? Periodicals relevant to your work?

Particularly interested in information re: numbers of gangs, sizes, locations in city, ethnic/racial status, degree of "organization," leadership. Names/not named, major kinds of activity, major kinds of offenses, degree of violence/violent offenses, gang-connected homicides.

I.3.A. If no reports, or information not in reports, query selectively/as appropriate from Gang Information Topic List.

I.3.B. Do you know of, or have available, any reports on gang situation, (youth crime/juvenile delinquency situation) produced by other organizations such as legislative committees, special committees, study groups, academic research groups, etc.?

I.4. What would you say are the most significant recent developments (for "recent" use a time period appropriate to, or related to specific events of, that city) with respect to activities, behavior patterns, of gangs/youth groups/ troublesome youth in this city?

I.5. (Recapitulate developments cited.) How would you explain, what seems to lie behind, the developments you have mentioned? If increase or emergence of gangs/group violence is not cited as a development, ask why increase or emergence.

I.6. Probe from Topic List.

Query as appropriate, situation with respect to Topic List items # A) Not cited under, or known to be contained in materials available under, I.3.B.) Not cited under I.4.

II. Methods, Procedures, Programs

II.1. Considering all the efforts of <u>all</u> agencies and organizations in this city working on the youth gang/youth crime problem, (not just your own), and the programs being carried out in all parts of the city, how would you characterize the totality of these efforts—

II.1.A. On an effectiveness scale, with "extremely effective" at one end and "completely ineffective" at the other? (Cite intermediate points—quite effective, moderately effective, so-so, rather ineffective, very ineffective)?

II.1.B. On a "coordinated-uncoordinated" scale, with fragmented, uncoordinated, low cooperation at one end, and organized, coordinated, cooperative, at the other?

II.2. What would you say is/are the major technique(s), methods, approaches, procedures, used by your agency in coping with the youth gang/youth crime problem?

For PD: Any special unit/officers specializing in youth gang work? Juvenile work? Special youth programs?

For Social Agencies: Any area worker/community worker/detached worker/outreach programs?

If yes, size of staff engaged in this work (possible, place in organizational system).

II.3. What would you say is/are the major philosophy (theory) underlying this approach, the use of this method?

Probe: Exposition of "service-oriented" versus "enforcement-oriented" positions (deprivation-extensive service versus welfare of citizens, small group of offenders. (Where appropriate/necessary, questions II.2. and II.3. can be combined into one.)

II.3.A. (optional) Are there any studies, reports, dealing with:

(1) The methods used by your agency.
(2) Evaluational studies of effectiveness.

II.4. If you were given completely unlimited financial resources (a blank check, $10 million budget, billion dollar budget) what would you do, propose, plan, to do about the youth gang/youth group/youth violence/juvenile delinquency problem in this city?

II.5. What is your prediction as to what will happen in this city during the next year, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years?

II.5.A. If gang problem; to gangs, gang violence?

II.5.B. If groups, no gangs, or no gang problem; what likelihood that groups will become gangs, gangs develop, youth group problem become worse?

II.5.C. If neither groups, gangs, gang problem; with the general youth crime/youth violence/juvenile delinquency problem/situation?

Gang Information Topics

1. Numbers of gangs, youth groups.
2. Sizes of gangs, youth groups; branches, lateral development.
3. Existence of different age-levels (e.g. midgets, pee-wees, juniors, etc.). General age range of gang members.
4. Existence of territoriality, "turf" principle.
5. Existence of names, "labels."
6. Existence of sweaters, jackets, "colors," special forms of dress, hairstyles, etc.
7. How well "organized"; leadership. Forced recruitment?
8. Ethnic/racial status of gangs, groups.
9. Existence of female gangs, gang members, auxiliaries, branches.
10. Existence of conflict between gangs, groups; rival neighborhood groups, high-school groups, etc. Severity of conflict, occurrence of gang-related homicides, injuries.
11. Use of, prevalence of, guns, other kinds of weapons.
12. Major forms of illegal activities (e.g., robbery, extortion, burglary, mugging, etc.).
13. Use of, prevalence of, drugs; kinds of drugs used, including alcohol.
14. Major forms of recreation, athletic, legitimate leisure-time activities, including jobs, employment.
15. Sections, areas, of city where gangs/groups most active; general socioeconomic level of area.
16. Favored kinds of hangouts (e.g., stores, hamburger/pizza restaurants/stands, playgrounds, street corners, schools, etc.).
17. Involvement with, relations with, schools; reports of school gangs, student gangs, gang influence in jr./sr. high schools.
18. Relations with, involvement with, adult criminals, organized crime, syndicate, rackets.
19. Involvement in local, municipal, politics/political activity.
20. Involvement with political/ideological movements (e.g. Muslims, Panthers, Young Lords, White Supremacy organizations, etc.).
21. Involvement with, relations with, local citizens associations (e.g., Citizen Action groups, citizen policing, security groups).
22. Relations with, involvement in, youth correctional institutions.

