DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 127 537 CG 010 765

AUTHOR Miller, Walter B.
TITLE Violence by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups in Major American Cities. Final and Summary Reports.
INSTITUTION Harvard Univ., Cambridge, Mass. Center for Criminal Justice.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Dept. of Justice/LEAA), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 75
GRANT 74-NI-99047
NOTE 240p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$12.71 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *City Problems; Crime; Delinquency Causes; *Delinquent Behavior; Disadvantaged Youth; Inner City; *Juvenile Gangs; Law Enforcement; *National Surveys; Research Projects; Student School Relationship; *Violence; *Youth Problems

ABSTRACT

This report represents the findings of a study on violence by youth gangs in 12 major American cities, and deals with the following topics: (1) the rationale and methods for a national survey of youth gangs; (2) the existence and seriousness of the problem of youth gangs in 12 major American cities; (3) the size and scope of the youth gang problem; (4) the social characteristics of gang members in six cities; (5) gang-related killings and other officially-recorded crimes; (6) gang-member violence; (7) gang activities and the public schools; (8) past and future trends in youth gang crime; and (9) conclusions about urban gang violence in the 1970's. Also included are statistical tables and appendices as well as a separate summary report. The report concludes that (1) current youth gang violence is more lethal than in the past; (2) more citizens today are threatened by gang violence; and (3) violence and other illegal activities of youth gangs represent an extremely serious crime problem with little chance for decline. (HLM)

VIOLENCE BY YOUTH GANGS AND YOUTH GROUPS IN MAJOR AMERICAN CITIES

FINAL REPORT

by
Walter B. Miller
Center for Criminal Justice
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Mass.

April 1975

National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
U.S. Department of Justice

5

This project was supported by Grant Number 74-NI-99047 awarded to the Center for Criminal Justice of the Harvard Law School by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Tables--Continued

VIOLENCE BY YOUTH GANGS AND YOUTH GROUPS AS A CRIME PROBLEM IN MAJOR AMERICAN CITIES*

I. A National-level Survey of Youth Gangs and Groups: Rationale And Methods

The United States in the mid-1970's faces a profusion of serious crime problems. These affect life at all levels, and include consumer fraud, governmental corruption at federal, state and municipal levels, epidemics of arson in major cities, widespread use of habit-forming 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 to the enterprise of crime prevention and control makes it imperative that priorities be set by policy-makers. What are the best patterns of allocation of available resources to current crime problems?

Setting of such priorities must of necessity involve a wide range of considerations--including the degree of threat posed by various forms of crime to the domestic security of the nation, their susceptibility to change through explicitly-developed programs, the political feasibility of affecting such programs, and many others. But an indispensable prerequisite to any informed decision-making process must be information--reliable, accurate, and current-- as to the actual scope, character, and degree of social threat posed by the various forms of crime. By its very nature, criminal behavior which victimizes identifiable

* The author is grateful to Professors Albert K. Cohen and Andrew Rutherford for critical reactions to earlier versions of this report.

classes of persons-- the old, females, the innocent--is unusually subject to distortion, since it so frequently evokes strong emotions. The media, as the principal source of public knowledge of the prevalence and character of crime, are particularly subject to such distortion, since of the enormous multitude of potentially reportable offenses, they generally select those most likely to evoke the strongest reactions. Often the types of crime selected for intensive media attention actually represent a small proportion of the total crime picture, may represent 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 disseminated information accorded such offenses, and the character of political responses to such information, forms of crime which may in fact be quite inappropriate as objects of concerted effort become the recipients of major resources, while other forms, which may pose a greater threat, are more endemic, and show a better potential for change through planned programs, are neglected.

The problem of violence perpetrated by members of youth gangs and youth groups is one of the host of crime problems currently affecting American communities. But the process by which both the general public and policy makers have acquired information as to the contemporary character of this phenonemonon has been 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 dissemination of media information. Looking at the nation from a New York eye-view, the youth gang situation appears simple and clear. In the 1950's black-jacketed youth gangs roamed the city streets. They bore romantic names such as Sharks and Jets, engaged one another periodically in planned rumbles which 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, which sapped their fighting spirit, and political activism, which directed their remaining energies toward agents of social injustice rather than one another.

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 comprised 275 police-verified gangs with 11,000 members. These new and mysteriously emerging gangs were 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 one another.

The major problem with this rather straightforward account, whatever its accuracy, is that there are other cities in the United States. In the year 1967, virtually the midpoint of the New-York delineated "no gang" period, a document issued by the major's office of Chicago, the nation's second largest city, reported a figure of 150 gang-related homicides-- probably the highest annual figure ever recorded for an American city. In Los Angeles, members of an extensive network of gangs in the densely-populated Hispanic barrios of East Los Angeles continued all through the 1960's, as they had in the '50's, to kill each other in the course of continuing intergang rivalry. Police-reported gang killings in Philadelphia, which started a steady increase in 1965, had reached sufficient proportions by 1968 that the governor directed the State Crime Commission to conduct an extensive inquiry into the burgeoning problem of youth gang violence.

During this entire period the New-York based media, and many criminal justice professionals as well, continued to entertain the conviction that youth gang violence was a thing of the past, its few remaining manifestations trivial and moribund. It was this conviction that engendered the notion that gangs had suddenly and mysteriously "re-emerged" after a decade of quiescence. How could so blatant a misreading of the overall national situation have occurred? The answer is simple. There was not at the time, nor is there at present, any agency, in or out of government, that

takes as a major responsibility the gathering of information as to gangs and gang activities on a nation-wide basis. When the media in New York began once again to attend the problem of gang violence in the early seventies, it was virtually impossible to evaluate the quality, accuracy, or generalizability of their often sensationalized claims of a "new wave of gang violence". Moreover, academic and other criminal justice researchers, for reasons to be discussed later, had essentially abandoned youth gangs as an object of study and were in no position to fill the informational gap.

It was primarily because the unavailability of information of the most basic kinds as to the youth gang situation in the United States of the 1970's that the present survey was proposed and undertaken. Is there really a "new wave" of gang violence in the United States, or is there only an image created by the sensation mongering media? Are today's gang members really amoral killers, preying on helpless adult victims rather than fighting one another as in the past? Are gangs and their violent activities confined to a few localized districts of a few cities, or have they spread throughout the nation--operating in the suburbs and small towns as well as in the urban ghettos? Are the "new" gangs of today vicious wolf-packs, 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 can be attributed to youth gangs and groups? How effective have local service and law-enforcement agencies been in controlling the gang violence of the 1970's? Are there promising new programs which show greater success than the gang-control efforts of the past? What operating philosophies underlie current measures for dealing with gangs? What are the prospects for gang violence--is it a temporary resurgence in a few communities of a fad revived from the 1950's, or does it appear instead as an intrinsic feature of an established way of life of youth in the 1970's?

The present survey was designed to provide at least tentative answers to all of these as well as other questions, but the present report addresses only a few of them. Because of the paucity of national-level information available at the time the survey was initiated, there was no way of knowing whether there was enough substance to claims of increasing gang problems in major cities to support more than an exploratory study. As will be seen, the hypothesis that American cities in the 1970's are facing gang problems of the utmost severity was supported far beyond any expectations, and the information gathered during the initial phase of survey was far more voluminous than had been anticipated. The present document is therefore intended as an interim and preliminary report, based on site visits to what now appears as an incomplete sample of cities with serious gang and/or group problems, and selecting from a much larger body of collected information a limited number of subjects, designed primarily to present a preliminary set of conclusions as to the existence, scope

seriousness, and character of violence and other forms of crime by youth gangs and youth groups in American cities, and to suggest what order of priority be granted the problem of gang violence among other crime problems facing the nation.

Gangs and Information: The task of obtaining and presenting accurate, balanced, and current information concerning youth gangs and related phenomena presents unusual difficulties. These have several sources. First, although gangs and their illegal activities are far more visible than illegalities involved in corporate crime, syndicate crime, and various forms of consumer fraud, all of which may involve intricate and ingenious methods of deliberate concealment, there are still elements of concealment, duplicity, and deliberate deception in the activity of gang members which can be brought to light only by trusted persons who maintain close and continued contact with gang members. A second reason is that gang activities through the years have provided a highly marketable basis for media pieces which are often sensationalized or exaggerated, and which represent as typical the most extreme forms of current gang manifestations. This is one aspect of the relation between youth gangs and adult agencies which has remained virtually unchanged throughout the years. A third reason is that information concerning gangs tends to be highly politicized; the kinds of information released by many of the agencies dealing with gang problems--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 particular agency rather than the interests of accuracy.

This aspect of the relation between gangs and adult agencies has also showed remarkable stability over time.

But probably the single most significant obstacle to obtaining reliable information is the fact, already noted, that there does not exist, anywhere in the United States, one single agency which takes as a continuing responsibility the collection of information based on explicit and uniformly applied data collection categories which would permit comparability from city to city 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 a major reason why authorities are caught off guard by what appears as a periodic waxing and waning of youth gang violence, and for the generally low effectiveness of efforts to cope with it.

Methods of the Twelve-City Survey

For purposes of gathering information capable of providing preliminary answers to the question of the degree to which the activities of youth gangs and groups constitute a crime problem on a nation-wide basis, site visits were made to twelve of the nation's largest cities. The major criterion for selection of cities was population size, but also considered were the nature of available information as to gang problems, achieving some order of regional representation, and other factors. The twelve cities were as follows: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Houston,

Detroit, Baltimore, Washington, Cleveland, San Francisco, St. Louis and New Orleans.* Site visits ranged from two to five days per city. An "interview guide" was prepared to serve as a basis of information gathering; this was not intended as a formal questionnaire, but was used rather to provide a set of questions which could be asked, as appropriate, in the several cities, in order to cover informational areas which could be examined on a comparative basis for all cities. The interview guide is included in this report as Appendix A. Most interviews lasted between one and four hours, depending on scheduling circumstances and the time available to respondents. Staff members representing 61 different agencies participated in 68 interviews, with a total of 148 respondents contributing information. Agencies are categorizable according to 17 types. Types of agencies and numbers of respondents are indicated in Table I.

Table I

Agency	Respondent Categories: Gang Survey Interviews	No. Persons Interviewed
1.	Police Dept: Juvenile/Yth Div'n/Bureau	21
2.	Police Dept: Youth Gang Div'n/Specialists	15
3.	Police Dept., Other: (e.g., Crime Analysis, Community Rels.)	6
4.	Municipal/County Gang/Group Work, "Outreach"	28
5.	Municipal/County Youth Service	13
6.	Municipal/County Criminal Justice Council, Planning Agency	12
7.	Municipal/County, other	2
8.	Private Agency gang/group work, "Outreach"	9

*In a thirteenth city, San Diego, a single interview was conducted. Additional discussion of reasons for the choice of cities is included in Section II.

Agency	No. Persons Interviewed
9. Private Youth Service	4
10. Private Service, other	3
11. Judicial	6
12. Probation, Court	9
13. Probation, other	6
14. Prosecution	2
15. Youth Corrections: Parole	8
16. Youth Corrections: other	3
17. Academic Research	1
	148

Selection of respondents was based on several criteria. Highest priority was given to those whose professional activities brought them into the most direct contact with youth in the community. Thus, for service agencies, preferred respondents were those engaged in "outreach," "area work" or "gang/group-work" programs, and for police agencies, personnel specializing in gang work on the level of intelligence, operations or both. In addition, the commanding officers of the youth/juvenile bureau/division in each of the thirteen cities were interviewed, often in conjunction with line personnel familiar with particular districts, precincts, or neighborhoods. Members of police research or data analysis divisions were also preferred respondents.

Initially, probation personnel were not seen as priority respondents, but contacts during earlier itineraries showed that most probation workers were closely familiar with the community situation,

and thus were interviewed more extensively in later itineraries. The low representation of academic researchers among respondents does not reflect a low selection priority, but rather the extreme rarity of academicians conducting gang-related research. The absence of school personnel in Table I reflects the fact that the importance of the schools as an arena for gang activity did not become clear until initial data analyses. Telephone interviews with selected school personnel were conducted during this phase, and such respondents will be utilized more extensively during the second phase of the survey.

A "full" interview involved responses to approximately 65 items of judgement or information: however, in few cases was it possible to obtain responses to all items, and selections were made on the basis of type of agency, time available, local circumstances, detail offered by respondents, and other factors. As the table shows, interviews often involved more than one respondent--particularly in cases where adequate city-wide information required persons familiar with often contrasting crime situations of different intra-urban areas. Of 68 full or partial interviews, 32, or 47%, involved multiple respondents. Often there was consensus with respect to particular items; frequently there was not. For this reason the "respondent" rather than the "agency" is the unit in some of the following tables.[1]

1. In addition to interview data, approximately 225 pages of reports, statistical data, and other documents were obtained from agency representatives in the twelve cities.

Most available studies of gangs are based on the situation of a single city. So far as is known, the present study represents the first attempt to compile a national-level picture of youth gang and youth group problems, based on direct site visits to gang locales. Precedents are provided by two previous national-level studies. The first is that of Saul Bernstein, who in 1963 surveyed nine major cities with gang or group problems. While Bernstein did visit the cities, his major focus was not on the character of gang activities as such, but rather on social work programs using the "outreach" approach.[1] The most comprehensive national-level survey of gang violence presently available is that of Malcolm Klein. Klein in 1968 conducted an extensive review of 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.[2] Klein's report clearly treats gang violence as a nation-wide phenomenon, but utilizes as its primary information source research reported by others rather than information obtained directly from local respondents.

Since a major objective of the present survey is to present conclusions of potential relevance to policy decisions, many of its conclusions must be judged in light of certain methodological implications of this objective. As noted earlier, high-quality, reliable information concerning gangs requires intensive, painstaking, and long-term research. Such methods could not be executed

---

1. S. Bernstein, Youth on the Streets; Work with Alienated Youth Groups, New York, Association Press, 1964
2. M. Klein, "Violence in American Juvenile Gangs" in Mulvihill and Tumin, Crimes of Violence, National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969, V. 13, p. 1428

in the context of the present survey. Much of the base data from which conclusions are derived--single interviews with local respondents, press accounts of uneven detail, in-house descriptions of agency operations, statistical tabulations compiled under less-than-ideal circumstances--fail to reach the level of quality necessary to sound research.

Using such data clearly entails risks that conclusions derived from them may in varying degrees be inaccurate, incomplete, or biased. This risk has been assumed deliberately in the interests of presenting conclusions which are as concrete and current as possible, and which are presented here in many instances without the caveats and qualifications which careful readers will of course realize are called for.

Two major devices are or will be used in an attempt to accomodate this problem. First, the practice is followed, primarily in connection with tabulated findings, of indicating as explicitly as possible sources of bias or inaccuracy which may affect the base data. Such information appears in footnotes to tables, in the discussion of tables, or both. For example, methodological considerations affecting the figures used in the central table on gang-related killings are noted both in footnotes and in the discussion of the table.

The second device relates to the interim nature of the present report, and plans to develop an expanded and amplified version. Copies of this report will be sent to representatives of each of the agencies participating in the survey, as well as to an

and second to provide additional material felt to be germane to issues treated here but not adequately covered. Insofar as such responses are forthcoming, this will permit corrections, emendations, and additions which should serve to increase the accuracy of the subsequent report, and to some extent correct for the methodological weaknesses inherent in the study.

Scope of the Present Report: Findings reported in the present document represent only a small part of information already collected, and in some instances, analysed. In addition, the process of analysing materials for this interim report has revealed gaps involving both substantive areas for which some data are available, and areas for which little or no data has been collected. Since this report focuses almost exclusively on the activities of the gang members themselves, the issue most conspicuously left unattended is that of program--what is being done, and what might be done, to cope with problems of gang and group violence and crime in the various cities.

Following paragraphs will specify first the substantive areas which are treated in the present report, and second those which are not. Of approximately 65 to 70 topics and issues for which information was sought either through interviews or other sources, following sections report findings in varying degrees of detail with respect

of what gangs do is not illegal; once a community perceives a group as a "gang" they will be so defined whether or not they

to about 20. These are: the basis for the choice of site-visit cities; how respondents defined the term "gang"; site-visit cities which report youth gang problems, and how serious these are judged to be; cities which report problems with youth groups, and how serious these are judged to be; judgments of seriousness of gang or group problems by various city agencies; the numbers of gangs and/or groups in major cities; the numbers of gang and/or group members in major cities; the proportion of youth affiliated with gangs; age, sex, social status, locality, and ethnic characteristics of gang members; numbers and rates of gang-related killings; gang-related killings as a proportion of all juvenile killings; numbers and rates of arrests of gang members; gang-member arrests as a proportion of all juvenile arrests; forms of gang member violence; victims of gang member violence; gang weaponry; motives for gang violence; types of gang activity in the public schools; issues relative to gang problems in the schools; reasons for current patterns of gang violence in the schools; gang-related developments during the past decade in six gang-problem cities; respondents' predictions of future developments; and projections of future size of gang-age populations.

Given the purposes of a national-level survey of gang problems, treatment of the subjects just cited is incomplete in several important respects. First, most reported findings apply only to the six cities in which all or nearly all respondents reported problems with gangs, so defined ("gang problem" cities, Table IV). Information of equivalent character for the six cities reporting problems with law-violating youth groups ("group problem" cities; Table V) is not

included. Second, the twelve cities surveyed do not include one of the ten largest -- Dallas; the provocative nature of the reported situation with respect to gangs in Houston strongly indicates the desirability of including Dallas in the survey. Third, findings do not cover the circumstances of approximately 15 other major cities for which information collected during the initial phase of the survey indicate the likelihood of moderate to severe gang problems. These include Buffalo, Boston, Denver, Newark, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh.

As noted above, the major topic omitted in the present report concerns the methods, programs, and procedures used or proposed by police, service agencies, municipal officials and others for dealing with crime and violence by youth gangs, groups, and youth in general. Included among topics for which program-relevant information was gathered but not reported here are: judgments as to the effectiveness of the totality of agency efforts to cope with gang/group problems in the several cities; judgments as to the degree of interagency coordination and overall planning relative to gang/group problems; descriptions of methods employed by the various agencies in the several cities; descriptions of the operating philosophies underlying these methods; overall philosophical approaches to problems of prevention and control;[1] and evaluations of the effectiveness of selected programs. Approximately one hundred and fifty manuscript pages describing current programmatic efforts in the twelve survey cities have been prepared and analyzed in terms of a simple analytic

1. A preliminary report on this topic has been prepared; see W. Miller "Operating Philosophies of Criminal Justice and Youth Professionals in Twelve Major American Cities"; Report to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, May, 1975.

scheme and are currently in draft form.[1]

Also omitted from the present report is any systematic treatment of the central issue of explanation; respondents cited what they considered to be major recent developments in their cities affecting gang, group, or general youth violence, and offered explanations for these developments. How do these explanations relate to one another, and to more comprehensive explanational theories? Other interview topics not reported here include: organization and leadership of gangs; gangs and drug/alcohol problems; legal activities of gang members, including their employment status; the relationship of gangs to organized adult crime in the several cities; their involvement with political and/or ideological movements; their involvement with and activities in the correctional system; the existence and activities of local citizens' groups concerned with gang problems; the activities of federal-level agencies affecting gangs, and others (See Interview Guide, Appendix A).

In addition to these topics, approximately 120 pages of draft manuscript have been prepared covering the history of gang and group problems in the major cities over the past five to ten years, with special attention to patterns of media coverage and local political developments affecting gang-control policies. These accounts provide a major source for the condensed city histories presented in Chapter VIII.

---

1. These materials, as well as the analyses of program efforts cited above, were prepared by Hedy Bookin, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Sociology, Harvard University. Ms. Bookin also performed virtually all the preliminary data-analysis upon which the substantive findings of this report are based, as well as making valuable contributions to the form and substance of the report itself. She has thus played a major collaborative role in the production of this document.

Present plans call for a second phase of the youth gang/group survey, in the course of which areas of inquiry not covered in this interim report, or covered in a preliminary fashion, will be subject to further investigation, analysis, and reporting. Possible activities for this second phase might include some or all of the following: site visits to a limited number of additional cities seen as strategically relevant to substantive and/or theoretical issues emerging from the initial phase of the survey; continuing data collection and analysis of gang/group control and prevention methods currently employed in major cities, and the reporting of such methods; the formulation and reporting of specific proposals or recommendations for gang/group control policies, based in part on conclusions derived from the analysis of present programs; a major effort directed at the basic issue of "explanation", which would incorporate both explanations offered by respondents and a specific research design which would take as a major dependent variable "intercity variation in severity of gang/group problems" and examine its relation to a range of independent variables such as city size, immigration patterns, racial/ethnic characteristics, unemployment rates, school-related variables (e.g., presence/absence of "busing" programs) arrest, court-appearance, and incarceration practices and policies, and others. This examination might employ factor analysis or an analogous type of cluster-analysis technique. These last two enterprises, that of increasing understanding of the "causes" of more or less serious gang/group violence, and that of exploring and formulating more effective methods of coping with the problem,

three, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Detroit, rated the gang

problem as "high"; in two, New York and Chicago, as "medium."

II. Youth Gangs and Law-Violating Youth Groups in Twelve Major United States Cities: Existence and Seriousness of Problem

The basic informational question underlying all subsequent findings and recommendations is this: Are major American cities currently experiencing problems with youth gangs and/or youth groups, and, if so, how serious are these problems? The present chapter presents information bearing on this question. As already mentioned, direct information based on carefully documented and systematically collected data is not available, and the effort and resources necessary to obtain such data would be clearly incommensurate with the scope and purposes of the pilot phase of a general survey. As one feasible and relatively adequate substitute for such information, the present survey uses as its primary (but not only) information-gathering technique a series of on-site interviews with a selected number of those law-enforcement and service professionals in major cities whose jobs require that they be familiar with the gang or youth group situation in that city.[1]

Issues such as the "seriousness" of gang problems call for judgments and estimates as well as direct factual information, and a major basis of characterizations of "seriousness" presented here are estimates given by some proportion of the approximately

150 persons queried.

Choice of Cities

What cities were chosen and why? Information collected prior to the site visits (newspaper accounts, magazine articles, agency reports, telephone calls, other sources) initially indicated a relationship between the size of cities the likelihood of finding serious problems with gangs or groups. (The larger the city, the more likely the existence of gang problems.) Subsequent analysis suggested that the size of the metropolitan area (the "Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area" or "SMSA" delineated by the U.S. Census) showed a more direct relationship than the size of the municipal city itself. Size of metropolitan area was thus taken as the major basis for selection of cities.[1] Table II lists the 15 largest SMSA's, ranked by size, as given by the 1970 Federal Census; asterisks indicate cities visited.

Table II shows that site-visits were made to 11 of the top 15 Metropolitan areas. A 12th city, New Orleans, was also visited, due primarily to reports of serious problems with youth violence in the city, and also to broaden regional representation (Northeast, 4; Midwest, 4; South, 2; Far West, 2). In a thirteenth city, San Diego, a single interview was conducted, and findings from this city do not appear in most subsequent tabulations.

Of the 4 cities in Table II not visited, (Boston, Pittsburgh, Newark, Minneapolis-St. Paul) available information indicates the

[1]This was not the only criterion; for more on bases of city selection, see Appendix C.

TABLE II

Fifteen Largest Metropolitan Areas
With Youth Gang Survey Cities Indicated

	SMSA	Population, 1970[1]	Youth Gang Survey
1.	New York, N.Y.	11,571,899	*
2.	Los Angeles-Long Beach, Cal.	7,032,075	*
3.	Chicago, Ill.	6,987,947	*
4.	Philadelphia, Pa.-N.J.	4,817,914	*
5.	Detroit, Mich.	4,199,931	*
6.	San Francisco-Oakland, Cal.	3,109,519	*
7.	Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va.	2,861,123	*
8.	Boston, Mass.	2,753,700	-
9.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	2,401,245	-
10.	St. Louis, Mo.-Ill.	2,363,017	*
11.	Cleveland, Ohio	2,064,194	*
12.	Baltimore, Md.	2,070,670	*
13.	Houston, Tex.	1,985,031	*
14.	Newark, N.J.	1,856,556	-
15.	Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.	1,813,647	-

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce PC-(1)-B1
Bureau of the Census: 1970 Census of the Population
General Population Characteristics Table 66 pp.314-316

[1]Population changes between 1970 and 1973 have altered these numbers, but ranks remained unchanged.

possibility or likelihood of gang or group problems in all four, and suggests the desirability of expanding the survey to include these cities.

Respondents in all 12 cities were asked most or all of the following questions: In your judgment, is there a "gang problem" in this city? How serious do you consider this problem to be, first with respect to other serious crime problems (UCR Part I crimes), and second to other major urban problems? Do other designated agencies recognize the existence of a gang problem? If you feel there isn't a problem with gangs, are there problems with troublesome youth groups? Collective youth violence? Youthful crime "rings"? If so, how serious do you feel such problems are? Do other agencies recognize the existence of such problems?

Definition of "Gang": Before presenting the respondents' answers to these questions, it is necessary to examine the meaning they ascribed to the term "gang". Low consensus among respondents in their conceptions of the nature of a gang would necessarily introduce considerable ambiguity into their appraisals of the nature of gang problems. If, for example, some significant number of respondents were to consider as a "gang" any ad hoc assemblage of youths such as civil-disturbance looters or anti-school-integration demonstrators, or to apply the term to any sporadic assemblage of street-corner loungers, judgments that their city faced serious gang problems would have to be interpreted with considerable caution.[1]

1. An extended discussion of definitional issues is contained in W. B. Miller, "American Youth Gangs: Past and Present" in A. Blumberg, Current Perspectives on Criminal Behavior, 1974, pp. 213-221.

Following the questions as to the existence and seriousness of gang problems, each respondent was asked "Just how do you define the term "gang"? Two kinds of probes followed the replies. The first queried specifically as to elements omitted from the definitions (e.g. "Is it necessary for a group to engage regularly in illegal activity for you to consider it a gang?" "Does a group have to have a name in order to be a gang?" "Can a group be a gang without making special claim to a particular turf or territory?"). The second was intended to find out whether respondents made a distinction between "gangs" and "law-violating youth groups". A typical "hanging group" or "street group" was described in some detail (congregate around park, housing project, store; engage in noisy disturbance; commit minor offenses such as petty shoplifting, smoke marijuana, drunkenness, vandalism), and respondents were asked whether they

considered such groups to be "gangs".

Results of these queries for the six cities designated in Table IV as "gang problem" cities are shown in Table III. [1] Of initial significance is the fact that of 24 respondents providing codable answers to the "gang vs. group" question, 18, or three-quarters, denied the status of "gang" to "hanging" or "street corner" groups. Thus the majority of respondents in the six largest metropolitan areas reserved the use of the term "gang" for associational units which were both more formalized and more seriously criminal than the more common type of street group. What characteristics did respondents cite as major defining criteria of a "gang"?

Table III lists in rank order the five criteria most frequently cited, along with the percentage of respondents citing or accepting the specified criterion as an essential feature of a "gang".

The criteria most frequently cited were: violent or criminal behavior as a major activity of group members; group organized, with functional role-division and chain-of-command authority; identifiable leadership; continuing and recurrent interaction or association among group members; identification with and/or

---

[1] Analyses of responses for the six "group-problem" cities of the present survey, including comparisons of these with "gang problem" city responses, will be presented in a future report. The small number of cases on which present conclusions are based will be increased by the planned addition to the analysis of responses from eight additional gang- and group-problem cities in addition to the six for which data has been collected but not analysed.

TABLE III

Five Most Frequently Cited Criteria
for Defining a Gang: Six Gang-Problem Cities

N Respondents=57 : N Responses=158

	No. Responses specifying as defining criterion	No. Responses specifying criterion not necessary	% Responses specifying as defining criterion
1. Violent or criminal behavior a major activity of group members	30	11	73.2
2. Group organized, with functional role-division, chain-of-command	21	2	91.3
3. Identifiable leadership	20	0	100.0
4. Group members in continuing recurrent interaction	19	1	95.0
5. Group identifies with, claims control over, identifiable community territory	17	0	100.0
	107	14	88.4

claims of control over, some identifiable community territory or territories. Citations of these five represented 77% (121/158) of all cited criteria.

Rephrasing these separately cited criteria in more formal terms produces the following definition:

> A gang is a group of recurrently associating individuals with identifiable leadership and internal organization, identifying with or claiming control over territory in the community, and engaging either individually or collectively in violent or other forms of illegal behavior.

Several considerations are relevant to general utility of this respondent-based definition. One concerns those criteria which a minority of respondents asserted were not essential to the definition; a second concerns six less-frequently cited criteria not included in Table III; and a third concerns intercity variation

in definitional conceptions.

Results presented in Table III indicate a high degree of consensus in definitional conceptions among respondents representing a variety of professional pursuits in six different cities. Ninety percent or more were in agreement as to four of the five criteria, with the remaining criterion (illegality/violence) showing an agreement level of 73%. It is of interest that the criterion with the lowest level of general acceptance was also the one most frequently cited.

No systematic attempt was made to find out why some respondents felt that involvement in illegal behavior was not an essential criterion of a gang, and in some cases no reasons were offered. Reasons that were given varied considerably. The most common was that the major influence behind the formation of gangs is the natural tendency of similar-aged peers to form themselves into groups for a variety of purposes -- including companionship, seeking collective solutions to common problems, and self-protection -- and that while illegal behavior might often accompany this process, it was not per se an essential condition of gang formation (this position contradicts that of others who maintained that the commission of violent or illegal acts was in fact the central purpose behind the formation of gangs).

Other reasons were: gangs are sufficiently frightening that they can achieve their ends merely by threatening violence without having to engage in it; the gang to which the respondent belonged as a youth did not engage in illegality; conceiving a gang primarily in terms of illegal behavior overlooks the fact that much

of what gangs do is not illegal; once a community perceives a group as a "gang" they will be so defined whether or not they are involved in illegality.

The five criteria of Table III represent 77% of all criteria cited by the 57 respondents. The remaining 33% (51 responses) include a number of additional criteria relating to age, sex, group size, and others. Of these, the age factor is probably most important to definitional specificity. Eight of twelve respondents (two-thirds) who cited age specified that in their minds the term "gang" applies to youth or juveniles. The remaining four felt that groups containing adults could properly be designated gangs. Some of these had in mind units such as motorcycle gangs, whose members often include persons in their twenties and thirties. No respondent cited maleness as a criterion of gang membership, and several stated specifically that members could be either male or female.

Few respondents explicitly addressed the issue of size, apparently being satisfied with the size implication of the term "group". Different respondents used the numbers three, four, and five as the bottom size limit for a "gang". One respondent put the upper limit at three or four thousand. Also cited were: having a name and/or identifying dress or insignia; a clubhouse or other meeting place; having multiple units (age-level subdivisions, branches); and periodic combat with rival gangs. A final category included a set of diverse criteria such as maintaining a distinctive subculture or counterculture, being

by mutual loyalty, using the group to achieve status superior to that which one could achieve as an individual, and maintaining clandestine and/or ritualistic practices.

It is also important to know, in evaluating respondents' judgments as to the character of gang problems, to what degree conceptions of gangs may have varied by city. Comparing definitional criteria offered by local respondents shows little intercity variation. While the total number of responses is much too small to support statistically sound conclusions,[1] what evidence is available fails to show that the definitional criteria cited by respondents in any city differed significantly from those cited in others.

With regard to the distinction between a "gang" and a "group", all respondents in four of the six cities made the distinction, and in the two cities where some failed to do so, (Chicago, Detroit), a majority did. With regard to the five major defining criteria, the highest proportion of respondents in any city not accepting any of the criteria was one-third, and this degree of non-acceptance occurred in only two of thirty possible cases. (In Detroit, one-third of the respondents felt that illegal behavior and organization were not essential to the definition of a gang). In 19 of the 30 possible instances, no respondent disagreed with the inclusion of the criterion under consideration.

Thus, although additional cases would be needed to provide

---

[1]The descriptive matrix distributes 107 responses over 30 cells (five major criteria, six cities).

respectable statistical underpinning to these conclusions, preliminary data indicates that the definition presented on page 25 based on 158 definitional criteria cited by 57 respondents, corresponds quite closely with conceptions shared by a substantial majority of respondents in six major cities. The definition thus indicates quite specifically the kind of unit referred to in respondents' evaluations of gang problems in their cities.

Youth Gang Problems in Twelve Cities:

Table IV shows the responses of respondents representing 61 agencies in 12 cities to questions regarding the existence and seriousness of gang problems in their cities. The table indicates that at least some respondents in 11 of the 12 Site visit cities felt that their city was currently experiencing a problem with youth gangs. Four major categories of city can be distinguished on the basis of the degree of agreement among respondents as to the existence of a gang problem in their city. In the first category, all those questioned, or all but one, affirmed the existence of such a problem either on a city-wide basis or in particular urban districts. These cities are Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Only two of 39 agency representatives queried (one in Detroit, one in San Francisco) felt there was no

TABLE IV

Respondents' Estimates as to Existence and Seriousness of Problems with Youth Groups Specifically Designated as "Gangs"

N Cities = 12; N Respondents = 67

Proportion Reporting Group Problems		Estimate of Seriousness relative to most serious crime problems			
		High	Medium	Low	No Estimate
All, or all but one:	$\frac{37}{39}$ (95%)	Los Angeles Philadelphia Detroit	New York Chicago	San Francisco	
Majority:	$\frac{5}{8}$ (63%)		Cleveland	Washington	
Minority:	$\frac{4}{16}$ (25%)			St. Louis Baltimore New Orleans	
None:	$\frac{0}{4}$ (0%)				Houston
12 Cities:	$\frac{46}{67}$ (69%)				

gang problem in their city. In two additional cities, Cleveland and Washington, a majority of those questioned reported a gang problem, and in three others, St. Louis, Baltimore, and New Orleans, at least one respondent claimed that gang problems existed. In only one city, Houston, was there unanimous agreement that the city was not experiencing any problem with youth gangs.

How can one account for differences in the judgments of respondents in the five cities where was consensus was lacking? One reason relates to the part of the city respondents were familiar with; the survey found a surprising degree of ignorance among many respondents as to conditions in districts of their own cities they did not customarily contact. Another and probably more influential reason relates to differences in definitional conceptions--an issue discussed in the previous section.

It is clear that one can recognize the existence of a "problem" in the area of crime or other areas without at the same time perceiving it as a "serious" problem. Respondents were asked to evaluate the "seriousness" of the city's gang problem with respect to two scales of comparison: the first was other "serious" crime problems faced by the city. A list of such crimes was cited, based on previously obtained information as to crime problems in that city, but including only serious felonies -- the eight "Part 1" offenses designated in the Uniform Crime Reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. "Homicide" and "Armed Robbery" were two of the offenses most frequently cited for purposes of comparison. A second scale of comparison was a list of non-crime "urban problems" -- also derived from information specific to the city being surveyed, and generally including problems such as "housing," "fiscal problems," "race relations," and the like. Seriousness estimates based on this second scale are not included in the present report.

Respondents were asked to use a scale of 1 to 10 in rating seriousness with respect to the "serious crime" scale; numbers 1,2,3 were considered as indicating an estimate of "low" seriousness, 4,5,6 as "medium," and 7 through 10 as "high." Of the six cities with high respondent consensus as to the existence of a gang problem (hereinafter "gang-problem cities"), a majority of respondents in

three, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Detroit, rated the gang problem as "high"; in two, New York and Chicago, as "medium," and in one, San Francisco, as "low." Respondents in the "high" problem cities made comments such as "It is clearly an extremely serious problem." In the two "medium seriousness" cities, the "medium" estimate was often explained on the grounds that a city-wide judgment was being rendered, and that while gang problems were very serious in some areas, they were either absent or of low seriousness in others.

In fact, almost all respondents cited variation by districts as a complicating factor in making judgments. This was clearest in San Francisco, where all respondents rated the seriousness of the problem on a city-wide basis as "low," but at the same time every one rated seriousness as "very high" or "the highest" in one district -- Chinatown. It is clear that a "high" rating could have been obtained for all 6 cities by soliciting estimates only for specific districts, but the estimates recorded in the table reflect primarily city-wide judgments.[1]

Other factors enter into the "medium" serious ratings for the two largest cities, New York and Chicago, in the face of data presented later showing that the scope of the gang problem in these cities is greater than in some cities estimating higher seriousness. The enormity of the population masses involved here, and the profusion of and severity of "problems" both with other forms of crime and other urban conditions operates to pro-

[1] Intra-city variations in seriousness of gang problems involve important methodological and conceptual considerations. Attempts will be made during the second phase of this study to utilize finer intra-city distinctions, and to employ units such as police precincts or census tracts as part of the comparative analyses.

duce perceptions of lesser seriousness of gang problems when gauged against the totality of urban problems. Further, as will be discussed further, almost every Chicago respondent referred his "seriousness" estimates to the gang situation of the late 1960's, when an extraordinary development of "supergangs" in that city made a deep imprint on respondents' consciousness.

It is quite clear that the lack of consensus in Cleveland, Washington, St. Louis, Baltimore, and New Orleans most often represented definitional differences; a typical response would be "Well, it all depends on what you classify as "gang"; we have "violence-prone clusters" or "loosely-knit street corner groups" or "delinquent street clubs" that often present serious problems, but we don't consider these to be "gangs."" In Washington, a police official said "There are only five gangs in the city that are at all vigorous," while a social service worker in the same city said "We only recognize about five gangs in the city, but the police claim there are about 100."

Only in Houston was there unanimous agreement that the city had no gangs, however defined, and that there had been none since 1945. The case of Houston is of particular interest; of the 15 metropolitan areas of Table II, it is in all probability the city with the least serious "problems" with either gangs or groups; moreover, it is currently the 5th largest municipal city in the U.S., and while all larger cities report serious gang problems, Houston reports none. Further analysis of why only Houston, of the 6 largest cities (Detroit is sixth) reports no gang problems is central to the "explanational" component of the present survey, a component not included in this report.

Problems with Law-violating Youth Groups in Six Cities: As noted earlier, the notion of "gang" evokes in most people quite specific conceptions of a distinctive and readily recognizable type of unit -- conceptions, however, which may differ quite markedly from person to person. On the assumption that one respondent's "gang" might be another's "group" and vice versa, respondents were queried as to the existence of problems in their city with a set of gang-like manifestations which they might or might not consider as "gangs." Respondents were asked about "troublesome youth groups," "collective youth violence," "street corner groups," "neighborhood hanging groups," "youth/juvenile burglary or crime rings," and the like. It was assumed that the six "gang-problem" cities listed in Table III would also have "group" problems, so this question was not asked in those cities. If respondents reported problems with "youth groups," they were asked to provide seriousness estimates on the same basis as in the "gang"cities. Table IV shows responses of 25 respondents concerning "group" problems in their city.

Respondents reported problems with "groups" in every one of these cities. One common response to the query as to the existence of 4 or 5 kinds of collective youth crime was "All of the above." In only one city, Houston, did more than one respondent deny the existence of "group problems"; two out of four respondents, however, reported that such problems did exist. Of 25 respondents in the six cities, 22, or 88%, reported the existence of problems with one or more kinds of youth groups.

For the other five cities, Cleveland, Washington, New Orleans,

TABLE V

Respondents' Estimates as to Existence and Seriousness of Problems with Law-violating Youth Groups, Collective Youth Crime and Related Phenomena

N Cities = 6; N Respondents = 25

Proportion Reporting Group Problems		Estimate of Seriousness relative to most serious crime problems			
		High	Medium	Low	No Estimate
All or all but one:	$\frac{20}{21}$ (95%)	Cleveland Washington New Orleans	St. Louis		Baltimore
Half:	$\frac{2}{4}$ (50%)			Houston	
None:	0 (0%)				
6 Cities:	$\frac{22}{25}$ (88%)				

St. Louis, and Baltimore, respondents were unanimous (with one dissenter, in New Orleans) that one or more of the cited kinds of collective youth crime presented problems. In several instances, one of the cited manifestations was reported as absent; for example, "youth/juvenile burglary rings" were reported as absent by several respondents. The majority of respondents in Cleveland, Washington, and New Orleans rated the group problem as "high" in seriousness; in St. Louis as "medium" and in Houston as "low." Seriousness ratings were not solicited in Baltimore. Cleveland in particular stressed the seriousness of youth group problems; one police official said "It's pretty damn bad right now and getting worse."

Respondents' Estimates of the Recognition of Gang Problems by Others: Respondents in the six "gang problem" cities were asked for their judgments as to whether other groups or agencies (including other branches of their own) recognized a gang problem in the city. This question was asked both to ascertain the degree of correspondence between respondents' positions and their perceptions of others', and to get some notion of which city agencies or groups accorded higher or lower priority to problems of gang violence. The five agencies or groups for whom estimates were sought were the police, the municipal or county government, the schools, the social agencies, and the citizens or residents of the city. Tables IV and V show respondents' estimates.

Eighty-three percent of the 135 responses included a judgment that others perceived gangs as a problem.

TABLE VI

Respondents' Estimates as to whether Major Agencies or Groups Recognize the Existence of a Youth Gang Problem: By Agency

N Cities = 6 ("Gang Problem" Cities, Table II); N Responses = 135

Category of Agency/Group being Judged: All Cities	No. Responses	% Estimating Agency/Group Recognizes Existence of Gang Problem
1. Schools	29	96.5
2. City Residents	23	91.3
3. Police	31	90.3
4. Municipal/County Gov't.	29	68.0
5. Social Service Agencies	23	65.2
All Categories	135	82.9

For all six cities, the type of agency seen by others to be most cognizant of and concerned with youth gang problems was the schools, with 96% of respondents estimating that school personnel were concerned. Elementary, Junior and Senior High Schools were mentioned, with Junior High Schools most frequently cited in connection with gang problems. As will be discussed later, 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.

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 non-police personnel, attributed to the police a clear recognition of the gravity of the problem.

Perceptions of the Municipal or County governments and the social agencies, public and private, differed. While the majority attributed concern to these agencies, about 7 in 10, in contrast to the 9 in 10 estimates for schools, residents and police, felt that these agencies were concerned with 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 6 cities with respect to estimates of gang-problem recognition by others.

TABLE VII

Respondents' Estimates as to whether Major Agencies or Groups Recognize the Existence of a Youth Gang Problem: By City

N Cities = 6; N Responses = 135

City being Judged: All Agencies/Groups	No. Responses	% Estimating Agency/Groups Recognizes Existence of Gang Problem
1. New York	18	100.0
2. Los Angeles	21	95.2
3. Philadelphia	19	89.5
4. Detroit	22	81.8
5. Chicago	40	77.5
6. San Francisco	15	53.3
Six Cities	135	82.9

In New York, all respondents agreed that all five categories of agencies and citizenry recognized the existence and seriousness of gang problems. This is probably related to the saliency of media communication in this city; since 1971 youth gang problems have been 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, in San Francisco, the city judged to have the least serious problem of the six "gang-problem" cities, only about one-half of the respondents estimated that city residents and agencies recognized the existence of a gang problem. Only Chicago shows a figure incommensurate with the scope of the problem in that city. This is probably due to the circumstance cited in the discussion of Table IV; compared to an estimated 1,000 gangs and a reported 150 gang-related killings in one year during the "supergang" era of the 1960's, a mere estimated 700 gangs and 37 killings in 1974 appears as a problem of lesser seriousness.