23. Involvement with Federal/State programs (e.g., Job Corps. NYC, HUD, OEO, LEAA, SPA, etc.)

24. Gang/groups situation in suburbs re urban situation.

Appendix B. Large Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas Containing Cities Reporting Youth Gang Problems 1970–80

SMSA	Population 1976 in thousands	% Total
New York, NY-NJ	9,509	17.1%
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	6,997	12.6
Chicago, IL	6,993	12.6
Philadelphia, PA NJ	4,803	8.6
Detroit, MI	4,406	7.9
San Francisco-Oakland, CA	3,158	5.7
Boston, MA	2,862	5.1
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	2,677	4.8
Cleveland, OH	1,969	3.5
Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, CA	1,756	3.2
San Diego, CA	1,624	2.9
Miami, FL	1,450	2.6
Seattle-Everett, WA	1,419	2.5
Buffalo, NY	1,328	2.4
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	1,265	2.3
Phoenix, AZ	1,224	2.2
San Jose, CA	1,205	2.2
San Antonio, TX	996	1.8
All SMSA's	55,641	100.00%

Appendix C. Large U.S. Cities With Youth Gang Problems 1970–80

City	Population 1976 in thousands	% Total	City	Population 1976 in thousands	% Total
New York	7,423	27.28%	Sacramento	262	0.96
Chicago	3,074	11.30	Jersey City	240	0.88
Los Angeles	2,744	10.08	Anaheim	199	0.73
Philadelphia	1,797	6.60	Fresno	183	0.67
Detroit	1,314	4.83	Santa Ana	181	0.67
San Diego	789	2.90	Springfield, MA	168	0.62
San Antonio	784	2.88	Huntington Beach	159	0.58
Phoenix	680	2.50	Riverside, CA	152	0.56
San Francisco	663	2.44	Torrance, CA	135	0.50
Cleveland	626	2.30	Hartford	135	0.50
Boston	618	2.27	Glendale, CA	134	0.49
San Jose	574	2.11	New Haven	125	0.46
Seattle	491	1.80	Hialeah	122	0.45
Buffalo	400	1.47	Stockton, CA	119	0.44
El Paso	391	1.44	Garden Grove, CA	118	0.43
Miami	355	1.30	Albany	109	0.40
Long Beach, CA	338	1.24	Pasadena	107	0.39
Oakland, CA	332	1.22	San Bernardino	103	0.38
Tucson	302	1.11	E. Los Angeles	101	0.37
Albuquerque	285	1.05	Cambridge, MA	101	0.37
Birmingham	281	1.03			
			All Cities	27,214	100.00%

Appendix D. Considerations Relative to Compilation of Gang-Related Homicide Statistics

During the 1970's statistics on gang-related homicides were compiled and made available by public agencies in several major cities; in some cities (e.g., Philadelphia and Detroit) statistics were compiled but availability was restricted. Each of the largest cities used different terminologies and definitions, with explicit rationales provided in some cities and not in others. At least five terms for loss of life were used—murder, homicide, manslaughter, killing, and death, with little consistency in definition. The term "gang-related homicide" was used in New York and Philadelphia and "youth-gang homicides" in Chicago. The cities used different criteria for determining whether a killing was recorded as "gang-related."

Probably the simplest and least ambiguous definition would be that a killing is considered gang-related if members of known gangs were either victims or assailants. In Chicago, however, a killing was considered gang-related only if it occurred during an explicitly defined collective encounter among two or more gangs (a "gang-fight"). The Los Angeles police, by contrast, classified as a "gang-related death" any form of murder, homicide, or manslaughter in which gang members were in any way involved. The killing of a security guard attempting to forestall a robbery by a single gang member would be tabulated as a gang-related death. The Los Angeles definition thus came close to the "simple" definition just noted. Los Angeles figures also included killings involving motorcycle gangs and members of van or car clubs, many of whose members were considerably older than those categorized as "youths."

In addition to the absence of consistency among cities in definitions, city police could at any time decide to change their methods of reckoning whether killings were gang-related, so that even figures for successive years may not be comparable. These changes often occurred largely in response to political pressures. For example, between 1973 and 1974 police in two of the largest cities, New York and Philadelphia, changed their method of determining whether homicides were to be recorded as gang-related.

In New York, before 1974, the responsibility for making the determination was assigned to the Gang Intelligence Unit. This unit maintained extensive files on gangs and gang members, making it fairly easy to ascertain whether an identified murder victim or suspect was affiliated with a gang. In 1974 this responsibility was transferred from the gang unit to the detective bureau. Officials of this unit stated that they decided whether to designate a homicide as gang-related on the basis of information gathered at the scene by the investigating officer.

So far as is known, the detective bureau did not use the lists compiled by the gang unit as an aid in ascertaining possible gang affiliation; officials of the gang unit reported that their files were not used, and that the detective bureau did not specify to them how the determination was made. In 1974 the detective bureau reported 12 youth gang homicides, while the gang unit

reported 30. It would seem reasonable to conclude that the discrepancy was due to the fact that the gang unit's determination was based on considerably more information.

In the same year the Philadelphia police also changed their methods of determining whether a killing was gang-related. The actual procedures involved in this change were not reported and were not ascertained; the police reported them simply as "a change." However, in contrast to New York, where police statistics were not publicly challenged from outside the department, agencies not affiliated with the police or municipal government kept independent statistics. Thus, for 1974, one such agency, the Regional Planning Council of the Pennsylvania State Governor's Justice Commission, reported 43 gang-related killings in Philadelphia, while the police department reported 32. The Philadelphia police chief, a candidate for mayor, used the police department figures rather than those of the Justice Commission when campaigning for office.

In Los Angeles political pressures did not produce the same kind of minimizing tactics used in New York and Philadelphia. During the past several decades California has experienced a major conflict between proponents of "hard line" and "soft line" methods for dealing with crime. Police figures showing dramatic increases in gang-related deaths were used by hard-line advocates to support their contention that the failure of the courts and corrections to prevent the return to the community of violent hard-core repeat offenders contributed directly to criminal violence in general and gang murders in particular.

Figures for Chicago are based on the most restrictive definition of the four largest cities; as noted, only killings occurring during explicitly designated gang fights were designated "gang homicides." Because this criterion excludes a wide range of assaultive crime involving gang members (e.g., gang members shoot and kill an adult who has appeared in court as a witness against them,) there is little doubt that the Chicago figures represent substantial undercounts of gang-related homicides. No specific information on changes in methods used by the Chicago police during the 1970's was available. However, it is known that during the late 1960's the mayor was extremely upset at a report from the Gang Intelligence Unit listing 150 gang homicides during a single year, that shortly afterward the police officer responsible for compiling the statistics was transferred to another position, and that no figure of this magnitude ever appeared in subsequent reports during the decade.

Appendix E. Data-Collection Methods

Site Visit Interviews and Data Processing. One-hundred thirty-one interviews were conducted with respondents representing 173 agencies. All interviews were conducted by the author. In general, multiple respondents participated in interviews with agencies selected for extensive coverage, and one or a few respondents in interviews with agencies selected for intensive coverage.

A standard set of questions was used as the basis of information collection. Designated an "interview guide," the full schedule included queries on about 65 items of information or judgment (see appendix A). The set of questions, however, was not a formal interview schedule administered uniformly to all respondents; it served rather as a flexible guide to information-gathering that could be adapted to a range of different interview situations and local circumstances. Because of wide variation among localities in characteristics such as the nature of the locality (e.g., larger, smaller), gang situation (e.g., formalized gangs present, absent, rare, numerous), position of respondents (e.g., higher, lower echelons, administrative, field operations), and nature of the agencies (e.g., scope of service, autonomous unit vs. organizational subunit), it was necessary to select from the range of available topics of inquiry those that were appropriate to the circumstances of particular agencies and he character of particular respondents.