Summary: Findings with respect to the question "Are major American cities currently experiencing problems with law-violating youth gangs or youth groups, and if so, how serious are these problems?" may be summarized as follows. In 12 major cities, including 11 of the 15 largest metropolitan areas, 70% of 67 criminal justice and social service professionals reported the existence of gang problems in their city. In 6 cities, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, New York, Chicago and San Francisco, all or all but one of persons questioned reported gang problems; in two other cities, Cleveland and Washington, a majority reported gang problems, and in three others, St. Louis, Baltimore, and New Orleans, a minority. In one, Houston, no respondent reported a gang problem. Seriousness of the gang problem was rated as "high" in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Detroit, "medium" in New York and Chicago, and

"low" in San Francisco.

Of those cities where agreement as to the existence of a gang problem was lower than those just cited, respondents in all six reported problems with some form of law-violating youth group. In 3 cities, Cleveland, Washington, and New Orleans, the seriousness of such problems was rated as "high"; in one, St. Louis, as "medium"; and in one, Houston, as "low."

Respondents showed a high level of agreement in their definitions of the term "gang". Approximately 90% agreed on five major defining criteria: organization, identifiable leadership, continuing association, identification with a territory, and involvement in illegal activity. Three-quarters differentiated between groups so defined and youth groups seen to lack some or all of these criteria.

Thus, in 12 cities whose metropolitan population of approximately 55 million comprises about 40% of the total population of all U.S. metropolitan areas, problems with either gangs or groups were reported in all 12, with the majority of respondents in 6 cities rating such problems as highly serious with respect to the most serious forms of crime, 4 rating seriousness as "medium" and one as "low." [1] These preliminary findings indicate that in the eyes of professionals in major cities who are closest to problems of youth crime, crime and violence perpetrated by members of youth gangs and/or law-violating youth groups currently constitute a crime problem of major scope and seriousness in urban America.

---

[1] No estimate was given for Baltimore.

III. The Size of the Problem: Numbers of Gangs, Law-violating Groups, and Gang/Group Members in Major United States Cities

Presentation of figures as to the numbers of gangs and/or law-violating youth groups and their membership which are at the same time reasonably accurate and reasonably comparable from city to city, involves unusual difficulties, as already noted. Among the problems encountered here are the absence of any uniform standards for defining and/or typing "gangs" (each city has its own definition and typologies); the absence in any United States city of an agency responsible for keeping account of the numbers of gangs and gang members independent of the organizational interests of particular service agencies; the continuing changes in numbers, sizes, designations, subdivision identity, locations, composition, of gangs in each city.

Pressures exist both to exaggerate and to minimize the size and seriousness of gang problems, and techniques are employed both to inflate and deflate figures. These opposing processes may exist in the same city at the same time (opposing interests present conflicting figures), or in the same city at different times (deflate one year, inflate the next, to show need for additional resources; inflate one year, deflate the next, to show success in dealing with gangs).[1]

---

[1] The expanded version of this interim report will present further detail as to the dynamics and politics of inflation-deflation procedures, including a discussion of the "overplay-underplay" process in representing the scope of gang problems.

Despite these problems, it is important for policy purposes to present the best possible estimates as to the numbers of gangs and gang members. A relatively reliable estimate [illegible]00 gang members in major cities would have considerably different implications for crime control priorities than an estimate of 25,000.

Table VIII presents estimates of numbers of gangs and gang members for the six "gang-problem" cities for the 1973-75 time period. The interpretation of this table will be facilitated by first considering the following data from Chicago.

TABLE VIII

Estimates of Numbers of Gangs and Groups in Chicago
1966, 1971, 1975

Year	Estimated No. "Groups"	Estimated No. "Gangs"	Estimated No. "Hard-Core Gangs"	Estimated No. Gang-Members
1967	900[1]	200[1]	20[1]	N.E.
1971	N.E.	N.E.	12-15[1]	3,000[1]
1975	700[3]	150[2]	10-12[2]	3,000-6,000

N.E. = No Estimate Obtained

[1]Source: Gang Intelligence Unit, Chicago P.D.

[2]Source: Gang Crimes Investigation Bureau, Chicago P.D.

[3]Source: Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee of U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee

In 1966 the commanding officer of the Gang Intelligence Unit of the Chicago Police Department made public departmental estimates showing that the police had recorded the existence of about 900 "youth groups" in the city, of which about 200 were sufficiently involved in criminal

activity to merit police attention (membership lists kept by the GIU) and thus to be designated "gangs", and that about 20 of these were "hard-core" -- that is, actively involved in serious violence and thus meriting close police surveillance. These figures reflect what is essentially a typology of different kinds of gangs, as used by the Chicago police. The "900" figure represents the "looser" definition which would include street corner groups, "hanging" groups, and others of the kind tabulated in Table III; the "200" figure represents the "stricter" definition which in general would correspond to those groups considered to be "gangs" as tabulated in Table IV, and the "20" figure represents a subtype of the latter, seen by the police as posing the most serious crime problems. In 1975, almost a full decade later, the corresponding figures were 700, 150, and 12. (The "gangs" and "hard-core" figures were provided by the Commanding Officer of Gang Crimes Investigation Unit, the GIU having been abolished in 1973, and the "groups" figure by the Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee of the Judiciary, on the basis of investigations conducted by the staff of Senator Birch Bayh, its chairman.)

While these figures appear to indicate something of a reduction in the size of the gang problem in Chicago (a decrease of 25% in the number of gangs estimated by the police in a nine-year period), what is significant here is the constancy of the ratios between types: in 1967, 22% of police-recognized groups were regarded as "gangs"; in 1975, 21%; in 1967, 10% of gangs were designated as "hard-core", and in 1975 about 8%. What appears here as an unusual degree of stability occurred during a period of enormous turbulence among

slum youth of the city, including a dramatic emergence and decline of highly-publicized "supergangs" -- in the aftermath of which many people felt that the "gang problem" in Chicago had all but disappeared. Estimated numbers of gang members also appear to show considerable stability; while no figure was obtained for 1967, extrapolations based on figures for 1971 and 1975 would indicate an approximate figure of about 6,000 members of gangs, so defined -- the same number as the "high" estimate for 1975.

The distinction between "gangs" and "groups" made explicitly in the Chicago estimates also affect interpretations of Table IX. In Philadelphia, for example, the police department in 1973 provided a public estimate of 88 gangs with a membership of 4,707, but mentioned also that there were many additional corner groups which did not meet their criteria for a gang (defending turf by violence); however, in their request to the city for operating funds for the same year, the department apparently decided that enough of the latter did meet the criteria of "gang" to raise their "gang" figure to 237 -- about two and a half times the number used in public statements. This kind of discrepancy shows how it is possible for agencies in any city to manipulate gang statistics simply by shifting the line of demarcation between "gangs" and "groups" in an upward or downward direction.

Table IX presents estimates for the 6 "gang-problem" cities, along with sources and dates of information. For each city except San Francisco, both a "high" and "low" estimate are given for all categories. More detailed information as to the exact sources and methods of estimation for all figures in the 22 cells of Table IX are given in Appendix B. In some cases estimates in column one (numbers of

TABLE IX

Numbers of Gangs, Gang Members in Six Gang-Problem Cities, 1973-1975

City		Estimated No. Gangs [1]	Source of Info	Date	Estimated No. Gang Members	Source of Info	Date
New York	high	473	P.D.	11/73	40,000	Juvenile Cts.	6/74
	low	315	P.D.	3/74	8,000-19,500	P.D.	3/74
Chicago	high	700	US Sen, J.D. Comm.	4/75	10,000	P.E.L.[2]	6/74
	low	150-220	P.D.	4/75	3,000-5,000	P.D.	4/75
Los Angeles	high	1,000+	P.D.	3/75	15,000	P.D.	1/75
	low	160	Juvenile Ct.	1/75	12,000	P.D.	3/75
Philadelphia	high	400	P.E.L.	6/74	15,000	P.E.L.	6/74
	low	88	P.D.	1/74	4,700	P.D.	1/74
Detroit	high	110	P.D.	4/75	1,250	P.D.	4/75
	low	30	Soc Agency, Bd. of Ed.	4/75	500	P.D., Soc Agency	4/75
San Francisco		20	P.D., Prob'n	2/75	250	P.D., Prob'n	2/75
Six Cities	high	2,700			81,500		
	low	760			28,450		

[1] See Appendix B for additional detail as to sources of high and low estimates.

[2] P.E.L. = Pennsylvania Economy League "The Gang Problem in Philadelphia" Report #375, June 1974.

gangs) derive from different sources than those in column two (numbers of gang members) so that caution should be exercized in attempting to derive average gang sizes from these figures.

High and low figures are given to present some notion of the order of discrepancy within cities as to size estimates, and to provide bases for both "conservative" and "non-conservative" totals.

With some exceptions, the major reason for discrepancies between "high" and "low" figures is definitional; "high" estimates generally involve the "looser" definitions which encompass the various kinds of law-violating youth groups cited earlier; "low" estimates are based on "stricter" definitions, generally including police-specified criteria such as involvement in serious violence, visible and explicit "leadership" and/or "organization", names and/or "colors", and other criteria commonly used to distinguish "gangs" from "groups".[1]

For Chicago, the "gang/group" distinction is explicitly made, as shown in Table VIII. The "1,000+" figure for Los Angeles clearly includes "groups", as shown in Appendix B. New York City's "high" figures include approximately 60 groups initially identified as possible gangs, but which upon further investigation failed to meet police criteria for "gangs". Detroit's "high" figure derives from the statement of a veteran police officer that he could cite 100 gang names for the East Side alone, but that these groups were relatively small, and constantly forming and reforming into different units.

Totals based on the "low" or most conservative estimates indicate a minimum of 760 gangs with a membership of approximately

---

[1] For one citation of these criteria, see W. Miller, "White Gangs" in J. Short, Ed., Modern Criminals, Transaction Books, 1970, p. 82.

28,500 youth in the six "gang problem" cities. These figures provide one basis for judging the relative importance of two major juvenile justice problems areas -- the youth correctional system and serious collective youth crime. On an average day in 1970-71, the total number of juveniles confined in all jails and all juvenile detention facilities in all 50 states was approximately 19,600. [1] The conservative estimate of the number of members of police-recognized gangs in 6 cities is thus approximately one and a half times the average daily number of juveniles confined in all jails and detention facilities throughout the whole country.

The total "high" estimate for the six cities, including as it most probably does estimates of both "gangs" and "groups", substantially exceeds the total number of youth (under 18) arrested for violent Part I crimes in the whole of the United States for the year 1973. (Total persons under 18 arrested for murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, 50 states, 63,700; total "high" estimate of gang/group members, six cities, 81,500, or about 25% higher[2]).

On the basis of the "low" figures in Table XIV, it would appear that New York currently estimates the highest number of gangs (315), and Chicago the next highest (150-220). However, Los Angeles estimates the highest number of gang members (12,000), with New York second (8,000).

---

[1] R.C. Sarri "Under Lock and Key: Juveniles in Jails and Detention" National Institute of Juvenile Corrections, University of Michigan December, 1974, Table 2.5.

[2] Crime in the United States, 1973: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Clarence M. Kelley, Director, September 6, 1974, Table 29.

In addition to showing the range of estimates, the difference between the "high" and "low" estimates for the six cities -- approximately 2,000 gangs and 53,000 members -- has a direct policy implication. Insofar as these figures represent members of "groups" identified by official agencies but not currently considered sufficiently violent or well-organized to merit the designation "gang", they represent the size of the youth population in the six cities which currently manifests some potential, of whatever degree, of taking the form of "gangs" rather than "groups".

Not included in the totals just reported are estimates for the five "group-problem" cities of Table V. In addition, they do not include estimates for more than a dozen other major cities which were not part of the initial survey, but are possible "gang problem" cities. Newspaper files for a seven month period between November 1974 and June 1975 show that the terms "gang" or "gang fight" were used in connection with collective youth crimes in approximately 50 United States cities and towns other than the twelve cities of Table IV.

Among these are the cities of Albany, Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, Denver, Des Moines, Newark, New Britain, Bridgeport, Hartford, Miami, Memphis, Jacksonville, Providence, El Paso, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh. It is almost impossible to ascertain on the basis of these newspaper stories, and in the absence of site-visit data-collection, whether the term "gang" in these reports refers to the kind of group found in the major "gang-problem" cities, but there is a good likelihood that there are gang problems in at least some of these cities, and possibly in most.

In addition to estimates of the total numbers of gang and group members in major "gang-problem" cities, it is important as well to adjust for city size, and attempt to estimate the proportion of youth in the several cities seen to be affiliated with gangs or groups. Table X uses the figures of Table XIV to provide such approximations. An "average" estimate of the numbers of gang/group members in each city was obtained by adding the highest and lowest estimates and dividing by two; "high" estimates were derived either by using the "high" estimate of group members, or by multiplying the high estimate of number of gangs by an average estimated gang size of 30.

TABLE X

Estimated Proportions of Youth Affiliated with Gangs or Law Violating Groups in Six Gang-Problem Cities

City	"Average" Estimate[1]	"High" Estimate[2]
Philadelphia	59.1[3]	88.6
Los Angeles	57.3	63.6
New York City	39.1	65.1
Chicago	22.0	33.9
Detroit	6.3	9.0
San Francisco	0.5	0.5
Six Cities	26.7	54.6

1. Table XIV "high" and "low" estimates/2 ÷ No. Male youth 10-19 U.S. Census 1970.

2. Table XIV "high" estimates of gang-members or "high" estimate of No. gangs x 30, which ever higher, ÷ No. male youth 10-19 U.S. Census 1970.

3. Rate per 1,000 males 10-19.

On the basis of the "average" estimates, Philadelphia and Los Angeles show the highest proportions of gang/group members to the male adolescent population -- approximately 6 per 100 youth. New York shows about 4, Chicago 2, and Detroit and San Francisco less than one. For all six cities the rate is about 37 per thousand, or something under 4 per cent. The ranking of cities according to these "proportion" estimates corresponds closely to the "seriousness" estimates shown in Table IV. The one exception is Detroit, whose rate relative to the four largest cities does not correspond to the "high" seriousness evaluations made by local respondents.

The "high" estimates suggest that close to one out of ten male adolescents in Philadelphia is affiliated with a gang or group, about six per hundred in Los Angeles and New York, and something over three per hundred in Chicago. For the six cities, the figures suggest that something on the order of 11 adolescent males per 200 are affiliated with gangs or groups.

It should be added that these estimates in all likelihood substantially underestimate the actual proportions of youth affiliated with gangs or law-violating groups in the six cities. Even the "high" estimates, which do in some cases include units more "loosely" defined, are still substantially influenced by the "stricter" definitions which reflect law-enforcement purposes of police agencies rather than "informational" purposes of a census-type survey or investigation.

The likelihood that a careful gang/group census based on clearly defined descriptive criteria would yield higher figures is suggested by statements from local respondents. In Los Angeles

the Commanding Officer of the Gang Activities Section of the Police Department said "There are thousands of gangs in Los Angeles ; every park has a gang, every bowling club has a gang..." A youth worker in Chicago said "Every community has a lot (of street groups)-- maybe three or four. In some areas you find one in each block--sometimes, one in each building! A colleague contested the "three or four per community" estimate, saying "There are two or three every block, not every community!"

Summary: Accurate data as to the actual numbers of gangs and gang members now active in major cities are extremely difficult to obtain. However, it is important for policy purposes to have some notion, however general, of the size of the gang problem. "Low" estimates indicate a minimum of 760 gangs and 28,500 gang members in the six "gang-problem" cities; "high" estimates, which still in all probability err on the conservative side, indicate 2,700 gangs and/or law-violating youth groups, and 81,500 gang/group members. On the basis of "low" estimates, New York City, with police estimates of 315 gangs with 8,000 "verified" or 20,000 "alleged" members, has the highest gang population of the six cities, and San Francisco with 250 estimated gang members the lowest. When adjusted for population size, Philadelphia shows the highest proportion of the six cities, with approximately 60 gang members per thousand male youth aged 10 to 19.

It should be noted in addition that while the numbers presented here indicate a gang/group problem of considerable scope, the general impact of gangs on the crime problems in a city, and

in particular on citizen perception of the gravity of such problems, is actually considerably greater than the numbers alone would indicate. This is because gang crime tends to embody a degree of violence, and because images of gang violence tend to evoke a sense of threat in the community, that are not found in the case of crimes committed by non-gang populations of equivalent size.

IV. Social Characteristics of Gang Members in Six Cities
Age, Sex, Social Status, Locale, National Background

With few exceptions, studies of gangs and gang members conducted during the past fifty years have shown that the great majority of youth gang members share a common set of social characteristics. Most gang members resemble one another in four respects: sex, age, social class status, and locale. They are predominantly male, range in age from about 12 to about 21, originate in families at the lower educational and occupational levels, and are found primarily in the low-income or "slum" districts of central cities. In a fifth respect, ethnicity, or national background, or race, gangs have shown wide variation -- with membership during different historical periods reflecting the full range of national background groups composing our society. What is the situation of the gangs of the 1970's, which differ in some important respects from their predecessors, with respect to these traditional social characteristics of gang members?

Accompanying the renewed concern over gang problems in the 1970's has been a questioning of the applicability to contemporary gangs of each of these "traditional" sets of characteristics. Claims are made that the age of gang members has expanded both upwardly and downwardly -- that violent gang activity among 6 and 7 year olds has become prevalent, and that men through their twenties and thirties are playing a much larger role in gangs. Female gang activity, traditionally far less prevalent than male, is said to have become far more common; claims are made that city slums are no longer the primary habitat of gangs, but that they are now found

equally in middle class suburban areas. Claims have also been made that the current gang problem in the U.S. is now almost entirely a black problem in contrast to the multiple ethnic statuses of gangs of the past. What are the findings of the survey with respect to these claims?

Age of Gang Members

Larger gangs have traditionally comprised a set of age-differentiated subdivisions ("segments"), bearing names such as "Pee-wees", "Midgets", "Juniors", "Old Heads", and the like. Respondents in all six "gang problem" cities reported the existence of this phenomenon, with some reporting it as very prevalent.

The notion that a substantial number of gang members are now older than was formerly the case ("Some are in their late twenties and even thirties") is particularly prevalent in New York. Two major factors are cited; the first is based on the thesis that increased gang activity is largely a product of returning Viet Nam veterans, who, in resuming gang membership, brought with them the knowledge and weaponry of actual military combat. The second factor involves a current version of the "Fagin" thesis (older man uses youths as criminal agents) which asserts that adults and/or older gang members delegate specific crimes to juveniles who are liable to less severe penalties than adults. In Los Angeles claims of involvement of older men apply primarily to the traditional Mexican communities, where "vetaranos" often maintain some order of affiliation with gang names in particular barrios well into their adult years. The notion that a substantial number of

gang members are now younger ("Six and seven year olds are heavily into robbery and burglary") is related to the thesis that the age of violent criminality is becoming progressively lower. (One New York respondent said "The average violent offender used to be about 16, but is now 12-14").

Similar claims of the expansion of the gang-member age range are made in other cities as well. There is undoubtedly some basis in fact for both types of claim, but preliminary findings seem to indicate rather clearly that what age expansion has occurred does not represent a substantial development.

It seems likely that claims of significant age-range expansion derive from overgeneralizations from 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 XI presents pooled figures obtained in response to the question "What is your estimate of the age-range of the bulk of gang members in this city?"

TABLE XI

Respondents' Estimates of Age-range of Majority of Gang Members

City	Estimated Age Range	Estimated "Peak" Age
New York	10-22	17, 18
Chicago	8-22	N.E.
Los Angeles	10-22	17, 18
Philadelphia	8-22	18 (median)
Detroit	12-20	N.E.
San Francisco	12-20	N.E.

These estimates do not diverge significantly from the traditional 12-21 range. Estimates offered by some respondents as to the "peak" age of gang membership in three of the six cities are also surprisingly similar. The "younger age" thesis is reflected in the fact that in two cities, Chicago and Philadelphia, respondents used the age of 8 as their lower limit, and in two others, New York and Los Angeles, 10. The fact that age 22 represents the upper estimate in four of six cities does not correspond to the notion that a substantial number of contemporary gang members are in their late twenties or thirties.

Table XII provides even less support to the "substantial age-expansion" thesis. These figures are derived from compilations of reported arrests of gang members during the 1970-'74 period. Of 807 gang-member arrests reported for the four largest cities, 93% fell within the 14-21 age-span, and 82 % within the 14-19 range. Only 6% of those whose arrests were reported were younger than 13 or older than 23. In all four cities the modal age was 16-17, a figure approximating respondents' estimates of 17-18 as "peak" years of gang membership.

The low 4% for the "13 and below" category could be attributed at least in part to a general reluctance by police to arrest early and pre-teen youth, but this interpretation would also imply a greater willingness to arrest those at the higher age levels -- a proposition which is not supported by the very low 2.1% figure for the 23 and over age category. Distributions for the four largest cities are remarkably similar. For example, percentages

TABLE XII

Ages of Gang Member Perpetrators and Victims

Four Cities: N=807

	New York	Chicago	Los Angeles	Philadelphia	Four Cities
	1971-74 N=215[1]	1971-74 N=121[1]	1970-75* N=171[1]	1971-73 N=292[2]	N=807
	%	%	%	%	%
Age Category					
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 and older	4.5	0.0	4.1	0.0	2.1
	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

____ = mode

1. Perpetrators, victims reported in daily press from police sources.
2. Assailants only: Pennsylvania Economy League Report, p. 10.

* Thru April

of those 17 and under vary only about 5% among the four cities (60 to 66%).

Preliminary 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.