In addition, both the number and identity of questions had to be selected to fit the duration of the interviews; this in turn depended on the amount of time respondents were able to make available and the length of their responses. Because most questions were open-ended, answers could be quite brief or quite lengthy, depending on the question and the respondent. Interviews ranged in length from about one hour to about four hours; the average interview ran about three hours.

Although no question was answered by all 458 respondents, and no respondent answered all 65 questions, the interviewer tried to strike a balance between the need to tailor the number and identity of the questions to specific circumstances and the need to get enough responses to support statistically respectable conclusions. The fact that different questions were answered by different numbers of respondents is reflected in the "N Respondents" figures appearing in those tables based on respondent information. These vary from table to table. For example, the findings of table 3-1, Presence of Youth Gangs, are based on responses from 297 respondents—about two-thirds of the total—while those of table 3-5, Seriousness of Group Problems, are based on 266 responses—approximately one-half of the total.

Information provided by respondents was handwritten by the interviewer. No tape recordings were made. Following each site-survey itinerary, the handwritten notes were dictated and transcribed to produce a typed record of each interview. These records were then coded using a content-analysis system based on the interview guide and using the same designation codes

(e.g., I.1.A, Gang-Problem Seriousness Estimates). All materials relevant to designated topics were filed together. These coded protocols become the basis of a variety of analyses—both qualitative and quantitative.[1] A second file with identical topic designations contained supplemental information obtained from a wide variety of noninterview sources.

Telephone Interviews. Although the bulk of systematically collected interview data was obtained through direct contact with respondents in the site-surveyed localities, telephone interviews provided a considerable amount of additional information. There were three categories of calls: calls to site-surveyed localities prior to the site visits, to site-surveyed localities subsequent to the visits, and to nonsite-surveyed localities.

The major purpose of previsit calls was to arrange the times and circumstances of the interviews; however, initial contacts with prospective respondents often yielded relevant information about the local situation, some of which was not repeated in the arranged interviews. Information was also provided by potential local respondents with whom interviews were not arranged. Postvisit phone calls to site-visited localities served primarily to update earlier information; all cities reporting gang problems were contacted at least once a year for four to five years following the visit for current statistics on gang killings and other crime, numbers of gangs, and related data. Most of the site-visited localities *not* reporting gang problems at the time of the visit were asked in a final followup survey whether such problems had emerged at a later time.

Approximately 50 localities *not* visited were contacted by phone, primarily to obtain information on the presence or absence of youth gang problems. Included were all California cities with populations of 100,000 or more plus a number of California counties (e.g., San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura). A major reason for these calls was to confirm or discount media reports indicating local gang problems. Information obtained through telephone interviews was transcribed and processed in the same manner as data from the site-survey interviews.

Media Reports

Media reporting of collective youth crime varies greatly in quality. Some reports are detailed and accurate, others sensationalized and unreliable, with all degrees in between. Despite their uneven quality, it was necessary to lean heavily on media reports due to the extreme scarcity and poor detail of information from official agencies. Experience from other projects shows that media sources, if used with care, can provide valuable information and are particularly useful in areas where very few other kinds of written documentation exist.

Media information was collected through two major efforts and a variety of smaller ones. The major efforts were collection and analysis of collective youth crime stories from local newspaper libraries and analysis of clippings obtained through a national press-clipping service.

Local Newspaper Library Files. A detailed report on collective youth crime in each site locality was prepared before the site visit. The report concentrated on current circumstances but also included a 10- to 15-year historical review. The major daily newspaper or newspapers in each

locality were asked for information on their filing categories and how to gain access to filed materials.

Only a few of the largest dailies filed stories under the category "juvenile/ youth gangs," but most did file stories under "juvenile delinquency," "youth crime," or similar categories. Where there was more than one newspaper in a locality, the paper with the most relevant or extensive files was chosen. Newspaper librarians were asked to select and photocopy all relevant stories for a period going back approximately 10 years. A member of the library staff selected the material or, if library personnel were not available, a local research assistant supervised by the librarian.

The survey office received approximately 7,500 newspaper stories. A survey staff member prepared abstracts of all relevant stories, arranged in chronological order. These abstracts, organized according to a standard set of topic headings such as background, demographic characteristics, neighborhoods, agency relations, and crime patterns, provided a major basis for the locality accounts. A major section in each account outlined relevant historical events of the recent past. Reports of the larger cities also included an index of about 25 topics whose titles corresponded to the coding categories used for interviews and supplementary materials.[2]

The locality accounts provided the interviewer with detailed information on past and present developments in local collective youth crime. This facilitated more efficient use of interview time, because it was possible to target specific neighborhoods, groups, agencies, and events, rather than using the time to get broader background. The availability of details on specific incidents and persons also served to jog respondents' memories and helped to evaluate the accuracy of the information they provided. Six of these locality accounts appeared in an earlier version of this report.

National Newsclipping Service. The survey also received information from a national newsclipping service whose staff received and reviewed all daily, weekly, and Sunday newspapers in the United States, as well as an additional 4,000 specialized publications. In contrast to the methods used for retrieving materials from newspaper libraries, whose stories were filed according to categories developed by each local paper, clipping service stories were retrieved in accordance with categories supplied by the survey. The service was directed to clip all stories in which youth gangs as such were mentioned, all stories involving illegal activities by three or more juveniles or youths, and all stories dealing with programs or policies aimed at the control of collective youth crime.

Clippings from the service arrived weekly for 3½ years—approximately 150 stories per month or a total of about 3,600 stories. These were filed by locality. Although some stories on collective youth crime during the 3½ years were undoubtedly missed, examining all the newspapers in the country on a daily basis made it most unlikely that any major developments escaped attention. The clippings served a wide variety of descriptive and analytic purposes.[3]

One strength of this kind of information source lies in the fact that many newspapers report illegal activity by nongang groups on a routine basis; this is especially true in smaller communities, whose press reports many incidents of youth group crime that might be passed over by dailies in larger cities.

Local Newspapers. While the bulk of media information came from local newspaper library files and the national clipping service, several other sources were also used. Site-surveyed localities were visited in itineraries of four localities each. Starting about a month before each itinerary, daily and Sunday newspapers from each locality were purchased at an "out-of-town" newsstand and reviewed for relevant stories. This provided information not only on collective youth crime, but on the broader social and political context in which such crime occurred, including programs by service agencies and political or governmental actions affecting crime and crime control.

During the site visits, local newspapers were bought each day to maintain continuity with previsit coverage and provide information on the most current local developments. In addition to the local papers, the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe* were reviewed on a regular basis while the survey was in progress.

Computerized News Retrieval. During later phases of the survey, computerized news-retrieval resources became available that made it possible to receive news reports on a nationwide basis without buying newspapers or clipping services. National time-sharing systems provided two methods. The first, a "menu-driven" system, made it possible to access about 10 national dailies direct from the computer keyboard—The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Minneapolis Star*, and others. Electronic editions of these papers were accessed each day, and relevant stories selected for hardcopy printouts. Associated Press wire-service stories were similarly processed.

The second system used a key word search method to select all relevant stories from the total output of United Press International (UPI). UPI carried about 1,000 to 1,500 stories a day from all parts of the country. When these stories go to subscribing newspapers, they also enter the time-sharing service for direct access by any online computer. All UPI stories were searched for key words. Two or more selector terms were permitted. For example, entering the word "crime" returned all stories containing this term; entering "Chicago and crime" returned all stories with both terms.

The term "gang," entered on a daily basis, returned about 5 to 15 gang stories per day. Some of these involved adult, cycle, terrorist, or other types of gang as well as youth gangs. Also entered on a regular basis were the terms "juvenile," "teenager," "group," "youth," "murder," "robbery," "crime," and "delinquency," alone or in combination. These terms often returned stories on murders and other crimes by youth groups not designated as gangs; the combination "group and robbery" was one common entry. A rapid scan feature made it possible to select abstracted stories for a full readout, and an optional printout command provided hardcopy printouts of selected stories.

These printouts were filed and analyzed according to the same methods and categories used for other data. Computerized news retrieval, while considerably less comprehensive than the national clipping service, made it possible to continue nationwide press coverage of collective youth crime on a reduced level after termination of the clipping service. The computer was also used to access several relevant data bases such as the *New York Times* Consumer Database, a set of abstracts from a variety of publications organized under topic categories such as "U.S. Census," "Population Trends," and others.