Sex 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, frequently bearing a feminized version of the male gang name (Crips, Cripettes; Disciples, Lady Disciples), generally comprises 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. Autonomous female gangs have been relatively rare. Although stories are frequently told about seriously criminal and/or violent behavior engaged in by females, often undertaken in the process of abetting male violations, arrests of female gang members have generally been far fewer than those of males, and their criminality tends to be substantially less serious.

None of the information collected in the initial phase of the survey indicates that the gangs of the 1970's differ signifi-

cantly from their predecessors in the above respects. The existence of female auxiliaries of male gangs was reported for all six gang-problem cities. In New York police estimated that about one half of the gangs they knew of had female branches. However, their number was estimated at only about 6% of the total known gang population. The number given for fully autonomous female gangs in all of the Bronx and Queens (population, 1970, 3.4 million) was only 6. A general estimate that gang members are 90% or more male probably obtains for all gang cities.

Despite claims by some that criminality by females, either in general or in connection with gang activity, is both more prevalent and violent than in the past, what data were available did not provide much support to such claims. For example, of 4400 arrests of gang members recorded by Chicago police in 1974, about 400, under 10%, 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. The classic rationale for gang fighting, avenging the impugned honor of females, was frequently cited. 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 of Gangs

Groups of adolescents customarily congregate in communities of all sizes, in all regions, and at all economic levels. However, the kinds of youth congregations whose illegal activities are sufficiently threatening and persistent as to earn them the designation "gang" 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 have affected both the distribution of urban populations and the subcultures of youth. In response to a complex set of processes involving racial and ethnic migrations, development of extensive urban-area motor highway systems, and others, 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 outmigrants have been middle- and working class, many lower-income populations have also been directly affected. Concomitantly there have been significant changes in basic orientations of many middle class youth respecting traditional morality, the legitimacy of official authority, and value of the "work-ethic" and other "value" issues.

Both of these developments, along with others, have laid the groundwork for what could be a serious erosion of the demographic and cultural conditions associated with the concentration of gangs in "inner-city" areas. And 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, respondents were asked the following question. "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. There has recently 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?"

Somewhat surprisingly, of 30 codable responses to this question in the six gang-problem cities, 26 (87%) agreed either with some qualification or without qualification that no modification of the "traditional" generalization as to gang concentration was necessary for their city. The city whose respondents showed most unanimity was Los Angeles, with four out of six giving an unqualified "no modification" answer, one a qualified "no modification", and one an ambiguous answer. Of the five respondents not supporting the "traditional" statement, three gave equivocal or non-responsive answers, one a qualified rejection (in Detroit), and only one a flat rejection (San Francisco).

Given this unexpected degree of consensus that the primary locus of serious gang activity in the 1970's, as in the past, is the "slum" areas of cities, some qualifications, derived both from other data and from the "qualified agreement" responses, are called

for (one-half of the "no-modification" responses were qualified). One major aspect relates to the fact that the terms "inner-city" and "slum/ghetto" today 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 30'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/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" areas to "outer-city", ring-city, or suburban areas -- often to formerly middle- or working-class neighborhoods, with special concentration in housing project areas. The gangs are still in the "ghettos" but these are often, in the 1970's, at some remove from their traditional "inner-city" locations.

The development of problematic gangs in the suburbs (or "out in the county" for several cities) was noted as a major development by surprisingly few respondents, 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 made by some that as ethnic slum populations have moved more widely throughout the metropolitan area they have taken their gangs with them. The above-cited consensus in Los Angeles is particularly notable in this respect in light of the fact that both respondents and media report movements by Mexicans and others from traditional barrios such as East Los Angeles into county areas, and also report serious gang problems in communities like Compton, which are outside the city limits. One Los Angeles respondent noted these apparent inconsistencies but stated explicitly that "the gang problem diminishes the more you move away from the center city".

As in the case of numerous other factual issues treated in this preliminary report, information as to the actual prevalence and seriousness of youth gang activity in the new suburbs, ring communities, and "in the county", as well as information as to gang activity among middle-class youth, remains sufficiently incomplete as to call for further investigation.

National Background of Gang Members

In the absence of carefully-collected information on gangs and groups in major cities, it is impossible to present an accurate picture of their racial and/or ethnic status. However, since the issue of race or ethnicity figures prominently in any consideration of gangs and has significant policy implications, it is important to attempt at least some general estimates.

Respondents in the six gang-problem cities were asked first to identify the major racial, ethnic, or national background categories represented in local gangs, and secondly, to essay some estimate of the general proportions of each major category. 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 then, should be regarded very much as approximations which could possibly fall quite wide of the mark.

Four national origin categories are delineated--African origin ("black"), Asian origin (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Thai, Samoan, American Indian, others); European origin, except Hispanic (English, Italian, Irish, Slavic, Scandinavian, German, Albanian, others), and Spanish-speaking county (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Panamanian, others). The latter category is not coordinate with the others, in that it is defined linguistically rather than on the basis of continent of ancestral origin; moreover, those categorized as "Hispanic" often represent complex racial and nationally mixtures (e.g., European Spanish, American Indian, African). Despite this anthropological heterogeneity, "Hispanic" is a sociologically meaningful category in contemporary United States.

TABLE XIII

Ethnic/Racial Background of Gang/Group Members in Six Gang-Problem Cities by Continent of Ancestral Origin

	Africa		Asia		Hispanic - Europe Africa America		Other Europe		Est. No. Gang Memb (low-high average)	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
NYC	10,150	(35)	1,450	(5)	14,500	(50)	2,900	(10)	29,000	(100.0)
Chicago	4,725	(60)	225	(3)	2,250	(30)	525	(7)	7,500	(100.0)
L.A.	9,000	(35)	2,700	(20)	4,725	(35)	1,350)	(10)	13,500	(100.0)
Phila.	9,000	(90)	0		500	(5)	500	(5)	10,000	(100.0)
Detroit	745	(85)	0		45	(5)	85	(10)	875	(100.0)
San. Fran.	15	(5)	235	(90)	15	(5)	0		250	(100.0)
Six Cities	29,135	(47.6)	4,610	(7.5)	22,035	(36.0)	5,360	(8.8)	61,125	(100.0)

TABLE XIV

Major Ethnic Categories of Gang Members in Six Cities

	No.	%
Black	29,000	47.6
Hispanic	22,000	36.1
Non-Hispanic white	5,400	8.8
Asian	4,600	7.5
	61,000	100.0

As summarized in Table XIV the totals of Table XIII yield estimates that approximately half of the gang members in the six gang-problem cities are black, somewhat over a third Hispanic, and somewhat under one-tenth Asian and non-Hispanic white. Thus about four-fifths are black or Hispanic. On a city by city basis, percentages vary widely from the six city totals. The estimated percentage of black gangs ranges from 90% in Philadelphia to 5% in San Francisco. In three cities, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago, black gang members are in a majority, and in three in a minority. New York leads in estimated numbers of Hispanic gang members, with about one half Hispanic (primarily Puerto Rican) followed by Los Angeles, with approximately one third (primarily Mexican). Chicago also estimates about one third Hispanic (locally termed "Latin" or "Latino"), with Hispanic gangs reported as present but in small numbers in the other three cities.

Asian gangs (also called "Oriental"), representing a relatively new development in United States cities, comprise the bulk of the gang problem in San Francisco, but are reported as well for Los

Angeles, New York, and Chicago. While most attention is paid to what are called "Hong Kong Chinese", a rather surprising range of different Asian backgrounds are represented; Filipino gangs are reported as an increasing problem in San Francisco, and Los Angeles, in addition to Chinese and Filipino gangs, reports gangs of Korean, Japanese, Thai, and other Asian origins.

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

As in the past, the bulk of youth gangs are homogeneous with respect to ethnic status; some white gangs may include a few blacks; "multi-national Catholic" (e.g., Irish, Italian, Polish) gangs are not uncommon among whites; some Puerto Rican gangs, often representing complex racial mixtures, may include a few ancestrally African blacks. But in general the religion, race, and national background of gang members within particular gangs are similar.

Summary: Age, sex, social status, and locality characteristics of gang members in 6 cities during the 1st half decade of the 1970's are not substantially different from those of past eras. Information both from respondents and other sources indicates

that some changes have affected each of these characteristics, and some striking exceptions to each generalized conclusion can be cited. But overall changes are of considerably lesser magnitude than indicated through the consideration of relatively small numbers of extreme or atypical cases. There appears to have been some expansion at both higher and lower levels of the "traditional" age range of 15-21, but this probably does not exceed one or two years at the most at each end of the range. Preliminary data show that 93% of gang member assailants and victims are between 14 and 21, that the modal ages for arrests are 16 and 17, and that the "peak" age for gang membership is about [illegible].

Reports indicate more violent activity by some female gang members than in the past, but the actual proportion of male to female gang members has shown little change, with males outnumbering females by about 10 to 1. There are few "autonomous" girls' gangs, and those that exist are seen to pose far less of a threat than their male counterparts. As in the past, the more seriously criminal or violent gangs tend to be concentrated in the "slum" or "ghetto" areas of the cities, but in many instances the actual locations of these disorders have shifted away from central or "inner-city" areas to "outer-city" or suburban communities outside city limits. There is 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, not presented here, suggests

of the 1820-1860 period (German, British Isles, Scandinavians) are substantially underrepresented in contemporary urban gangs.

The similarity to the past inheres in the fact that the ethnic statuses 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 has 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 present period is no exception. Ethnic categories most heavily represented in gang populations are by and large the more recently migrated groups -- blacks (south to north, urban to rural, or both), Hispanic (Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba), Asian (Hong Kong, Philippine Islands). 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.

But in general, the ethnic categories most heavily represented in gang populations are those whose educational and occupational status - due either to recency of immigration and/or other constraints - has not moved beyond the lower levels. The social observers of New York City in the 1880's, when the city was swarming with Irish gangs, would be 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.

increased development among many blue collar and some middle class youth of gang-like manifestations such as "burglary rings" and vandalism gangs which have been responsible for many burglaries and extensive property destruction . suburban or ring-city communities.

The ethnic or national background status of contemporary gangs shows 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. Today there is no "majority" ethnic category, but the bulk of gang members, about 4/5ths, are either black or Hispanic. The rise in the proportions of Hispanic gangs to over one-third of the estimated totals, and their presence in all six cities, represents a new development on the American scene. The rise in numbers of Asian gangs represents an even more marked departure from the past. Accepted doctrine for many years has been that oriental youth pose neglible problems in juvenile delinquency or gang activity; this accepted tenet has been 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 is now almost equal to that of white gangs, and may exceed their number in the near future. Gangs of non-Hispanic European origins -- both the "classic" white ethnics of the 1880-1920 period (Irish, Italians, Jews, Slavs) and the classic ethnics

V. Gang-Related Killings and Other Officially-Recorded Gang-Member Crimes

In appraising the seriousness of national youth gang problems in the 1970's, a major question is "How lethal are the criminal activities of contemporary gangs?" Probably the single most common basis for police action with respect both to youth groups and gangs can be encompassed under the broad category "disorderly behavior"; police each year respond to hundreds of thousands of complaints of boisterous behavior, drunken noisemaking, obstructive congregation, and the like, by the thousands of youth groups in United States communities. But such activities, despite their ubiquity, enormous volume, and capacity to engender immeasurable annoyance, can hardly be said to constitute a major threat to the internal security of the republic.

The remainder of this interim report will concern itself with kinds of gang behavior which do in fact constitute serious criminality--presenting first material with respect to statistical prevalence, and second more descriptive treatments of activities such as school-related violence, forms of gang assault, weaponry, and others.

Gang-related Killings

The central and archtypical form of violent crime is murder. In the 1970's, the phenomenon of deaths which occur in connection with gang activity has been subject to far more direct attention as a specific kind of measure than in the past. Reasons for this will be discussed

in the expanded version of this report. Despite its importance, attempts to present data relevant to this issue which are reliable and comparable from city to city involve all the difficulties, and a few more, previously noted for gang-related information in general.

To start with, each city has its own terminologies and definitions, with explicit rationales sometimes present and sometimes not. At least five terms for loss of life are used--murder, homicide, manslaughter, killing, and death, with little consistency of definition. The term "gang-related homicide" is used in New York and Philadelphia; "youth-gang homicides" in Chicago. The cities use different criteria for determining whether a killing is "gang-related".

One might suppose that a relatively simple criterion would suffice; killings would be considered "gang-related" if members of known gangs were either assailants or victims. But in Chicago, a killing is considered as "gang-related" only if it occurs 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 classify as a "gang-related death" any form of murder, homicide, or manslaughter in which gang members are in any way involved. A security guard killed in the attempt to forestall a robbery by a single gang member would be tabulated as a gang-related death. Moreover, Los Angeles figures include 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, city police may at any time decide to change their methods of reckoning whether a killing is "gang-related" in response to essentially political pressures, so that even figures for two successive years may not be comparable.

Table XV, which provides the most direct indication of the degree of lethality of contemporary gangs, must be interpreted with the above considerations in mind. Such interpretation is facilitated, however, by footnotes indicating the presence of factors of the type just noted.

Table XV

Gang-Related Killings: Gang-Problem Cities
1972-74

City	1972	1973	1974	3 year total	Average/year
New York	57	41	30[1,4]	128	43
Chicago[2]	45	20	37	102	34
Los Angeles[3]	32	39	70	141	47
Philadelphia	39	44	43[1,5]	126	42
San Francisco	5	10	13	28	9
Five Cities[6]	178	154	193	525	175

1. Method of determining if "gang related" different from previous year.

2. Includes only homicides occuring in connection with explicitly-designated gang fights.

3. Includes Cycle Gang and Car Club incidents.

4. Includes Detective Bureau figure of 12 plus 18 additional cases recorded by Youth Aid Division.

5. Includes police figure of 32 plus additional 11 recorded by Pennsylvania Governor's Justice Commission.

6. Data from Detroit not available.

Table XV indicates the number of gang-related killings (including murders, homicides, and other deaths, as locally defined) recorded in five of the gang-problem cities for the years 1973, 1974, and 1975. The total is 525, a figure equivalent to approximately one in five of all juvenile homicides in these cities, as will be shown in Table XVI. Trends over the three years appear to indicate a sharp rise in Los Angeles, a gradual rise in San Francisco, a drop followed by a rise in Chicago, little change in Philadelphia, and a substantial drop in New York.[1]

In connection with the latter, it is important to note that in two cities, New York and Philadelphia, a change in methods of determining whether homicides were to be recorded as "gang-related" was instituted by the police between 1973 and 1974. In New York, prior to 1974, the responsibility for determining whether a homicide was gang-related was assigned to the Gang Intelligence Unit, which maintains extensive files on gang members, and on the basis of which one can readily ascertain whether a murder victim or suspect is a known gang member.

In 1974 this responsibility was taken away from the gang unit and given to the Detective Bureau. Officials of this division state that they designate a homicide as "gang-related" on the basis of information gathered at the scene by the investigating officer or in the course of subsequent investigation. It is not known whether or not the Detective Bureau utilizes the gang membership lists compiled by the GIU. Officials of the Gang Unit claim

---

[1] New York City and Los Angeles record "attempted" as well as successfully executed gang-related murders. In 1973, approximately 400 "Assaults with intent to murder" were recorded for the two cities, giving an approximate "success rate" of one actual murder for every five attempts.

that they have not been able to learn from the Detective Bureau exactly how the determination of the "gang-related" is currently made. The apparent drop in homicides between 1973 and 1974 must therefore be interpreted with considerable caution. It may well represent a true reduction in gang related killings; on the other hand, it is also likely that some or all of the reduction reflects changes in data-gathering methods rather than a true reduction.[1]

In Philadelphia, the actual details of the change in methods of determining whether a homicide was gang related, instituted the same year, are not known, having been reported simply as a "change". As in New York, the change in methods was accompanied by a substantial drop in the number of gang homicides reported by the police--from 44 to 32. This reduction was utilized by the former police chief, a candidate for re-election as mayor, as evidence of increased effectiveness by his administration in coping with gang violence--a major campaign issue in Philadelphia. However, in contrast to New York where police statistics were not publicly challenged from outside the department, agencies not directly related to the police or municipal government have been keeping independent tabulations. One of these, the Regional Planning Council of the Pennsylvania State Governor's Justice Commission released data

---

1. Detective Bureau figures released in February of 1975 recorded 12 youth gang homicides for 1974, while figures provided by the Youth Aid Division in June put the figure at 30. A March newspaper study interpreted the apparent drop from 41 to 12 homicides as evidence for a "lull in the illegal activities of gangs" (NYT March 23, 1975).

showing that 11 killings in addition to the 32 recorded by the police could be categorized as "gang-related" on the basis of information they had collected, and the figure in Table XV, which incorporates these 11 cases, thus shows essentially no change over the previous year rather than a reduction.

In Los Angeles, some respondents reported that political considerations also influenced the police-released figures on gang homicides--only in the opposite direction from New York and Philadelphia. Los Angeles is in the throes of an intense struggle between liberal and conservative forces over the proper legal handling of juveniles. Police figures showing a dramatic rise in gang-related deaths are used in support of their contention that the failure of the courts and corrections to prevent the return to the community of violent, hard-core, repeat offenders contributes directly to youth violence in general and gang murders in particular. One respondent said "Gang-killings in Los Angeles will rise so long as it is politically expedient for them to do so." One element in calculating gang-related deaths in Los Angeles, as mentioned earlier, is that killings involving members of motorcycle gangs and van clubs are designated as "gang-related", along with those of the more numerous street gangs.

Figures for Chicago are based on the most restrictive definition of any of the four cities; as noted earlier, only killings occurring in the course of explicitly-designated gang fights are categorized as "gang homicides". Since this criterion excludes a wide range of assaultive crime involving gang members (e.g., gang members shoot an

adult who has appeared as a court witness against them) there is little doubt that Chicago figures represent a substantial undercount of possible gang-related homicides. Although no direct information is available as to changes instituted by police in reckoning gang homicides, one might speculate that very high gang-related homicide figures in the late 1960's (e.g., 150 in 1967) may have served as an inducement for officials to adopt a much more restrictive definition.

Influences extrinsic to the task of gathering accurate and systematic information as to gang-related killings, then, are seen to affect figures presented for each of the four largest cities. On the basis of these figures, it would appear that the average yearly number of gang-related killings for the five cities was about 175--with a decrease in 1973 over the previous year (about 13%), and a rise to higher levels in 1974 (25% over 1973). How do the five cities rank on the basis of population-adjusted rates?

Table XVI

Rates of Gang-related killings: Five Cities 1972-1974

City	Three year Totals	Rate[1]
Philadelphia	126	7.4
Los Angeles	141	6.0
Chicago	102	3.5
New York	128	2.1
San Francisco	28	0.6
Five Cities	525	3.9

1. Per 10,000 Males 10-19, U.S. Census 1970.

Table XVI suggests that Philadelphia gangs are the most lethal, with approximately one in every thousand male youths being victimized by gang killings every three years. Los Angeles is next, with a rate of 6 per 10,000 for the three year period, and San Francisco the lowest, with a rate of 6 per 100,000. For the five cities, about four youth per 10,000 males age 10 to 19 were killed by gang violence during the three year period.

Do these gang-related killings represent any significant proportion of the total number of juvenile homicides in the gang-problem cities? Table XVII shows wide variation from city to city in the proportion of gang-related killings to juvenile homicides--with San Francisco figures suggesting that estimated numbers of gang killings are equivalent to almost three-quarters of all juvenile homicides, in contrast to a figure of about one in ten for Chicago. In Los Angeles equivalent figures are four in ten, and in Philadelphia three. Figures for the five cities of Table XV suggest that gang related killings are equivalent to about one in four of all juvenile homicides--a substantial proportion.

Table XVII

Juvenile Homicides and Gang-related Killings

City: Year	Murder/Homicide arrests, persons 17 & under	Gang-related killings as percent of juvenile homicides
	No.	Percent
San Francisco: 1974	18	72
Los Angeles: 1973	92	42
Philadelphia: 1972	127	30
New York: 1973	268[1]	15
Chicago: 1973	188	10
Five Cities	693	24

1. Years 16 & 17 via extrapolation.

Gang Member Arrests

Information as to the numbers of gang members arrested in major cities can provide some indication of the amount of police effort consumed in dealing with gang-member crime. Relevant data are difficult to obtain. For 1973, overall arrest figures were obtained only for New York; for 1974, however, figures were obtained directly or estimated on the basis of partial data for the three largest cities. Philadelphia does not compile arrest tabulations on the basis of gang membership. Table XVIII shows that there were approximately 13,000 arrests of gang members for the three largest cities in 1974, of which approximately half were for "violent crimes." Actual arrest volume in these cities was quite similar, with none varying much from the three-city average of about 4,000 arrests.

Table XVIII

Arrests of Gang Members
1973-74

City	1973		1974	
	All Offenses	Violent Crimes	All Offenses	Violent Crimes
New York	3588	1643	4548	1379
Chicago[4]	NI	NI	4417	2530[5]
Los Angeles	NI	NI	4104[1]	2052
Philadelphia[2]	-	(307)[3]	-	-
Three Cities			13,069	5,961

1. Extrapolation: Violent Crimes x 2.
2. No arrest data kept by Police Department.
3. Incidents of Assault related only to inter-gang conflict.
4. Includes only gang members arrested by Gang Crimes Unit.
5. Based partly on estimates.

N.I. Information not available

A further question arises as to what proportion of all juvenile or youth arrests is accounted for by gang member arrests. Unfortunately, data to answer this question are very difficult to obtain, due largely to differences in age categories used to tabulate data both within and among cities. Table XIX attempts a very rough approximation of this relationship.

Table XIX

Gang Member Arrests as a Proportion of Juvenile Arrests 1973/74

	Juvenile Arrests All Offenses[1]	Juvenile Arrests Violent Crimes[2]	Gang Member Arrests,[3] All Offenses, as % of juvenile arrests	Gang Member Arrests, Violent Crimes,[4] as % of juvenile arrests
New York	23,600	7,079	15.2	31.4[4]
Chicago	65,166	9,857	7.2[6]	25.7[4]
Los Angeles	35,593	4,609	11.5[6]	44.5[5]
Three Cities	124,359	21,545	10.0	31.5

1. Chicago, LA, 17 and under; NYC 15 and under; 1973 figures.
2. Homicide, Assault, Robbery, Rape.
3. All Ages.
4. "Violent" crimes not identical with footnote 2 offenses.
5. Footnote 2 offenses.
6. Gang member arrests for 1974.

Table XIX indicates that arrests of gang members in the three largest cities in 1973 were equivalent to about one-tenth of all juvenile arrests. However, when violent crimes only are considered, the proportion of gang member to juvenile arrests rises to one-third--ranging from about a quarter in Chicago to a surprisingly high 45% in Los Angeles. The difference between proportions of arrest for all crimes (10%) and for violent crimes (30%) provides evidence that gang members are arrested for violent crimes at a substantially higher rate than the general juvenile population.

It is important to note, however, in interpreting this table, that these gang-arrest percentages are inflated by two major factors. The most important is that the "juvenile" category in Chicago and Los Angeles applies to persons under 18, while gang-member arrests involve a substantial number of older persons (Table XII shows that approximately 35% of arrested gang members are between 18 and 22). In New York the "juvenile" age is below 16, so the effect is even more pronounced here. Secondly, while it was possible to make the category "violent crimes" comparable for the three cities by confining the designation "violent" to four major offense categories (homicide, aggravated and simple assault, rape, robbery), figures for gang member crime could not be broken down according to equivalent categories, and "violent" gang-member crimes include some not included in the four major categories (e.g., "shooting at inhabited dwelling;" Los Angeles; "kidnap," "possession of dangerous weapon;" New York).

Additional data could make it possible to show more precisely the proportion of juvenile and youth arrests accounted for by gang

member arrests; on the basis of data available for this interim report, Table XIX represents the best approximation possible But even if the factors noted above result in an inflation as high as 50%, the number of gang-member arrests remains a substantial proportion of total youth arrests for the more violent forms of crime.

Summary: Two different but related kinds of information emerge from data on gang-related killings and other crimes. The first provides data of varying degrees of reliability as to volume, distribution and trends of gang-member crime in major cities; the second provides evidence relating to the manipulability of statistical materials.

Methods of defining and recording gang-related offenses differ from city to city and over time. Present findings are based on judgments as to which currently-available sets of data are most reliable, but are subject to modification if and when better data become available. Gang-related killings, a major indicator of the seriousness of gang violence, show a total of 525 for five gang-problem cities over a three-year period--1972 through 1974--an average of 175 killings per year. Trends over the three years show a dip in 1973 followed by a rise in 1974, with 1974 figures 9% higher than 1973, and 25% over 1972. The three year homicide rate for the five cities was approximately four killings per 10,000 male youth, with Philadelphia showing the highest rate, almost one gang killing per 1,000 male youth.

Calculating gang-related killings as a proportion of all juvenile (under 18) homicides showed a five-city proportion of about one in four. San Francisco shows the highest proportion, with

gang killings equal to almost three-quarters of all juvenile killings, and Los Angeles the next highest ratio--about four in ten.

Incomplete data on arrests of gang members show a one year (1974) total of 13,000 gang-member arrests for the three largest cities, of which approximately half (6,000) were for violent crimes. This ratio of gang-member arrests--one violent offense arrest out of every two arrests, compares to a national-level youth arrest ratio of one in five when the category "violent crimes" includes misdemeanor assaults, and one in twenty when only aggravated assaults are included.[1]

Finally, data are presented to provide a rough approximation of the portion of officially-recorded youth crime attributable to gang members. Using total juvenile arrests as a baseline (many gang-member arrests involve youth older than the "juvenile" category) shows that the volume of gang-member arrests in the three largest cities is equivalent to about one-tenth of all juvenile arrests, but almost one-third of all arrests for violent offenses. These last two calculations suggest that arrests of gang members involve violent crimes to a substantially greater degree than do those of the general youth population, (it is important to note that gang crime figures are given as a proportion of juvenile figures, not as the proportion of juvenile offenses attributable to gang members).

With regard to the manipulability of gang-related statistics, descriptions of the process of deriving figures for each of the four largest cities--New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and

---

[1]Crime in the United States, 1973: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Clarence M. Kelly, Director, September 6, 1974, Table 36.

Philadelphia, suggest that in all four cities the process of deriving publishable statistics involves objectives other than that of providing systematic and accurate data. In all four cities at least some of these influences can appropriately be designated as "political." This finding lends support to a recommendation to be forwarded in a subsequent report, that federal influence, resources, or both be directed to developing and implementing modes of gathering information about gangs which might serve to transcend, to some feasible extent, the influence of political considerations on data-gathering operations.

VI. Gang-Member Violence

Statistical data as to the numbers of gangs, gang members, and arrests for various types of offenses are of direct value in approximating the size and scope of contemporary gang problems, but they do not convey much of the "flavor" of gang violence and other problematic activities. Following sections will deal briefly with major forms of gang activity primarily on a "qualitative" rather than a quantitative level, so as to provide a clearer picture of the character of certain current gang activities.[1]

The present section discusses assaultive behavior and other forms of violent crime engaged in by gang members either collectively or as individuals. Violent crime by gang members plays a central role in whether or not youth gangs are perceived as a "problem" in a particular community, and how serious that problem is seen to be.

As noted earlier, and discussed elsewhere[2] the bulk of activities engaged in by gang members are non-criminal, and the bulk of criminal behavior engaged in by members of most gangs is of the less serious kind. While the kinds of disorderly congregation, public drinking, and similar activities that are charac-

---

[1] Information was gathered with respect to 24 different forms of gang activity (See Gang Survey Interview Guide, Appendix A, pp. 5,6). Partial data derived from some of these forms has been reported in earlier sections, (e.g., ethnic status, age-levels). This interim report thus includes analyses based on 8 of these 24 forms, leaving approximately 16 forms yet to be reported on in the expanded version of the report.

[2] Miller, Walter B., "Violent Crimes in City Gangs", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 364, March 1966, pp. 96-112

teristic of so many gangs are often seen as "problemmatic" in smaller and/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 by youth gangs of violence, 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 as "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. 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 one respondent.

A somewhat higher degree of concern may be engendered when gang members victimize non-gang members with social characteristics similar to their own. Insofar as such non-gang members are seen as "innocent victims" of gang violence (not infrequently gang members will wrongly identify a target of retaliation), concern is

aroused, 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" element may affect judgments. Respondents working in slum communities frequently complain that gang violence is seen as problematic only when outsiders are victimized. Official concern is more likely to be aroused 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. Finally, the highest sense of "problem" is engendered when there is a real or perceived increase in victimization by gang members of persons with different social characteristics--young children, females, the elderly, non-community members--through mugging, robbery, rape, murder. In the mid-1970's public and editorial concern over gang violence was heightened when gang members in some cities began to pursue a pattern of systematically victimizing 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.

Assuming that it is this latter type of gang violence which has the greatest capacity to create a sense of "problem", it is significant that informants in several cities cited as a major new development of the 1970's the increasing tendency of gang members to victimize non-gang adults and children, with some claiming that this had become the dominant form of gang violence. New Yorkers and Los Angelenos in particular cited this development.

What does the survey evidence show? Following sections will

examine the issue of gang violence under four headings: forms of gang-member engagement, victims of gang violence, weaponry, and motives for violence.

Forms of Assaultive Encounters: Gang members

There is a common misconception that the predominant form of hostile encounter between or among gangs is the "gang fight" or rumble--conceived as a massed encounter between rival forces, arranged in advance by mutual consent. Paralleling the notion that if there is no gang fighting there are no "true" gangs is the notion that if there are no "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 notion 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 are no exception.

Information gathered during the survey with respect to assaultive behavior involving gang members (behavior involving non-gang-members is discussed in the next section) was originally categorized according to approximately 15 different types. These were collapsed into a categorization delineating 8 forms, as presented in Table XX . These are here designated the "planned rumble", the "rumble", "warfare", the "foray", the "hit", the "fair fight", the "execution" and "punitive assault." Table XX provides no information as to the prevalence or frequency of the several forms; it indicates simply that the existence of the desig-

nated form in one of the six gang-problem cities was reported either by a respondent during interviews or by another source (newspaper accounts, special reports, etc.) between January 1973 and June of 1974. The 1973 cutoff date was adopted in order to insure that reported forms represent the most current manifestations.

Table XX indicates the existence in all cities of most of the designated forms, thus showing that currently, as in the past, violent encounters among gang members take a variety of different forms rather than one or a few. If all forms had been reported for all cities, a total of 42 would have appeared in the Table. As it is, the existence of the designated form is indicated in 38 of 42 possible cases. The planned rumble was not reported for San Francisco; no "execution" or "fair fight" was reported for New York; "punitive assault" was not reported for Detroit and San Francisco. This does not necessarily mean that these forms are absent in these cities, but rather that available information did not indicate their presence.

The eight forms of encounter of Table XX do not represent mutually-exclusive categories, as will be shown, but rather elements or episodes which can combine in many ways under varying circumstances. The fairly widespread notion that the "planned rumble" was the dominant form of gang conflict in the 1950's but disappeared in the '70's is contradicted by the fact that its existence was reported in five of the six gang-problem cities. Detailed accounts of classic, full-scale mass engagements (called "jitterbugging", "jamming" and other terms in the '50's) were recorded for all five cities during 1974 and 1975. However, the notion that the planned rumble is relatively uncommon as a form of gang confrontation

TABLE XX

Major Forms of Assaultive Encounters:
Gang Member Participants

1973-1975

Form	Existence Reported						No. Cities Reporting Form
	NYC	Chi.	L.A.	Phil.	Detr.	S.Fr.	
"Planned Rumble": pre-arranged 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
"Warfare": 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	5
"Punitive Assault": gang members assault or kill present or potential members of own gang	O	O	O	R	-	-	4
No. Forms Reported Per City	6	7	7	7	5	5	

R = Reported by respondent

O = Reported by other source

(rather than having disappeared) is given support by the fact that respondents in three cities (New York, Los Angeles, Detroit) reported this type as extant but rare, and one city, San Francisco, did not report it at all.[1] In Chicago, respondents said that the planned rumble type of engagement was fairly common among Latin gangs, but not among others.

The "rumble"--an engagement between gangs resulting from unplanned encounters between fairly large numbers of rival gang members (20 to 50) or from raids by one large group into rival territory, was reported for six cities. There is no uniformly accepted terminology for the several forms of gang engagement cited here, but there is some overlap among cities in terms used for either or both planned and unplanned rumbles. The term "rumble" is 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 is used in Chicago, Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco. Terms such as "jitterbugging", "jamming" and others used during the 1950's are not currently in use.

---

[1]The "rumble", in either its pre-arranged or "spontaneous" manifestations, was in all probability not nearly as common in the 1950's as generally supposed. One study which reported prevalence data on forms of gang engagement in the '50's states that "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.B. Miller, 1966, Ibid., p. 107)

The term "warfare" is used here applies only to a continuing series of engagements between rival gangs or among coalitions of gangs. In some cities this term (e.g. "gang-warring", in Philadelphia) is applied to particular encounters as well. The actual kinds of engagements comprising "warfare" can include any combination of rumbles, planned rumbles, forays, hits, fair fights, and executions, often in logical sequences ("foray" produces retaliatory "hit" leads to "rumble" leads to retaliatory execution, and so on). The essential element of warfare is that of retaliation and/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). In several cities gangs or sets of gang names become paired with each other as enemies, with enmity sometimes brief, sometimes lasting. Some of these are: Latin Kings and Gaylords (Chicago); Bishops and Chains, "warfare" between 1972 and 1974, when the two gangs merged into a single gang called the "Brotherhood" (Detroit); Savage Skulls and Roman Kings (Bronx); Crips and Piru, Sangra and Lomas (Los Angeles); Hwa Ching and Chung Ching Yee (San Francisco).

The "foray" was represented by a number of respondents as the currently dominant form of gang engagement. This pattern, locally called "guerilla warfare", and by other terms, involves relatively small (5 to 10) raiding parties, frequently motorized, reconnoitering in search of rivals, and engaging in combat if contact is made. Forays are seldom announced, and count on surprise for their success. Raiding parties are almost always armed, and tactics are mobile, fluid, and often intricate. Since the raiding parties almost always

carry firearms, such engagements frequently involve serious injuries and sometimes death. 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.

One pattern of engagement which combines several of the forms just cited was reported, with high consensus as to details, by a majority of Chicago respondents. A carful of gang members cruises the area of a rival gang, looking for rival gang members. If one is found, he will be attacked 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, this will be taken 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 was stated to be more common for conflict occurring in school-environments, and among Latino gangs.

One respondent stated that while motorized forays and/or hits are common in Chicago, its consequences are less lethal than in Philadelphia, since the major type of weapons used, .22 pistols or rifles, are less likely to produce death or serious injury than the sawed-off shotguns characteristically employed in the latter city.

A Philadelphia respondent reported that local gang members often conduct an initial reconnaissance excursion on bicycles, and return with cars once gang rivals have been 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 today's 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 which triggers a series of larger scale retaliatory engagements.

In the "execution", a particular member of a rival gang is selected for assassination on the basis of behavior for which he is seen to have been 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 killed for violating gang rules; in some cases local youth who refuse to join a gang, or having

[illegible] to believe, are subject to attack on these grounds. Evidence as to the prevalence of sanitary 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 new developments of the 1970's.

Property Destruction: In an earlier paper on gang violence[1], damage inflicted on property was included as one form of violent crime. The present report does not include a discussion of this form. It should be noted, however, that destruction of property constitutes a very serious form of gang crime in some areas. With respect to vandalism per se, gangs in certain suburban and/or outer-city communities are actively engaged in inflicting damage on automobiles and other property, with damage costs totalling hundreds of thousands of dollars. In some slum communities, gangs have effected almost complete destruction of community recreational facilities and have participated in extensive destruction of school facilities. Another extremely serious manifestation of property damage activities is gang involvement in arson. The burning of hundreds of structures--residential and business, abandoned or occupied, has become increasingly prevalent in slum-area communities throughout the nation, and in many instances gang members are the agents of these conflagrations--sometimes accidentally, more often, deliberately.[2]

---

[1] W.B. Miller, 1966, Ibid.

---

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

Victims of Gang Violence

Findings just presented convey some notion of the present character of gang-member violence in major American cities, but do not include information on two important related issues; what is the relative prevalence of the various forms cited, and what categories of persons are the primary victims of gang violence? The latter question, as already noted, is of particular importance in light of widespread claims that it is now non-gang members who are the primary victims--particularly adults. As is the case in other sections of this report, the kinds of data necessary to provide accurate and reliable answers to these questions are unavailable. However, to an even greater extent than in other sections, and partially with respect to the latter questions, it is important to attempt some sort of approximation, however rough and tentative, because respondents' estimates of the proportion of non-gang victims varies so widely. One stated, for example, that over 80% of victims were non-gang members, while another claimed that non-gang victims comprised only a small minority, and even here victimization was accidental. Not only were these two respondents referring to the same city, but they were both members of the same police department.

One of the few available sources of routine identification as to the identity of victims which is amenable to quantitative treatment are incidents of gang violence described in the daily press in sufficient detail as 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 as to what categories of persons are most frequently victimized serves to counterbalance 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 XXI

Victims of Gang Violence: Four Cities

N Incidents = 301: 1973-'75*

Type of Victim	City				
	N.Y.C.	Chi.	L.A.	Phila.	Four Cities
	N=80	N=58	N=108	N=55	N=301
Gang Member	51.2**	56.9	66.7	65.5	60.5
Via Rumble, Warfare	36.2	22.4	35.2	28.2	31.9
Via Band, Ind'l Assault	15.0	34.5	31.5	36.2	28.6
Non-Gang Member	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
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* First 6 months
** All figures in table are percentages

Table XXI 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. The 1973 cutoff date was used to insure that reported victimization patterns be as current as possible. Two major categories of victim are distinguished--gang members and

non-gang-member, as well as two sub-categories of each; for gang members, whether victimization occurred in the context of larger-scale rumbles/warfare, or smaller-scale band/individual assaults; for non-gang members there are two subcategories of victim-- peers -- generally males of similar age, ethnic status, and residential areas, and non-peers--mostly male or female adults, but 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% of reported victims were gang-members, and 40% non-gang members. None of the four cities varies by more than 10 percentage points from these figures. These findings would appear to weaken assertions that the majority of victims of gang violence in the 1970's are non-gang-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% of gang victims are other gang members."

Of the four victim subcategories, the gang-members involved in rumbles and "warfare" ranked highest as victims, gang members assaulted in the course of individual or smaller band encounters, second highest, adults or children not affiliated with gangs ranked third, and non-gang peers, fourth.

While these figures would appear to weaken assertions that the primary victims of 1970's gangs are uninvolved "outsiders" rather than other gang members or local peers, they provide no basis for determining whether the proportions shown here differ substantially

from those of the past. The 28% four-city figure for non-gang, non-peer victims might represent a major development if equivalent percentages in the past were, say, in the neighborhood of 5%. Directly comparable data for past periods are not available. However, there are data which permit an indirect comparison. These were gathered in the course of a three-year gang study in Boston in the 1950's, in the course of which all known incidents of gang assault involving members of seven gangs in one city district were recorded by field workers, analyzed, and reported.[1]

TABLE XXII

Three Categories of Gang Member Victims

Two Studies Compared: 1955-57, 1973-75

Type of Victim	301 Press-Reported Incidents, Four Cities, 1973-75	77 Field Recorded Incidents, One Community, 1955-57[1]
Gang Member	60.5	57.1
Non-gang Child, Adult	27.6	22.0
Non-gang Peer	11.9	20.8
Three Categories	100.0	99.9

[1]Violent Crimes in City Gangs, 1966, Table 5, p.109

Table XXII compares proportions of three categories of victim obtained through the current four-city analysis and the single-community study

---

[1]Walter B. Miller, 1966, Ibid., Table 5, p.109

twenty years earlier. In the face of differences of time, methods and locations, proportions are surprisingly similar. Gang members were victims in 60% of reported incidents in the '70's compared to 57% in the '50's. Non-gang adults and children were victims in 28% of current incidents, 22% in the past. The non-gang-peer category showed less similarity, with such persons being victimized by gangs only about half as often as during the recent period. Even so, the proportions fall within 10% of each other.

Comparing victimization figures by category for the four major cities clarifies the issue of non-gang-member victimization. The four-city average of victimization of children and adults, 28% is somewhat, but not much higher than the 22% figure of the earlier study. On this basis, such victimization does not appear as a particularly distinctive practice of contemporary gangs. 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%, Chicago 35%) are substantially higher than those for the next largest (Los Angeles 22%, Philadelphia 16%), as well as the 1950's figure (21%). This suggests that there is considerable substance to claims by New Yorkers and Chicagoans that increasing victimization of children and adults represents a significant development, but that similar claims by Los Angelenos and Philadelphians be regarded with some caution.

Weaponry

How lethal is the violence of contemporary gangs? Data just presented concerning the forms and victims of gang violence provide no direct information as to the consequences of such violence. Section V does deal with one kind of consequence--death--in the dis-

cussion of gang-related killings, but no examination of injuries, maiming, intimidation, property destruction, and other consequences of actual or threatened violence is included in this report. However, the discussion of gang member violence in the 1970's requires at the very least some attention to the role of weaponry--a primary instrument of violent victimization.[1]

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" between the two gangs. 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."[2]

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

---

[1] Information concerning use, prevalence, and types of weapons was solicited in each of the 12 survey cities as one of the 24 "gang information topics" mentioned earlier. However, the interim nature of this report does not permit a fuller analysis of this topic with the degree of detail used, for example, in the analysis of the "operating philosophies" item of the survey guide (W.B. Miller, "Operating Philosophies of Criminal Justice and Youth Survey Professionals in Twelve Major American Cities" Preliminary Report to LEAA, May, 1975, 11 pages). The present treatment of weaponry is based on a partial and non-systematic examination of selected materials for six of the twelve cities.

[2] Frederick M. Thrasher, The Gang, University of Chicago Press, 1927, page 180.

almost identical form during every decade of the 55 years since the Belmont-Elston killing. Most often the time period cited for the reported resort to guns is "two or three 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 of the reporter's life.

Given the almost ritualized nature of the claim that gangs of the past used fists, clubs, 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 have thus been subject to particularly careful appraisal. Approaching the factual accuracy of such statements with an attitude of scepticism, one conclusion nonetheless seems inescapable. The prevalence, use, quality, and sophistication of weaponry in the gangs of the 1970's far surpasses anything known in the past, and is probably the single most significant characteristic distinguishing today's gangs from their predecessors.

Why has information as to gang-related killings, of the kind presented in Table XV, not been reported on a routine basis in past studies of youth gangs? Very probably a major reason is that in the past actual killings were relatively rare as an outcome of assaultive activities by gangs. 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 contemporary gangs are markedly more lethal than during any previous period. Data just presented respecting

the forms and victims of gang violence show some departures from the practices of previous periods, but by and large these differences are not of sufficient magnitude to account for marked differences in the degree of lethality currently observed. It would appear that the major differentiating factor is that of weaponry. This raises several questions: how prevalent are firearms, what is 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 possess 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 a variety of kinds were extremely prevalent in the community, easy to obtain, and used

extensively by gang members.