Media Articles and Features. In addition to news stories, a fair number of reports on collective youth crime appeared in both the print and electronic media. Some of these were quite detailed, taking the form of multipart series prepared by a group of reporters, in some cases reporting from different cities. Features and articles of this kind appeared, among other places, in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Newsday*, *Life*, and elsewhere. Given the scarcity of published academic research during this period, these articles were the closest thing available to a body of current academic literature.

Reports on gangs and related topics also appeared as programs in the electronic media. Such programs appeared on all the major television networks—generally focusing on gang problems in particular cities. Local radio and television stations also ran programs on gangs. Like some of the print media articles, these programs in some cases represented a collaborative effort by a fair number of reporters, editors, writers, and producers. Notes were made on as many of these programs as possible. In some cases producers provided the substance of the programs through transcripts or videocassettes.

About five gang-focused television dramas a year aired during the site-visit period. Notes and transcripts of these shows provided not so much a basis of factual information but rather a way of ascertaining attitudes and orientations of media writers toward youth gangs and the kinds of imagery currently in vogue for depicting gangs.

Media-Initiated Sources. During the survey period the author participated periodically in the preparation and production of media pieces on gangs and related topics. Largely because of extensive publicity accompanying the publication of an interim version of this report, writers, reporters, and producers initiated contacts with the author in connection with stories, articles, features, and programs dealing with gangs, and these contacts developed information of use to the survey.

Sometimes an upsurge of gang activity or new developments in collective youth crime (e.g., "wolfpacks") provided the impetus for requests by local reporters for background information. A frequent byproduct of these contacts was information not obtained through other sources. Participation by the author in radio and television programs also provided information. A common format for such programs was participation by a group of informed persons in panel discussions. Most of these programs included gang members along with specialists such as police gang-squad personnel, youth service workers, and legislators.

Other Data Sources

Information obtained through interviews and media reports was augmented by data from other sources including routine police reports, academic literature, and documents issued by local and Federal agencies.

Routine Police Reports. Every stage of the criminal justice processing system generates data on offenses and offenders, from initial reports of violations through release from parole. Extensive attrition of offense information occurs as one proceeds from earlier to later stages; information recorded during the final stages of the process includes only a very small proportion of the offenses dealt with during the earliest stages.

One body of information collected near the earliest stages of the process records the enormous number of acts and events reported to or by local police in the course of their daily activities. Recorded incidents have two major sources: citizen complaints generally received by phone and relayed by radio to patrol officers, and incidents observed directly by police in the course of patrol. Records of these incidents take various forms including handwritten records by individual policemen, logs kept by the department, and computerized incident listings, often coded by locality, type of incident, and other characteristics. In some communities police-log information appears on a regular basis in local newspapers.

Analysis of these records provides a unique picture of criminal activity in the community—a picture not available through any other routinely collected body of data. Many of the reported incidents are noncriminal in character, and many of the criminal incidents are quite minor in nature. Therefore, analysis of routine police reports is of limited or no utility for many kinds of criminal justice research (e.g., studies of court-processed offenses). For the study of collective youth crime, however, these reports are of considerable value. In many communities a very substantial proportion of all incidents handled by the police involves groups of youths, and only a very small proportion of these many thousands of youth-group incidents ever appears in any other set of records (e.g., arrest reports, news stories).

In Boston during the survey period, between 50,000 and 70,000 reports of disorderly youth groups (called "gang disturbances" by the police) were recorded—an average of about 150 incidents per day. The number of "gang calls" in Boston is atypically high, but such activity is common to a lesser degree in most U.S. communities.

As part of the survey, routine police reports for selected time periods were obtained for all of the site-surveyed localities. Similar data were also obtained for about 250 other U.S. communities both during and preceding the survey. Analyses of these data provided findings not available elsewhere and a useful basis of comparison with data obtained through other sources. For example, calculations were made of the proportion of youth group incidents to all incidents handled by the police in different cities and towns as a measure of the amount of police effort consumed by youth group incidents.[4] Computer printouts of Boston "gang calls" pinpointed those neighborhoods with the highest volume of disturbances, and this information was used in

connection with the development and deployment of a special police unit for handling gang disturbances.

In addition to quantitative uses for these data, they helped develop a picture of the general character of youth group activity, because the reports generally consisted of descriptions of specific activities (i.e. "Four white males about 16 years old breaking into parked cars in the shopping plaza"; "about 8 juveniles setting fires and destroying playground equipment at the school"). Because the vast majority of youth groups whose illegal activities are documented in routine police reports do not fit the criteria used here for "gangs," they provide one of the few sources of continuing information on the character and activities of youth groups other than gangs.