A very rough notion of the prevalence of weapons is furnished by the kinds of arrest figures presented in the previous section. 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 '73. These figures substantially under-represent 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 is that of the Bronx Division of the New York City Police Department's Gang Intelligence Unit. Lists compiled in 1973 and '74 included 25 categories of weapon used by gang members. Of these, weapons in 17 of the categories utilize gunpowder or some other explosive. The categories include: "Rifles, all calibers"; "Shotguns, all calibers (sawed-off)"; Handguns (revolvers, automatics) 22, 25, 32, 38, 45 caliber"; "Semi-automatic rifles converted to automatic"; "Home-made mortars"; "Home-made bazookas"; "Molotov Cocktails";

---

[1] A discussion of reasons for the increased availability of weapons in the 1970's will be included in the expanded version of this report.

"Pipe Bombs". In only one of the six cities, San Francisco, was the "Saturday night special" (a cheap, short-barrelled .22 revolver) cited as the major kind of gang weapon; in all other cities respondents claimed that the majority of guns used were at the level of high quality police weapons; the Smith and Wesson .38, one common type of police weapon, was mentioned several times. Home-made "zip guns", reported as prevalent in the 1950's, were mentioned as still used by some younger gang members, but several informants said that such crude weaponry was held in contempt by most gang members.

Accurate information concerning 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 non-gang victims, but because such information bears directly on the issue of the "causes" or origins of contemporary patterns of gang violence.[1] One of the most common elements of current efforts to account for increased gang violence is the notion, particularly favored by the media, that today's gang member, in common with other violent youthful offenders, simply lacks 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, is given substance in current media images through televised or quoted statements by youthful killers such as "What do I feel when I kill somebody? Nothing at all. It's nothing

---

[1] A fuller and more systematic treatment of the causes or origins of current manifestations of youth gang violence will be included in the expanded version of this report.

more to me than brushing off a fly."

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

Without exploring the plausibility, character of supportive evidence, or other implications of this position, it is appropriate simply to note at this point that of two posited factors for explaining increases in violence--a basic personality change in American youth and an increased availability of firearms, the latter appears far more likely to exert a significant influence. The fact that guns are 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 technologies 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 indicates 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 there 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 tech-

nological 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 has increased substantially. Those technological and economic factors which govern the availability to adolescents of firearms and automobiles have thus played a major role in changing the character of major forms of gang violence.

Motives for Gang Violence

Consideration of the reasons behind acts of violence by gang members is part of the larger issue of the motivation for gang behavior in general, and as such is not treated in the present 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 have been operative in the past, and all four continue to be operative in the present. However, it would appear that violent acts in the service of the latter two--control and gain, have been increasing in frequency at the expense of the former. Much of the information concerning forms of gang violence--intimidation of possible court witnesses, claims of control over the facilities and educational/disciplinary policies of the schools, claims of complete hegemenony over parks and other recreational areas--reflects 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 greater stress on the use of violence as a means to the acquisition of money and salable goods. All these issues--the nature of motives for violence, possible changes in the character of such motives, and possible reasons 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 scepticism. 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 '60's, it would appear that the more careful and scholarly the study, the less emphasis was placed by the authors on the centrality and gravity of violence as a basic form of gang activity. One of the foremost scholars of gangs of the '50's and '60's, Malcolm Klein, in a comprehensive view of gang studies of this period, 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 problem."[1]

Starting from the assumption that gang violence during the past

---

[1] M. Klein, "Violence in American Juvenile Gangs," op. cit., p. 1457.

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 as to gang violence in the 1970's seem warranted.

Violent acts committed by members of youth gangs in six major cities in the 1970's, as in the past, encompass a wide range of different forms and manifestations. Of these, violence which takes as its victims persons outside the immediate orbit of gang members--primarily adults and children in similar or different communities--has the greatest capacity to arouse public fear, and to engender perceptions that youth gangs pose a serious crime problem. Eight forms of inter-and intra-gang conflict may be distinguished--the planned rumble, the rumble, warfare, the foray, the hit, the fair fight, the execution, and punitive assault. While there is some evidence of "specializations" in different cities, most of the above forms were reported as present in all six cities. The notion that the "rumble", in either its "planned" or "spontaneous" form has disappeared was not supported by available evidence; however, it does appear that the "foray"--an excursion by smaller bands, generally armed and often motorized--has increased in prevalence relative to the rumble. With respect to victimization, the notion that non-gang adults and children have become the primary victims of gang violence was not supported; of three categories of victim identifiable through press reports, other gang members comprised about 60%, adults and children about 28%, and non-gang peers about 12%. The 60% gang, 40% non-gang ratios based on four city averages do not differ substantially from figures recorded in the past. However, when figures are differentiated by city, considerable substance is granted the notion of increased

non-gang-member victimization in the nation's two largest cities, where non-gang-members appear as victims in almost half of the reported incidents, and non-gang children and adults in well over one-third.

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

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

Related to changes in forms and victims of gang-member violence noted above appear to be changes in motives for violence. Insofar as gang violence is played out in an arena of intergang conflict, motives arising out of "honor" ("rep", "heart" in the past), and defense of local turf play a major role; as muggings, robberies, and extortion of community residents have become relatively more prevalent, and as efforts to intimidate witnesses, determine school policies, and dominate public facilities have become more widespread, the motives of "gain" and "control" can be seen as playing a larger role.

In sum, taking into account 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 currently available indicates with considerable clarity that the amount of lethal violence currently directed by youth gangs in major cities both against one another and against the general public is without precedent. It is not unlikely that contemporary youth gangs pose a greater threat to the public order, and greater danger to the safety of the citizenry, than at any time during the past.

VII: Gang Activities and the Public Schools

The bulk of youth gang members in the largest cities are aged approximately 10 to 21. Youth in the United States are required by law to be in attendance at a public or private school for seven of the twelve years of this age span. Furthermore, as shown earlier, approximately 60 percent of gang-member arrests involve persons aged 17 and below. This substantial overlap between the ages of required school attendance and the ages of customary gang membership, along with the fact that about half of arrested gang-members are school-aged, would lead one to expect that whenever one finds serious gang problems, one would also find serious gang problems in the schools.

Strangely enough, this has not, apparently, been the case in the past. In all of the literature devoted to gangs in the '50's and '60's, very little specific attention was paid to this area. The writings of Frederick Thrasher, whose study of gangs in the '10's and '20'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 affecting the school system are widely perceived as a major problem. In a nation-wide Gallup Poll

---

1. Most of the ten rather brief references to gangs and the schools included in Thrasher (1927, Op. Cit.) illustrate strikingly the contrast between the gangs of the '20's and the '70's. One gang "dared not openly defy" school authorities; the sanctity of the school as "neutral territory" is noted. M. Klein (Street Gangs and Street Workers, Prentice Hall, 1971) includes two brief discussions of gangs and schools, focussed primarily on methods of behavior change, rather than descriptions of gang activities.

reported in late 1974, a surprisingly high 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 schools repeatedly pointed to youth gang activity as a major contributor to the larger problem of student violence.

What is the character of gang activities in the public schools today, and why are they currently arousing so much more concern than in the past? The present section will address the first issue quite briefly, and the second even more briefly.

Gang Activities in the Schools

The point of departure for the present discussion is the fact that in the 1970's identifiable youth gangs are operating within as well as outside of many schools in major cities, and that the nature of such operations not only poses serious obstacles to the primary mission of the schools--the education of their students--but also poses a serious threat to the physical safety of students and teachers. Table XXIII lists ten kinds of gang activity or responses to gang activities reported by respondents, or through other sources for the six gang-problem cities.

As in the case of Table XX , no report of the presence of a particular activity does not necessarily mean that it is absent, but rather that information as to its presence was not obtained.

TABLE XXIII

School - Related Forms of Gang Activity

Form	NY	Chi	LA	Phil	Det	SFr	No. Cities Reporting Activity
Identified gangs reported 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 (corriders, classrooms, etc); teachers, other gang members, non-gang 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 (re: 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 non-gang students	R	R	R	R	-	-	4
Gang members inflict major damage on school buildings, facilities	-	R	R	R	-	-	3
Gang problems require special security arrangements; public/private security personnel patrol school interiors, exteriors	R	R	R	R	R	-	5
No. Activities Reported per City	8	10	9	8	4	3	

R= Reported by respondent
O= Reported by other source

Table XXIII shows differences between the four largest cities on the one hand, and the remaining two on the other. Of forty potentially reportable activities for the four 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 are at present considerably less serious in the latter two cities.

Nonetheless, the table shows clearly that the schools are a major arena for gang activity in all six gang-problem cities; all six report three important features--the presence of identified gangs operating in the schools, stabbings, shootings, beatings, and other kinds of assaults on teachers, other students and rival gang members inside the schools, and similar kinds of assaults in the school environs. In all cities but one, San Francisco, special security arrangements have been instituted either primarily or partly in response to problems of gang violence. Statements by informants in each of the six cities in response to the survey inquiry as to gang problems in the schools convey some notion of local perceptions.

> 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 devasting.

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

when these qualifications are considered, the statements just quoted accurately reflect the preceptions of those professionals who are closest to the gang-school situation in the several cities, and it is these perceptions, in cases where more systematic information is unavai ble, which must serve as the informational underpinning of policy formulation.

No information was obtained as to the number of schools in each of the six cities in which at least one gang was operating, but problems currently appear to be most widespread and/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 three 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 city wide." "The teachers feel that gangs are their biggest problem".

A New York respondent claimed that as the schools have increasingly lost their capacity to "hold" students, they are forced out onto the streets, where they then form into gangs as a natural development. The spread of gangs was also attributed by other respondents in New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia to school policies; when schools transfer particularly difficult

Philadelphia for the past five years has been running special workshops to instruct schoolteachers in methods of coping with gangs, and the city has set up special crisis intervention teams to be dispatched to the schools during the many times that gang violence erupts or is threatened. One of the few urban communities to collect 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 seems less widespread than in the four larger 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 affect schools with substantial Chinese populations, but several respondents expressed fears that gangs in largely black schools are in the process of becoming more active.

Correspondences between elementary school districts and neighborhood boundaries, as pointed out by a Chicago respondent, create 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, has resulted in throwing together gangs from different areas into the same Junior and/or Senior High Schools.

Of the 32 Bronx schools containing at least one gang, 26 (81%) contained two or more. Los Angeles respondents reported that it was not at all uncommon for five or six gangs from different Junior High Schools to converge on a single high school, and one high school reportedly contained ten different gangs. Seven different gangs were reported to be in attendence at one middle school (Junior High) in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, and other schools contain similar numbers. Since the gangs coming into the higher level schools are frequently rivals, a high potential for serious violence is created.

Despite increasing attempts to strenthen school security, much of this violence occurs within the schools themselves. Victims of gang attacks include other gang members, non-gang 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 report open gang fights occuring 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 non-gang students in Chicago and Los Angeles. Shootings and other assaults were also reported to have occurred in school cafeterias, auditoriums, and other internal locations.

Violence also occurs in the immediate environs of the schools, with gangfighting taking place in schoolyards, athletic areas, and adjoining streets. Such conflict often involves gang members

who have dropped out of school or passed the compulsory school attendance age, but who congregate in school areas because the "action" is 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 have made it difficult or impossible for these ex- or non-student gang members to gain entry to the school buildings themselves, so they wait until student gang members leave the building and use the surrounding areas as arenas of conflict.

Claims of "control" by gang members over specific rooms, zones, and facilities within the schools, as well as over school-yards, athletic facilities, and other external areas, were reported for the four largest cities. 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 agreed-upon convention, held in suspension. (One respondent referred to the "medieval concept of sanctuary").

In the 1970's this convention seems to have eroded radically, at least in the four major cities. The traditional practice by youth gangs of making claims of special rights of ownership and control over particular areas and facilities in the community

("turf" "territorialization") has apparently 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 involves several features, including 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 evinced most strongly in Los Angeles and Chicago. Los Angeles respondents said that gangs had "territorialized" whole high school districts, with the "ownership" of particular high schools serving as the victory prize for gang combatants. They told also of gangs gradually increasing their numbers in particular classrooms until they have achieved a "critical mass"-- a presence which defeats the capability of the teacher to exercise discipline. A Chicago respondent said "The gangs have simply taken over the schools"; a New Yorker, "The schools have sold out to the gangs"; Philadelphia was forced to close the cafeterias in several major high schools because gangs had claimed the right to control access, seating areas, and other arrangements.

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

the teacher will be beaten or killed if he or she reports violations by gang members of school regulations or legal statutes, or appears as a witness in court proceedings against gang members. A related aspect of "intimidation" is the refusal by gang members to accept the authority of the teacher and concomitant claims that the right to exercise classroom authority belongs to the gang members. A respondent in New York, where the school system has been partially "decentralized," claimed that the local semi-autonomous school districts had "sold out" to the gangs, granting them the privilege of recruiting members among 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 for Los Angeles by the respondent who described the process whereby the presence in a class of a sufficient number of gang members effectively renders the teacher powerless. He also described the process whereby gang members establish a beachead of control in one classroom, which they then attempted to extend to the entire school. A Philadelphia respondent, denying the existence of "intimidation" by gang members, admitted that they <u>did</u>

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 victims of this practice have primarily been younger adolescents or children in the local community, and sums of extorted money have generally been low. Most authorities have thus tended to regard this as a relatively innocuous practice, referred to as a "lunch-money shakedown" or by similar terms. As in the case of turf-control claims, the shakedown extortion practice has now been "imported" from the community into the schools.

Extortion in the schools takes two major forms, one being the traditional "protection" type already noted--payment in order to forestall threatened beatings or worse. But 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 gang-asserted premise that they "own" the school and/or its facilities, fees are levied for the right to enter the building, traverse its passageways, utilize its cafeterias and gyms, and so on. A Los Angeles respondent said that the line between this type of "exchange" and outright robbery is extremely thin.

Figures on the extent of these practices and the amounts of money involved have not been obtained. Quarters and dollars were

the sums most frequently mentioned; a Philadelphia respondent said that many students customarily keep their extortion money in an accessible place, but hide additional sums in their shoes or elsewhere so as to keep all their money from being taken by the gangs. Several respondents suggested that demanded sums were getting larger, and that since children are reluctant to inform their parents of the reason for their need for money, were being 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 represents a particularly pointed method 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 changable, and New Yorkers report that the practice of wearing colors in schools has recently waned in some areas of the city. It should be noted, however, that gang members in those schools where colors are not worn openly do not thereby forego 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 avail themselves of a very wide variety of what some respondents call

"distinctive forms of apparel" which readily reveal their gang identity to the initiated. These 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 participate in the monumental amount of property damage currently being inflicted upon the schools, but the largely secretive nature of such activity makes it difficult to identify specifically those acts of vandalism, arson, and defacement in which gang members are the primary participants. One exception, of course, applied to a relatively mild form of property defacement, grafitti; gang members in Philadelphia, Chicago, and elsewhere cover the walls in and around the schools with names of their gangs and their members. One particularly spectacular instance of property destruction in Los Angeles is widely assumed to be the work of gangs; after one and a half million dollars was put into 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 have used explosives such as pipe-bombs and Molotov Cocktails to burn and damage public facilities, and it is not unlikely that some portion of the extensive damage to school facilities has been effected in this manner.

One very concrete indication that gang violence constitutes a highly disruptive force in survey-city schools is that authorities have been constrained, in recent years, to institute and augment arrangements for school "security" that are probably unprecedented. Table XXIII indicates that five of the six gang-problem cities report special security arrangements involving municipal police, private or school-system security guards, and citizen security personnel, in various combinations. While it is impossible, as noted earlier, to isolate exactly that portion of general school violence that is specifically attributable to gangs, there is little doubt that gang activity constitutes a principal reason for these increased security arrangements.

Two of the gang-problem cities, Chicago and Philadelphia, utilize all three types of security personnel just mentioned--municipal police officers, school-department security guards (sometimes off-duty municipal policemen), and civilian security personnel. In Philadelphia, a fourth kind of arrangement is used--emergency response teams summoned in cases of gang violence. While these teams do not include police officers, they carry mobile communications equipment which permits radio contact with city police.

New York uses both city police who are assigned to the schools and a separate school security force. Civilian security personnel as used in Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia are not reported. The only gang-problem city not reporting special security arrangements in response to gang and other youth violence in the schools

is 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, claiming that to "have policemen in the schools" would be unduly disruptive to the climate necessary for productive educational activities.

While no statistics have been obtained as to the actual numbers of school security personnel in the five cities and the costs of security operations, a rough notion of the scope of these operations is conveyed by the fact that in Los Angeles the amount of money allocated to school security is higher than that of any other security operation in the city, with the sole exception of the Los Angeles Police Department itself.

Police officials in all five gang-problem cities claim that the placement of officers within the schools has made it far more difficult for gang members to engage in gang-fighting and other forms of assault (Chicago, in addition, attempts to enforce a strict "no outsiders on the campus" regulation), and that the presence of uniformed police (and in some cases plainclothes police) within the school has in fact prevented the situation from becoming worse that it is. Others claim that this policy has simply shifted the major locales of violence from the interiors to the exteriors of the schools. In any event, data just presented as to the kinds of gang activity currently found in the gang-city schools indicates that while police presence may well exert a

restraining influence, violent and other criminal activities by gangs in the schools still remain a formidable problem.

Issues Concerning Gang-School Problems

A number of additional issues are relevant to the problem of gangs in schools, but can be treated only in the briefest fashion in the present report. They 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 the issue of what lies behind the severity of current gang-school problems.

The policies of school authorities with respect to disseminating information concerning their gang problems were raised as an issue by many respondents. The New York situation was described in almost identical terms by most respondents. In the past, they said, school principals had been extremely reluctant to admit the existence of gang problems in their schools--seeing such problems as a direct reflection on their own capacity to maintain internal school discipline. Police complained that concealment and denial by school authorities had unduly delayed the adoption of necessary control measures. Many schools, respondents said, still pursue a policy of concealment, but in an increasing number of cases the problem has become so overwhelming that the principals have been constrained not only to admit its existence and severity, but to adopt policies of cooperation with and use of other service agencies to a far greater degree than before.

The sentiment that "the schools are finally beginning to admit the seriousness of the problem" was also expressed, in various forms, in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Detroit, but in some of these cities, and particularly in Chicago, an essentially opposite position

was cited. These respondents claimed that let alone trying to conceal their gang problems, the schools were deliberately exaggerating them, in effect scapegoating the gangs in an attempt to cover up their own inadequacies in handling problems of security, race relations, and so on. These opposing characterizations were in some cases forwarded by respondents in the same city. In all probability, an understanding of these apparent contradictions would require further information and analysis.

The practice by gangs of using populations of students for the purposes of recruiting membership was reported for the two largest cities. In New York, as noted earlier, a respondent claimed that the schools had "sold out" to the gangs, promising them free rein in recruiting students in return for no-violence pledges. In Chicago the recruitment problem is regarded as sufficiently serious that not only is recruitment into gangs proscribed by statute, but this offense is classified as a major felony. As in the case of the "concealment" issue, information as to forced conscription by gangs and other aspects of gang recruitment is extremely fragmentary, and any sort of adequate picture would require further research.

One might suppose that the issue of racial antagonism, and its role in general and/or gang-related school violence, would have been a major subject of concern by respondents. Somewhat surprisingly, the race issue was not raised by any of the respondents discussing gang-school problems in the four largest cities. The issue was raised, however, by respondents in Detroit, and San Francisco--appearing here as experiencing problems of lesser

seriousness. In both cities the issue was discussed in the context of school integration, and particularly in connection with the possibility that compulsory busing was in prospect. Respondents who raised this issue seemed convinced that additional mixing of racial and/or ethnic groups in the schools would serve as a spur to gang formation. One position projected the likelihood that "defensive" gangs would form in schools now without gangs in the event that potentially hostile students of other races or ethnic backgrounds were to enter the schools. Evidence respecting such predictions is very 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 experience of Boston, a city not included in the present phase of this survey, during its initial year of busing to achieve a broader racial mixture, does not support the notion that increased racial mixing in the schools inevitably leads to increased gang problems. Here again, additional information is needed.

A final issue concerning gangs and schools relates to explanations for the activities and practices described here. As already noted, the present report presents no systematic analysis of this very fundamental issue, and the reasons behind increased gang problems in the schools constitute only one aspect of the larger problem of explanational treatment. 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 explanational scheme. Explanations mostly 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 have increasingly lost their capacity to "hold" students, they are forced out onto the streets, where they then form into gangs as a natural development. The spread of gangs was also attributed by other respondents in New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia to school policies; when schools transfer particularly difficult students who are also gang members to other schools, the transferred student then proceeds to form new gangs or branches of gangs in the new school, thus spreading rather than confining gang problems. In Chicago reasons for the erosion of teacher authority over gang members were couched in racial/ethnic terms, but the postulated processes were explained quite differently 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 couldn't possibly exert effective discipline; others claimed that the training of teachers equipped them very poorly to deal with persons of different ethnic and/or subcultural backgrounds; others said teachers had become too permissive, and that students mistook

kindness for weakness. A very strong indictment of the schools was articulated by several respondents on the grounds that overall educational policies had utterly failed to inculate gang members with any sense of identification with or allegiance to the larger social order, providing them 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 directly contradictory.

The question of why gang activities in the school are perceived as a more serious problem in the 1970's than in the past was not addressed directly by local respondents, and even tentative answers must await further analysis. One speculative answer concerns the "holding power" of the schools, claimed by a New York respondent to have weakened, thus forcing adolescents onto the streets and into gangs. It appears equally likely that the public schools are today "holding" more rather than fewer gang-prone youth. Prior to the rights movements of the 1960's schools controlled a variety of methods for extruding youth who posed the most serious discipline problems, among whose numbers gang members ranked high. These included early release for work-related purposes, "continuation" schools, and of course, expulsion.

During the past decade there has been increasing pressure on the schools to "hold" the maximum number of school-aged adolescents--particularly those from minority and/or low income communities. Many of the methods by which the schools were able to extrude "problem" youth became less available to them.