Academic Literature. The number of books and articles on youth gangs written by scholars and researchers, while quite small compared to the volume of literature on topics such as poverty, race relations, welfare dependency, drug abuse, women's issues, and others, is still fairly sizable. By contrast, scholarly works on law-violating youth groups other than gangs are all but nonexistent. In 1982 the most recent available gang bibliography was a volume prepared by Dorothy Tompkins that included about 300 titles of books, articles, and reports published mostly between World War II and 1965.[5]

Thus, at the time of writing, no gang bibliography had been published for over 15 years. This was not surprising because the output of published academic works on youth gangs diminished substantially in the late 1960's and the 1970's. Only about 50 titles appeared between the Tompkins bibliography and the end of 1981, and only about 15 since the start of the National Survey. The flurry of gang activity in Philadelphia in the late 1960's and early 1970's produced about 10 titles (published and unpublished), and an extraordinary upsurge of gang violence in California in the late 1970's and early 1980's produced some additional academic studies.

In the absence of current bibliographies, the National Survey had to use other methods to locate, obtain, and review more recent publications. The two major methods used were special computerized literature searches and the monitoring of ongoing reference or abstract services.[6]

Computerized literature searches were conducted by The National Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information of what was then the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; the National Criminal Justice Reference Service of the U.S. Department of Justice; and the Educational Resources Information Center. The first two sets of listings included abstracts along with titles, authors, and related information; the third contained citations but no abstracts.

Of the three, the Mental Health Information listings were the most comprehensive. Printouts were returned in response to search requests based on four terms: Juvenile Gangs, Juvenile Delinquency, Groups and Delinquency, and Crime and Unemployment. A total of over 200 letter-sized pages was printed out, with an average of two references/abstracts per page. Many of the approximately 100 references were unrelated or only indirectly related to collective youth crime in the United States (e.g., a fair number of studies in other countries were listed), but the

data base used by the Mental Health service was sufficiently large to ensure that a good proportion of the relevant studies were reported.

The National Criminal Justice Reference Service, using the search term "Juvenile Gangs," returned 25 titles. Almost all of these were books, including most of the major book-length works devoted exclusively or largely to youth gangs. The Educational Resources Information Center search produced approximately 20 references, of which 10 related specifically to youth gangs. While the use of computerized literature searches provided a fair degree of assurance that few relevant academic studies would be overlooked, an updated version of Tompkins' 1965 gang bibliography would provide a useful tool.

The most recent references obtained through the computerized retrieval services were dated 1976. To obtain continuing and current information on academic studies and other reports on youth gangs, the study used two series of title/abstract publications. The first was *The Criminal Justice Abstracts* series (formerly Crime and Delinquency Literature), published quarterly by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency of New Jersey. All major books, journals, and agency reports were abstracted and categorized under topic classifications. References to collective youth crime were most likely to appear under the category "Juvenile Delinquency and the Delinquent." The second source was the *Selective Notification of Information* series published on a monthly basis by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Those abstracts, which provided the data base used in the computerized search earlier noted, were also categorized by topics. References to collective youth crime were most likely to be found under the "criminology" and "offenses" categories.

Reports and Documents, Site Visit Localities. Agency personnel in the 26 site-surveyed localities provided approximately 400 reports and documents. These documents covered an extremely wide spectrum, ranging from a few pages of current arrest or probation caseload statistics to copiously detailed multivolume series describing major local criminal justice programs. A relatively small proportion of the documents dealt directly with gangs and other types of groups (New York City and Philadelphia were major exceptions), but almost all provided information directly or indirectly relevant to collective youth crime problems. Included among the documents obtained were victimization reports and statistics; descriptions of delinquency prevention programs; descriptions of agency operations; evaluational reports of past programs; planning commission reports; internal agency memoranda; agency correspondence; arrest statistics; probation department statistics; court case statistics; detention statistics; youth authority caseload statistics; demographic information on local communities; flow charts of juvenile offender processing and disposition; reports of local, county, and State government hearings on the prevention/control of delinquency by individuals and groups; and many others.

The documents were cataloged, along with a brief description of their contents, and used as part of the general data analysis. Particularly useful were data on arrests by offense category and age. These materials made it possible to compare crime patterns and personal characteristics of gang members with those of nongang offenders.