This section has presented examples of gang activities (extortion, gang-fighting) which 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 have been 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 community. Other possible reasons as well as this require further investigation and testing.

Summary: The phenomenon of gang violence and other gang activities in the public schools in the 1970's commands a degree of concern and attention which is probably unprecedented. One reason for this concern relates to the range and character of gang activities currently conducted both within school buildings and in the school environs. Activities reported for the gang-problem cities include the following. Identified gangs are operating within the school at all three levels--Elementary, Junior High ("Middle" School) and Senior High Schools. In many instances, several gangs, often rivals, operate within the same school--often 2 or 3, in extreme cases 8 or more. This creates a high potential for intergang conflict. Gangs have 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 frequent school environs, impeding or interdicting passage or entry by non-gang students, attacking rival gang members leaving or going to school, engaging in gang combat, and defacing and destroying school property. In the two largest cities gang members openly wear jackets or sweaters bearing their gang names while in school, and in other cities maintain some distinctive form of dress or adornment that identifies them as gang members. Through threats of violence, in some instances carried out, gang members in many schools have so terrorized teachers that they are afraid to report their illegal activities to school authorities, let alone daring to lodge formal complaints with the police or appear as witnesses in court proceedings.

To a degree never before reported, gang members have "territorialized" the 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 have 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 by gang members while in school. Gang members have covered the walls of school facilities with the names and membership of their gangs, and have participated 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 are reported to be using the student bodies of particular schools as recruitment pools--in some instances with the complicitiy of school authorities--fearful lest their refusal to permit this practice will provoke gang attacks.

In the face of such activities, five of the six cities have been forced to institute vastly increased security measures--including the stationing of uniformed policemen in the schools, use of special school security forces, enlistment of citizen volunteers to perform security functions, and the use of city-wide mobile emergency response teams, ready to move rapidly to city schools when violent incidents occur. No cost figures for such security measures are available, but in one city the cost of security operations for the schools is 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 suitable discipline and control over their students. In the 1970's, however, the severity of gang-related crime and violence has risen to a point where the principals in many instances have been forced to admit the gravity of the problem and their inability to cope with it using school resources alone, and have been turning increasingly to outside agencies for help. In some instances, principals have reversed the traditional policy of concealment and in fact exaggerate the severity of violent incidents in their schools, in an effort to persuade outsiders of the seriousness of their needs for assistance.

Authorities in cities which face the prospect of court-ordered busing for purposes of increased ethnic/racial mixing of student bodies express fears that such policies would aggravate existing gang problems, in that newcomers from communities with gang traditions would either import these traditions with them to new schools, force the formation of defensive gangs in new schools, or both. Evidence to support such developments is not, however, currently available, and it is also possible that increased transfers of gang-members from one district to another might serve to weaken the territorial basis of gang membership.

Reasons for what appears as an unprecedented proliferation of gangs, gang violence, and other illegal gang activities in urban schools in the 1970's are poorly understood. Professionals, apparently taken unaware by the intensity of these developments, have not as yet developed any generally accepted explanations. Reasons currently forwarded tend to be fragmentary, poorly articulated, and sometimes contradictory. One possible explanation derives from the observed fact that gang members in the 1970's "imported" into the formerly "neutral-ground" environment of the schools activities such as gangfighting and extortion whose practice was previously confined largely to the community. This suggests that the schools today may be "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 formerly conducted in the community having been curtailed, have transferred

encouraged treatment of juvenile delinquents in the community--a program later cited by law-enforcement officials as one major cause of the gang-violence crisis of the mid-'70's.

Some developments in 1967 and '68 appeared to support those who

VIII. Trends in Youth Gang Crime: Past and Future

A major objective of the present report, as noted earlier, is to provide information which will serve to inform the process of deciding which of a variety of pressing crime problems should receive what portion of limited public resources. At least two kinds of information are relevant to this decision-making process--information as to the current magnitude and seriousness of the problem, and information as to possible future trends. Are particular forms of crime on the rise? decreasing? fairly stable? With respect to that portion of the total crime problem attributable to youth gangs, Chapters II, III, VI, and VII provide the first kind of information; the present chapter the second.

A more comprehensive treatment would provide information not only concerning crime by gangs as such, but related phenomena such as youth group crime and collective youth violence as well. It is possible, for example, that crime by gangs might decline at the same time as crime by groups increased. In the present chapter, however, only gang crime as such will be considered.

The importance to policy-makers of information as to future trends in crime is matched only by the difficulty in developing such information. The basic questions can be stated quite simply. Will gang crime in major cities rise, decline, or remain at similar levels? Will the numbers of gangs and gang members increase, decrease, or remain at similar levels? Are levels of gang activity in the mid-1970's higher or lower than in the 1960's? 1950's? 1930's? What can we expect for 1980? 1985? But problems in obtaining reliable answers to such questions are enormous. Social

researchers by and large have a rather poor track record in forecasting trends relevant to crime problems. Along with a few accurate forecasts (e.g., 1950: the percentage of youth completing high-school will increase substantially by 1970) there have been a fair number of striking misses (1955: The major problems faced by the United States during the next decades will be those associated with excessive affluence; 1967: large-scale civil disturbances will be a continuing feature of urban ghetto life for the next decade; 1968: violent student protest will be a continuing feature of campus life during the next decade).

Prediction is particularly problematic when the behavior of youth is involved, since many practices of the youth subculture are highly susceptible to fashion. Use of consciousness-altering substances provide a good example; during the past decade there has been a rapid succession of fads affecting the use of drugs and alcohol--the types of drugs used (marijuana, amphetamines, barbuturates, LSD, cocaine, etc.), the types of alcohol favored (wine, types of wine, beer, hard liquor), drugs versus alcohol as favored forms, and so on.

As one type of associational form delineated within and playing an important role in certain adolescent subcultures, youth gangs are subject to, and respond sensitively to, changes in that subculture. But fashion is only one of a variety of influences that affects the prevalence, popularity, and practices of youth gangs. The cyclical nature of gang activity, discussed elsewhere[1], is

---

[1]Miller, 1974, op.cit.

affected as well by community reactions. Once gang violence reaches a certain level of intensity, it produces a set of responses by police, service agencies, municipal authorities, citizens' groups, and others which significantly impact the numbers, visibility, formality of organization, and other characteristics of gangs and their members. Our understanding of the nature and causes of these cyclical variations is very primitive.

Prediction of future levels of gang activity, either over the short or long term, is thus a perilous enterprise. It would appear, by contrast, that comparing the present to the past would be relatively safe, but even this task entails considerable risk. This is due, as noted earlier, to the paucity of reliable information relating to gangs--either on a national level or for individual cities--for any previous period of American history. One cannot with any confidence assert that there are more or fewer gangs in major cities in the 1970's than in the 1950's, '30's, or '10's. Reliable quantitative information for these periods is simply unavailable.

Despite these problems, the importance of trend data for policy purposes indicates the desirability of an attempt both to compare the seriousness of current gang problems with those of the past, and to predict future trends. Following sections will address four major questions. How does the seriousness of the youth gang problems described earlier compare with those of the recent (ten to fifteen year) past, and do present developments represent a "new wave" of gang violence? How do respondents in the six gang-problem

cities see the future of gang problems in their cities? What are the major factors--social,economic, demographic--seen by respondents as influencing the future of gang violence? What do population projections for the "youth" sector of the population portend for the future of gang and other youth violence? A fifth question--What is the likelihood that gang problems will develop in cities not now experiencing such problems--will be addressed in a future report.

Gang-Problems Cities: Past to Present

The question "Is there a new wave of gang violence in the United States?" must be addressed on a city-by-city basis, since developments in different cities vary considerably. Following sections present brief histories of developments relating both to gangs and to local efforts to cope with gang problems. In most instances the events described cover a ten-year period--roughly from 1965 to 1975. A summary section compares cross-city trends for the decade and their implication for the future.

New York: The history of gangs and gang problems in New York during the past decade may be divided roughly into three phases. Between 1965 and 1971 there was general agreement by both law-enforcement and social agencies that the kinds of "fighting gang" problems prevalent during the 1950's had essentially disappeared. In 1969 the Youth Division of the Police Department reported a total of 18 gangs in all of New York, of which only 3 were catagorized as "fighting gangs". Police personnel began to note a resurgence of

gang activity in the Bronx in the spring of 1971, and media reporting of such activity began in November of the same year. The years 1971 and 1972 were characterized by rapid increases in reported numbers of gangs and gang members. Between 1973 and 1975 citywide figures remained fairly stable--with police reports showing approximately 300 "known" or "verified" gangs, and an additional 150-200 "alleged" or "under investigation". Numbers of gang members reported for this period also remained fairly stable, fluctuating around 10,000 for "verified" members, and around 20,000 for "alleged".

In the face of considerable stability during a three year period in estimated numbers of gangs and gang members (1975 figures for "verified" gangs were somewhat higher than in 1974) the character of gang activity handled by the police changed considerably. The total numbers of gang members arrests climbed steadily (approximate figures: 1972, 2,200; 1973, 3,400; 1974 and 1975, 4,600), while the kinds of offenses involved varied from year to year. The most marked change occurred in reported killings, with a decline from a peak of 57 in 1972 to almost none in 1975.

On what grounds can one explain what appears to be an almost total disappearance of gang-related killings in New York in three short years, while arrest rates for other offenses were rising? The only clearly-documented development relates to changes in methods of recording gang-related killings. Until 1973 the task of reporting all gang-related crimes was the responsibility of the city police department's gang intelligence units. In 1973, the right to make determinations with respect to one type of offense--gang-related killings--was removed from this unit and assigned to the detective

division. Sharp reductions in the reported numbers of such crimes followed. Information as to the details of present methods of determinating whether a murder is to be considered "gang related" are not available, but several kinds of available information provide a rough check of the accuracy of released figures.

For the first 11 months of 1975 detective division figures showed 2 homicide complaints and one homicide arrest involving gang members. Newspaper accounts during this period indicate a minimum of 7 killings almost certainly related to gang activity, and 5 more probably related. More direct evidence derives from arrest figures for other offenses compiled by the gang intelligence units. These figures show that gang member arrests on "assault" charges rose from 411 in 1974 to 436 in the first 11 months of 1975. To suppose that in only three cases of almost 440 gang member arrests on assault charges did acts of assault--many executed with firearms--result in death, appears highly unlikely.

Indirect evidence would thus indicate that at least some portion of an apparently drastic decrease in gang-related killings may be attributed to changes in police reporting methods rather than in the behavior of gang members. It seems evident, however, that only a part of this decrease reflects police reporting methods, and that in fact a reduction of considerable scope, even if not as great as that indicated by official statistics, has affected gang-related killings. This decrease has also been accompanied by a marked reduction in media attention to New York's gang problems.

But what does this mean as to the current seriousness of these problems? Police estimates of 10 to 20,000 gang members in the city, figures which remained essentially constant for three years prior to 1976, indicate that New York at present has more police-reported gang members than any other city in the country. (See Table VII). Reported numbers of arrests of gang members for offenses other than homicide (approximately 4,600/year, 1974/5) are also the highest of any other city. (Chicago's arrest figures exceeded New York's in 1975; See Table XVI). In addition, while recent arrest figures show some decreases in serious offense categories (robberies down slightly), they show increases in others (burglaries up 33%; assaults, rapes, up). As indicated elsewhere, criminal activities by New York gangs, while less lethal than in the past, still constitute a crime problem of major magnitude.

For New York, then, the past decade was characterized by a five year period during which neither predatory nor violent activities by gangs were recognized as serious problems; a two-year period of rapid growth in the numbers of police-identified gangs and their spread from the Bronx to other boroughs, accompanied by an upsurge in lethal violence often related to intergang combat; and a recent period during which the most lethal forms of gang activity have declined substantially, while the numbers of gangs, gang members, and gang-member involvement in other forms of crime have remained at a high level, and in some instances increased.

Chicago: Unlike New York City, which apparently experienced a five year moratorium in perceived youth gang problems during the

1965-75 decade, gang problems in Chicago received continued attention throughout the entire period, with one or more gang-related issues being publicized during each year of the decade. In 1965 and '66 publicity was directed to the formation and growth of a number of black "supergangs"--including the Blackstone Rangers, the Vice Lords, and the Black Disciples. In 1967 police-reported gang killings related to conflict among these and other gangs reached an all-time high of 150, and the police department, at the urging of the mayor, established a special gang squad--the Gang Intelligence Unit (GIU). In 1968 Federal programs aimed at the conversion of the supergangs into "legitimate" organizations became embroiled in a complex set of scandals, with the gang-federal program issue becoming the subject of a series of hearings by a U.S. Senate subcommittee. A Newsweek article reported a membership of 2,000 for the Rangers, and 1,000 for the Disciples.

In 1969 the mayor and State's Attorney declared an "all out war" on Chicago youth gangs; the GIU was expanded to 200 officers, and a feature in a major newspaper claimed that 200 violent gangs roamed every area of the city, which had become the gang violence capitol of the country. In 1970, a substantial number of black community leaders, some of whom had previously been supportive of the major black gangs, began to turn against them, and call for stricter control measures. These moves were associated with a well-publicized gang extortion plot against a popular black radio personality, and a gang attack on a minister who directed a major civil rights organization. In the same year the Board of Education issued a report claiming that youth gangs were a major problem in all 27

city school districts. In 1971 the issue of forcible recruitment of local youth into gangs came to the forefront, and the Illinois State Legislature, by a unanimous vote, passed a statute making such recruitment a felony. A report by the Chicago Crime Commission claimed that youth gangs represented a greater threat to the city than Chicago's famed syndicate operations.

In 1972, violence by gang members in correctional institutions (many had been incarcerated as the result of intensified arrest policies and special gang-focussed legal procedures instituted largely as a result of mayoral pressure)became an issue, and a candidate for Attorney General included a proposed "all-out war on gangs" as a major campaign promise. Attempts by the waning super-gangs to ally themselves with established civil rights groups were rebuffed. In 1973 attention shifted away from the now declining supergangs to the growth and spread of white and Latino gangs in the North and Northwest sections of the city. The GIU, having become embroiled in complex political disputes, was abolished, and a new gang unit, the Gang Crimes Investigation Division (GCID) was established within the Bureau of Investigative Services of the police department. In 1974 the GCID reported approximately 4,400 gang-related arrests in connection with 2,600 separate gang incidents--with the bulk of arrests in North Chicago. A special report on gang-related crimes in the schools tabulated 800 arrests of gang members in connection with 400 incidents involving drugs ($64,000 worth of marijuana, cocain, heroin and other drugs were recovered from students) possession of weapons, and other offenses.

Between 1974 and '75 (1st 11 months) arrests of gang members by the CCID rose from approximately 4,400 to 5000--an increase of over 25%--in the face of reductions in the size of the unit. Since no records are kept of the numbers of gang members arrested by units other than the CCID, these statistics represent the minimal number of gang-member arrests. Also in 1975 a U.S. Senate subcommittee reported that hundreds of youth gangs in the city were responsible for school vandalism costing millions of dollars, and received reports of 2,200 assaults on public school teachers in a 2 year period.

The decade can be divided roughly into three periods: 1965-1969, the rise of the supergangs, with a peak of 150 killings in 1967; 1970-'72, the decline of the supergangs, and the rejection by major black leaders of gang claims to be socially-beneficial organizations; 1973-1975, the proliferation of smaller, more traditional gangs among white and Latino populations in North and Northwest Chicago. Throughout the decade the numbers of gangs and gang-like groups reported by the police remained relatively constant, with the number of groups varying between 700 and 900 (see Table VI), and the number of gangs between 200 and 300. It would thus appear that serious gang problems remained at a high and fairly consistent level throughout the entire decade, in the face of changes in the ethnic status, major locales, and sizes of the more seriously criminal gangs.

Los Angeles: The Los Angeles Metropolitan area is at present experiencing what is probably the most serious youth gang violence problem of any major United States city. Understanding the complex

developments affecting gang problems during the past decade requires at least two sets of distinctions--one involving metropolitan locales, the other, ethnic status. Within an extremely complicated distribution of metropolitan-area communities over an extensive urbanized area, a simplified distinction can be made on the one hand between the city of Los Angeles proper--an irregularly shaped entity extending from the San Fernando Valley in the north to San Pedro on the Pacific coast in the south, with a population of approximately three million persons, and the "county" areas on the other--an equally irregular zone encompassing two major counties--Los Angeles and Orange. Los Angeles County alone includes some 87 urban communities beside the main city--some of which fall completely within the boundaries of the municipal city. The total population of the metropolitan area is about seven million, as is the population of Los Angeles County.

With respect to gang problems, four major racial or ethnic categories figure most prominently in the events of the decade--Hispanic, ("Chicano"), Anglo (non-Hispanic European), black, and Asian. Throughout the decade, gang problems have risen and declined in severity according to a complicated pattern of ethnic/locality manifestations.

Viewing the area as a whole, metropolitan Los Angeles somewhat resembles Chicago in possessing a long-term well developed gang tradition which extends at the least to 1900. For the decade between 1965 and 1975, as during the previous six, the major problem is not how to account for increased gang problems during certain

periods, but rather how to explain those relatively short periods when gangs have not presented serious problems.

In Los Angeles, probably more than any city, concerned professionals in the middle 1960's were convinced that the likelihood of serious gang violence in the future had been greatly reduced by three major developments; the rise of the ethnic-pride movements, with their ideological stress on refraining from violence against persons in ones own ethnic category; the "Great Society" programs, which funnelled many millions of dollars into a myriad of vocational, educational, recreational and other service programs for youth; and the institution of major reforms in the criminal justice system whose major thrust was to utilize "treatment" approaches, preferably through community based programs, in preference to more punitively oriented law-enforcement measures.

Thus, in Los Angeles, as gang violence increased to alarming proportions by the end of the decade, the major dimensions of conflict among concerned parties involved "soft" versus "hard" approaches to youth violence, and conflicts among Chicano, Anglo, black, and Asian interest groups. Another basis of conflict particularly well-developed in Los Angeles centers on the thesis that the more direct attention is devoted to gangs qua gangs (e.g., public/media recognition, service programs using group-work methods) the more are gang problems exacerbated.

As the decade opened, public attention was focussed on extensive civil disturbances in the largely black community of Watts, in southwest Los Angeles city--disturbances in which local gangs re-

portedly played a minor role. However, eclipsed in public attention by the Watts developments, violent gang encounters were occurring with considerable frequency among Chicano gangs in two different areas--the San Fernando Valley of northeast Los Angeles (towns of Pacoima, Van Nuys, Reseda, others), and in East Los Angeles--a county city contiguous to west central Los Angeles. In the latter community, a large number of established Chicano gangs, each associated with a particular barrio (La Marianna Mara, Lotte Mara, Varrio King Kobras, La Arizona, others) were continuing a pattern of lethal intergang conflict started in the early 1900's. In the "Valley", numerous confrontations involving shootings and stabbings, primarily among Chicano gangs, resulted in many serious injuries, and a fair number of gang-related killings.

Gang violence in East Los Angeles and the Valley continu as a crime problem in 1966, with an increased number of violent incidents and killings in the Valley. The Los Angeles County probation department reported that there were 300 identifiable youth gangs in the area, of which 150 were "violent". They also reported an increase in the number of criminally-oriented black gangs in South and West Central Los Angeles; these reports, however, were disputed by most black community leaders, who claimed that those gangs which remained in communities like Watts and Compton had converted their criminal activities into political activism. A Chicano worker claimed, on similar grounds, that Chicano gangs were dying, and predicted their extinction by 1975. In this year the State of California instituted a "probation subsidy" program, which

encouraged treatment of juvenile delinquents in the community--a program later cited by law-enforcement officials as one major cause of the gang-violence crisis of the mid-'70's.

Some developments in 1967 and '68 appeared to support those who contended that civil-rights activism, massive federal programs, and related measures were ameliorating gang problems. Gang conflict in the Valley apparently diminished, and there was little reported gang activity in the black communities of the south central city. On the other hand, several developments, not attended at the time but seen in later years as portents, were noted. Violence in the Valley flared up again in latter 1968; in a single incident, police arrested 55 gang members in Van Nuys; a few years later Pacoima police arrested 42 youths, also during a single incident. A "new" set of black gangs were beginning to develop in the Watts-Compton area, and were involved in several shootings. Also in 1967 the first of the current wave of shootings during gang fighting in the public schools was reported. Anglo gang activity received attention in several outer-city communities--much of it involving newly-expanding "van" or car clubs. Newsweek in a 1969 feature reported a membership of over 10,000 youth in such clubs. Reported in the same year for the first time were extortion activities of the Chinese Hwa Ching gang--the pioneer of the "new" Asian gangs of the '70's.

Events in 1970 and '71 signalled the beginnings of what was to become a major escalation of gang violence in the Los Angeles area. The mayor in 1970 used federally published police statistics

as the basis of an announcement that violent crime was declining in the city; however, in the predominantly black communities of Watts and nearby Compton, local residents were becoming concerned with increasing gang activity. In 1971 the Los Angeles police department began to keep records of gang-related crimes, and reported 33 gang-related killings for the city and nearby county areas; gangs in East Los Angeles were particularly active, accounting for a minimum of 15 killings. The year 1972 witnessed a sharp increase in recognition by public agencies of the growing severity of gang problems, with police spokesmen claiming that the rapidly expanding "Crips" gangs were "spreading like an octopus" from their base locale in the south central city. The mayor, taking a sharply differing position from that of 1970, announced that "gang activity in Los Angeles has reached extremely serious proportions"; the city council, in ordering the police to launch a major crackdown on south central gangs referred to "a crisis of intimidation and fear" imposed by the gangs.