Federal Government Reports

The national coverage of the Survey required national-level data on crime and related topics compiled by Federal agencies. The major agencies providing statistical materials were the Bureau of the Census, the Department of Justice, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Census Bureau publications included the *Decennial Census* reports; selected publications of the *Current Population Reports* series; the annually published *Statistical Abstracts* volumes; a special series on characteristics of low-income areas of major cities; and the *Criminal Victimization Survey* series (city statistics volumes and national trend volumes) produced under an interagency agreement with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Some preliminary data on the 1980 decennial census were obtained through the *New York Times* Consumer Data Base.

The major Department of Justice publication used by the survey was the *Uniform Crime Report* series of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These annual volumes include data both on crimes reported to the police and on arrests, and contain many tables categorizing crime data according to a variety of social characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender), locality categories (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), and time period. In addition, the FBI, on request, supplied the survey with several sets of unpublished data; these included tabulations of arrests by age, gender, type of offense, and other characteristics of site-surveyed cities.[7]

The Office of Management and Budget provided a very useful volume on U.S. metropolitan areas, including information on definitions, population, major localities, county composition, and other characteristics of standard metropolitan statistical areas.[8]

Qualitative materials were obtained from the Department of Justice; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; *Congressional Record;* published documents based on hearings held by various Senate and House committees and subcommittees; preliminary and final versions of congressional legislation, and other sources. Included among the publications of the Department of Justice was a large number of special reports on programs and other topics produced under the former Law Enforcement Assistance Administration later the Office of Justice Programs) and its various branches—The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Institute of Justice, and others. Most of the materials published by these agencies are cataloged by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service and its OJJDP-sponsored component, the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse. Also useful was a monthly Department of Justice newsletter called *LEAA Newsletter* prior to March 1980 and *Justice Assistance News* subsequently.

Notes to Appendix E.

1. Coding and filing were done by Hedy Bookin, Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Bookin performed the bulk of the preliminary data analysis, as well as making valuable contributions to the form and substance of this report. She thus played a major collaborative role both in the development of the research methods of the study and in the formulation of its major findings.

2. The library file project was administered by Hedy Bookin, who contacted the local newspapers, arranged for local assistance, and gave instructions on procedures. Dr. Bookin also prepared most of the abstracts and wrote and indexed most of the locality accounts. Gail Travis Messinesi prepared some later reports, and Deborah Bookin and Lynn Hallen also assisted.

3. Newspaper reports, in common with other data sources, have both strengths and weaknesses as a basis of research findings. A major weakness is the low likelihood that populations of reported incidents will meet the "representativeness" criteria of rigorous statistical sampling methods. Newspapers tend to select from a population of potentially reportable incidents on the basis of newsworthiness rather than comprehensiveness or representativeness. This tendency, however, generally has much less effect on the reporting of criminal activity in smaller communities; unlike larger cities, where the large volume of crime requires considerable selectivity, virtually all illegal activities by youth groups in smaller cities and towns are regarded as newsworthy, and are thus reported comprehensively and routinely. A major strength of this source of data lies in the fact that information can be provided for all U.S. communities covered by newspapers. Coverage this extensive is impossible to achieve through other methods, except at prohibitive cost.

4. Reports on procedures and findings based on this data source are found in J. Lasme, "Patterns of delinquent activity in Boston suburbs," Honors Thesis, Harvard University, 1969; W. Miller, materials prepared for the Juvenile Justice Module, "Training course in the analysis of crime and the criminal justice system: State curriculum," U.S. Department of Justice, 1976; W. Miller, "The Boston warriors: youth gangs in Boston," Boston Magazine, July 1979, and W. Miller 1981, nn. 4, 8, 9, chapter 1.

5. D.C. Tompkins, Juvenile Gangs and Street Groups A Bibliography, Institute of Government Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1966. A less comprehensive bibliography, covering the same general period as Tompkins, was published by William Kirkwood in 1965: W. Kirkwood Jr., "Delinquent gangs: a bibliography" in International Bibliography of Crime and Delinquency 3, 3 (August 1965).

6. References to a few additional papers, mostly unpublished, were obtained through word of mouth or contacts with researchers.

7. Uniform Crime Reports, Crime in the United States, printed annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

8. Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.