In 1973 U.S. News and World Report reported that in Los Angeles a serious gang incident was occurring almost every day, and a local newspaper editorial stated that the problem of black gangs, now numbering nearly 10,000 members, had caught the Juvenile Justice System completely off balance. The police department assigned 100 men to gang control duty, and established a new gang intelligence unit. The head of the juvenile division stated that approximately 50% of juvenile arrests in the city were gang-related. The head of the city council announced that Los Angeles was in the grip of a gang

crisis that would probably get worse, and the council participated in setting up a special gang-violence coordinating council, whose members included top-echelon representatives of the police, city and county human relations departments, board of education, and the state youth authority. A six million dollar program to deal with gang violence in the schools was proposed.

In 1974 the governing body of Los Angeles County, the County Board of Supervisors, whose chairman stated that "gang violence in Los Angeles is close to an epidemic stage", and that "halting juvenile crime and juvenile gangs is the number one priority of county government", set up a special task force on gang violence, and proposed a major reorganization of eight county departments so as to deal more effectively with the problem. The police department estimated that 180 violent gangs with 12,000 members were active in the city, and held a conference on "Gang Violence in 1974" attended by 500 law-enforcement officers. The department also expanded both the intelligence and operations branches of its gang-control units, with the nature of these intelligence operations arousing the opposition of civil-liberties interests. By year's end the department reported 69 gang-related killings, and over 2,000 arrests of gang members for violent crimes.

The Board of Education, convening a special meeting on gang violence in the schools, issued a report citing gang activity in 95 city school districts, 380 assaults on teachers and other school personnel, confiscation of 636 guns, and 5 killings in the schools thus far that year. The County Youth Service department applied

for a $500,000 grant for gang-focussed efforts, including a gang-worker program (initially designated a "gang" operation, then a "group" operation, and finally a "youth" operation) which was to begin operations with a staff of approximately 45 service workers. The state legislature held hearings on gang violence in Los Angeles. The stance of some black community leaders was beginning to shift; a statement by the Watts-Compton Community Tensions Committee claimed that local blacks were "caught in the middle" between oppressive police tactics and rising black gang violence; a black newspaper urged in a front page editorial that authorities "remove the velvet glove" in dealing with "a new and frightening element--black gangs who kill without remorse".

In 1975 the process of committee hearings continued, with the City Council for the first time taking the initiative in forwarding a set of recommendations to the State Legislature respecting revisions in the state's juvenile justice laws--most of which advocated stricter treatment of juveniles, including the processing of older juveniles as adults. The County governing board also held hearings, and produced similar recommendations; the County Grand Jury, also conducting a study of the juvenile justice system, advocated sterner legal measures, and recommended more resources for the Watts-Compton area. The number of justices in the juvenile court was increased from 3 to 7. Black police officers in south central Los Angeles claimed that gang members were "regularly killing each other and frightening the hell out of the community", and several groups of black businessmen organized programs designed to divert gang members from illegal activities.

Conflicts developed between the City Council and the Police Department over the allocation of gang-control funds, with the mayor and council pressing for more "diversion" programs, and the police for more enforcement; one outcome was an additional $800,000 to the police to expand gang control operations by 44 additional persons. Gang Intelligence personnel reported that there were "thousands of gangs" in Los Angeles, with the more criminally-oriented comprising about 15,000 members; about 2,000 had been arrested for violent crimes the previous year. By the end of September police in the metropolitan area had recorded 80 gang-related killings (49 city; 31 county), a figure exceeding in nine months the total for the previous full year.

The complex and rapidly-changing pattern of developments in the Los Angeles metropolitan area might be summarized in highly simplified form as follows. With respect to gang developments, events involving the more seriously violent gangs may be divided into four phases. In 1965 and '66 the most serious problems were located in the predominantly Chicano communities of East Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. These reflected a continuation, with periodic fluctuations, of a long tradition of barrio-related gang rivalry. Black gangs in the south central city received little attention. The second phase, 1967-'71, was characterized by increasing severity of intergang violence in East Los Angeles, and its spread westward to a number of nearby county communities in the San Gabriel Valley area. Black gangs were starting to become more active in the communities of Watts and Compton, but received little official

attention. The first of a new set of Asian gangs, the Chinese Hwa Chiao, began activities in Chinatown. The third phase, 1972-'73, saw extensive development of violent black gangs in the Watts-Compton area, with most attention focused on the multi-branched "Crips" gangs, and gang activities in the public schools. The in-movement of Chicano families intensified violent gang activity in the San Gabriel area. The fourth phase, 1974-'75, saw a continuation of high levels of violence in the Watts-Compton and San Gabriel areas, and intensified gang activities in numerous parts of the county with particularly acute problems in two more distant areas--the Santa Ana (Orange County) and Pomona (Los Angeles/Orange County) areas.

Three phases can be distinguished in the activities of communities and official agencies with respect to gang problems. Between 1965 and '69 methods of most public agencies were based on service philosophies which stressed treatment and rehabilitation, preferably in non-legal community settings. Spokesmen for the major ethnic groups forwarded the position that violent and illegal activities of gangs had been, or were in the process of becoming, converted into political activism, and generally opposed police involvement in local gang problems. Gang control was primarily the concern of local police agencies, acting independently, with major responsibility exercised by juvenile officers. There was no specific organizational specialization in response to gang problems within city or county police departments, and minimal involvement by governmental agencies at the state, county, or city levels.

During a second phase, 1970-'72, the city police began to develop organizational responses to the worsening gang problem. A gang-focussed intelligence gathering unit was established, and for the first time information on the numbers of gangs, gang members, and gang crimes, including killings, was collected. Other public agencies, however, while increasingly aware of gang problems, undertook little direct action; similarly, representatives of the ethnic communities began increasingly to recognize the gravity of the problem, but undertook few initiatives in mounting specific programs.

A third phase, 1972 through 1975, was characterized by intensive activities on many fronts by a variety of public and private interests. The police at the same time substantially expanded information-gathering activities and mounted several direct law-enforcement efforts; over a two year period the numbers of officers assigned to these operations more than doubled to over 100 uniformed and plainclothes officers. Many county police agencies also began to institute specialized gang control units or designate particular officers as gang control specialists, with duties differentiated from those of regular juvenile operations. The City Council and Mayor's Office took new initiatives in pressuring the state for major changes in laws governing the handling of serious juvenile offenders--with most recommendations in the direction of stricter dispositional measures. Declaring the halting of juvenile and gang violence the number one priority of county government, the county governing board set up a special task force on gang violence, and advocated extensive reorganization of county facilities to cope with

the problem. The number of juvenile court judges was more than doubled.

Major spokesmen for the black community began to move toward a much "harder" approach to black gang activity in the Watts-Compton area, recommending sterner measures and evincing greater sympathy toward law-enforcement approaches. The beginnings of black citizen action, considerably better developed in Philadelphia during this period, were also in evidence. As of 1975 the tempo both of gang violence and efforts to cope with it were clearly on the rise; in this year the highest number of gang-related killing in the history of the metropolitan area, and the highest of any city in the nation was recorded, with an inevitable peaking-off still in the future.

Philadelphia: Philadelphia's experience with gang problems during the past decade differs quite substantially from that of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. For one thing, both public and official concern with gang violence as a crime problem has been more intense and long-lasting than in the three larger cities, and thus has become swept up into the political arena to a greater extent than elsewhere. Secondly, since the more problematic gangs in Philadelphia have been almost exclusively black, black community leaders have tended to play a more direct role in political maneuvering relating to gang problems.

While the details of actual developments both with respect to activities of the gangs and the city's attempts to cope with them are extraordinarily complex, the profusion of events assumes some semblance of order if they are viewed as elements in a pattern of

response geared to a series of repeated failures in devising demonstrably effective methods for coping with steadily worsening gang problems. Paralleling the complexity of control efforts, developments respecting the activities of the gangs themselves do not fall readily into clear patterns. However, discernable if not always evidently related trends can be followed by tracing three indicators of gang problems--the number of violent incidents (shootings, stabbings, killings) attributed to gangs, the number of "rumbles", as one form of gang violence, and the numbers of reported gangs.

Between 1963 and '64 the number of gang-related violent incidents reported by police doubled (about 25 to 50), and doubled again the next year (about 50 to 100). This number remained fairly stable for three years (1965 through '67) and then doubled again between 1967 and '68. Violent incidents remained at this level, approximately 200 per year, for three more years (1968 through '70), and then increased once more by 150%. This level, about 300 per year, was maintained for another three year period (1971 through '73). 1973 is the last year for which such data are available,[1] but developments with respect to one component of the violent incident count, gang-related killings, appear to indicate a dimimution in 1974 and 1975. As discussed on page 76 , at least some of this decrease is probably due to the adoption by the police of a more

[1] In 1974 the police department stated that it was no longer making separate tabulations of "gang-related" homicides, on the grounds that dissemination of such information aggravates the situation.

restrictive definition of what constitutes a "gang-related" killing, but other evidence indicates that there has been, during the past two years, a definite slacking off in the level of killings achieved during the peak period between 1969 and '73.

With respect to the numbers of violent gangs in Philadelphia, starting with a figure of 27 in 1963, numbers estimated by the police increased at a rate of approximately ten new gangs each year until 1970, when the number levelled off at about 100--a figure which remained fairly constant during the next five years. However, during this same period, as officially-disseminated police estimates hovered around 100, administrative reports claimed the department was monitoring over 300 gangs and/or trouble-prone groups, and social service agencies put the number at closer to 400.

Separate police tabulations of "rumbles" between rival gangs[1] indicate two fairly distinct phases. Between 1964 and 1969 the number of police-reported rumbles ranged between approximately 25 and 40 per year; from 1970 on, the number was approximately 7 to 15 per year. As the number of reported "rumbles" decreased, the amount of intergang violence attributable to "forays" and "hits"[1] increased, reaching a peak between 1969 and 1971.

Attempts by the city to cope with these increasingly severe problems have been characterized by a profusion of often competing approaches, by recurrent shifts in methods used by the various agencies, in the major loci of responsibility for gang control, and in the degree of primacy granted to different kinds of programs.

---

[1]For definitions of "rumble" and other forms of hostile gang-member engagements, see page 91.

Major participating entities include the state government, municipal government, police, and private agencies. Also involved have been black and white political constituencies and their leaders.

In 1968, as the number of gang killings increased 2 1/2 times, the gang control unit of the police department shifted from more service oriented methods of dealing with gangs to a more direct focus on gang homicides per se. In the same year, the city welfare department, which had contracted out gang-work services to a private agency, terminated the contract and assumed this function itself. This year also saw the organization of a black private gang-work agency which was to play a major role in control efforts during the next seven years.

In 1969 a Commission of the State Department of Justice held widely publicized hearings on the gang violence problem, and issued a report containing 45 specific policy recommendations. The police department in connection with the district attorney's office announced a major new "hard line" policy of intensive arrest and prosecution of gang-member offenders. In 1970, as "hit" and "foray"-type killings reached their peak, a crime committee of the federal house of representatives held hearings on Philadelphia gang violence, and the police department, currently spending almost a million dollars a year for its gang-control unit, indicated its intention to request additional federal funds for gang work.

In 1971 the gang-work unit of the city welfare department received $1.6 million in federal (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) funds to increase its staff of gang workers from 150

to 300. In 1972, a new mayor, the former police chief, set up a new gang-control unit within the mayor's office--a separate agency independent of existing welfare department operations. A leading newspaper complained that with all the expenditure of federal, state and local funds, the gang situation had not improved since the 1969 state commission hearings. In 1973, after four years of agonized, conflict-ridden planning, the city council finally authorized the establishment of a municipal youth service commission, one of whose major functions would be to rationalize and coordinate the chaotic multiplicity of gang-control efforts. The council also allocated a quarter of a million dollars for the support of local community efforts to deal with gang problems. The police department reported monitoring the activities of 231 gangs, and the welfare department gang unit announced a new policy of working with gang members on an individual, case-by-case basis rather than using group-oriented methods.

The next year, 1974, represented a major turning point in the stance and policies of certain black community leaders with respect to gang-problems. Prior to this time, most black community leaders had been united in supporting service-oriented approaches to gang problems, and in strongly opposing "get-tough" policies advocated or executed by the police and other agencies. In August a black city official presented a detailed proposal for legislation which incorporated extremely strict, law-enforcement-oriented measures for dealing with gangs. While this proposal was vigorously opposed by some black leaders, it received strong support from others--including some identified with militant black activism.

A second major development involving the black community was the institution and proliferation during this year and the next of a set of largely "grass-roots" citizens' organizations aimed at the control of gang problems in their own communities. These groups were both male (e.g., "Black Men in Motion") and female (e.g., "North Philadelphia Mothers", claiming four chapters by 1975). While mounting and/or supporting a variety of recreational and service programs for youth, a central activity of most of these groups was the active conduct of neighborhood citizens' patrols which in effect posed a direct challenge to the gangs' claims of "control" of local neighborhoods. These patrols were for the most part supported and backed by local police. In the public sector, the city welfare department allocated two and a half million dollars, largely from federal sources, for its gang programs.

In 1975 the city Board of Education, responding for the first time in a comprehensive fashion to progressively worsening gang problems in the schools, began the implementation of a major gang control plan, to be funded at an initial level of $135,000 per year. At the same time, the city, in concert with private agencies, instituted a third major municipally-mounted gang program--based on a new method of using "crisis intervention" teams. These teams, composed of representatives of different agencies and interests, were to be dispatched to local communities on the advent of new or renewed gang problems. The teams in essence resumed the practice of dealing directly with gangs--an approach which the welfare department had abandoned two years before. The crisis intervention

program, for the first time in the decade, pursued policies which involved cooperation on both administrative and operational levels between private black service organizations and the city police department. There was further proliferation of local citizens' groups, and a concomitant increase in cooperative efforts between adult black citizens and the police. Concurrent with these major new efforts, police reports indicated the most significant decrease in the number of gang-related killings since the start of the decade, although information as to gang involvement in crimes other than homicide has not been forthcoming.

Philadelphia's complex experience with gang problems during the past decade can be summarized in highly simplified form as follows. During the period between 1963 and 1968, as problems with gang violence continued to worsen, programs were based primarily on service-oriented methods,[1] and administered primarily by whites. In 1968, with the number of violent gangs increasing to about 100, violent incidents to about 200 a year and gang killings to about 40 a year, approaches to treatment and control tended to split largely along racial lines, with most black leaders advocating and expanding predominantly service-oriented programs, and many white leaders, primarily through the police and other criminal justice agencies, pursuing increasingly stringent law-enforcement policies. This divergence put major sectors of the black and white communities

---

[1]See Miller, "Operating Philosophies of Criminal Justice Professionals" 1975, op.cit.

in direct opposition. After about five years during which there was little appreciable improvement in gang violence, a significant realignment occurred, with one group of black leaders moving toward direct advocacy of stricter law-enforcement approaches, and another group (including "grass roots" leaders) which had previously evinced strong opposition to the police and law-enforcement methods, starting to participate in programs which combined elements of law-enforcement with the kinds of service provision previously employed. This shift was accompanied by an apparent diminution in the more lethal forms of gang violence, and possibly by a decrease in the numbers of the more violent gangs.

Detroit: Detroit during the past decade has experienced extremely serious problems with criminal violence--leading the nation in numbers of recorded homicides in the early '70's--but until very recently has shown a persisting reluctance to associate such violence--even when it involved groups of youth--with the existence of youth gangs per se. This reluctance has been shared by municipal authorities, police, service agencies, and the media. Many officials appear to subscribe to the notion--also prevalent in Los Angeles--that designating violent youth groups as "gangs" will engender gang formation and aggravate criminality. This reluctance is reflected in the existence of at least two schools within the police department--one of which has consistently underplayed the gravity of gang problems and the need for any specialized police response, while the other has emphasized the gang-connected nature of much of the city's youth violence, and has called for police measures geared specifically

to gang problems as such.

One consequence of this reluctance to recognize gangs is that informational operations concerning gang activities in Detroit are the poorest of any of the large gang-problem cities. In 1975 a juvenile court judge asserted that "getting a handle on Detroit's teenage gang situation is like fighting two tons of feathers"; a high official of the police Youth Bureau claimed "I just can't understand how these figures (as to numbers of gangs, gang members, and arrests) can be provided by these other cities!" Maintaining a state of informational deficiency permits officials who wish to do so to gloss over or even deny the severity of gang problems. These circumstances make it possible for a group of officials to agree that there are "10 to 15" gangs in the city, and then proceed to cite 30 to 35 different gang names in subsequent discussion. It was not until late in 1975 that the police released any figures on gang-related homicides for the recent period.

In common with numerous other cities, Detroit experienced problems with "traditional" fighting gangs in the 1950's. Sporadic gang activity was recognized during the years between 1965 and 1967, involving a number of gang-related killings. In 1965 Detroit's homicide rate began to rise, reaching a peak in the early '70's, but none of the murders were officially attributed to gang members. In 1967 the city experienced a large-scale civil disturbance--one of the most serious of the urban disturbances of this period. Again, although 42 disturbance-related killings were recorded, little direct participation by gangs per se was reported. However,

the threat of violence experienced by local residents in the course of these events prompted many to arm themselves, thus contributing to the general availability of weapons to many citizens--including gang members.

During the decade gang control activities were conducted by several divisions within the police department--including the Youth Division, the Community Relations Section, and the Major Crimes Section. The Youth Bureau gang squad was relatively small; in 1967 it consisted of four men--a number which remained fairly stable until 1972. In 1968 juvenile homicides showed a substantial increase, and the police department established a "Youth Patrol", which patrolled potential trouble spots where youth congregated (schools, parks, recreation centers) in both marked and unmarked cars. During the next several years the department reported between 25 and 30,000 visits per year to a variety of youth congregation locales. It was also in 1968 that initial developments began to occur in a gang rivalry that was to achieve extensive attention five years later; the two warring gangs, both from the predominantly black East Side, were named the "Bishops" and the "Chains".

In 1969 and '70 police spokesmen claimed that there were between 10 and 16 gangs in the city and that gang activity around the schools was increasing, but that none of the approximately 25 juvenile homicides reported for these years were gang-related. The police claimed to be "on top of the gang situation", with gang activity kept well under control by the Youth Patrol and other police

operations. In 1971 the Youth Bureau changed the name of its Gang Detail to the "Special Assignment Unit" and continued to report its existence for several years. In reality this change signalled a phasing out of Youth Bureau gang operations. Meanwhile the police were experiencing increasing criticism of their undercover intelligence operations, some involving gang activity, and a few years later a particularly controversial unit was eliminated at the order of a newly-elected black mayor.

Although gang activity, particularly in the East Side, began to intensify in 1972, it was accorded little or no official attention. It was not until 1973--a year that marked a dramatic turning point in the city's stance toward gangs--that public and official attention turned to focus on the role of gangs in youth violence. Gang shootouts in the vicinity of schools early in the year were accompanied by increasing complaints by Eastside residents that gang violence was spreading throughout their community. In October the Community Relations Section of the police department conducted the first city-wide police survey of the gang situation in many years. Their report stated that gangs were active in 10 of the city's 13 police precincts; the largest gang was the Bishops, a black Eastside gang reputedly able to muster between 300 and 400 members. The head of the Youth Bureau, on the other hand, downplayed the gang problem--claiming that there was little or no "formal" gang activity in the city--merely spontaneous actions by collections of youth. By the end of the year, however, concern over Eastside gang violence--including several publicized shoot-

outs between the Bishops and Chains--had become sufficiently intense to produce a citizens' demonstration in front of the county courthouse. Representatives of several block clubs and other community organizations as well as unaffiliated residents claimed that gang violence during the past 6 months had reached the point where residents were afraid to leave their homes at night, and that gang members engaged in robberies, shootings and extortions were threatening their victims with death if they informed the police.

Official activity with respect to gang problems began to accelerate substantially in early 1974. In January a meeting including representatives of the municipal government, Recreation Department, the Police Athletic League, and the Ford Motor Company resulted in the assignment of workers to the warring Bishops and Chains, who responded by claiming to have reformed and made peace, and requesting public funds to involve themselves in legitimate enterprises in place of gang conflict. The newly-elected black mayor befriended a Bishop leader charged with armed robbery. The next month five members of the supposedly reformed Chains killed a store clerk in a holdup, and the mayor admitted he had been duped by the Bishop leader, who turned out to have a long criminal record. These events did not discourage efforts to reform the Bishops and Chains, and in April a group of gang members was taken to Chicago to share the experience of a Chicago gang who had become involved in a fast-foods franchise operation. The mayor began to shift to a harder line with respect to youth violence, and deplored the increasing victimization of black by blacks.

In September, and also early in 1975, publicity was given to what the media called "youthful gangs of criminal generalists"--groups similar in age to the kind of youth gangs defined earlier, but differing from these in being organized almost exclusively around predatory crime. Police claimed that one of these gangs in less than a year had committed a minimum of 5 killings, 50-70 rapes, and 250 robberies, and another at least 12 killings.

In November the head of the Police Department's Youth Bureau issued a new memorandum on gangs, essentially reversing his position of the previous year. The memo reported "an upsurge in gang activity" in the city during recent months, and a proliferation of gangs, particularly on the Eastside--a proliferation attributed at least in part to publicity accorded the Bishops and Chains. His report included three recommendations; a substantial expansion of police gang-control personnel, the establishment of a special gang-school detail, and the establishment of a systematic and comprehensive gang intelligence operation. None of these recommendations, at the time of writing, had been implemented. The city thus continues to lack any official agency responsible for collecting city-wide information on gangs and gang crime. Some of the older Bishops and Chains, continuing claims of reform, formed a single group called the "Brotherhood", and reportedly decreased their criminal activities, but younger age-divisions of both gangs continued to engage in violence. Violence in the high schools--some of it involving gang members--resulted in several killings, and the mayor placed special police in the schools.

In March of 1975 the mayor set up a special Gang Unit within the mayor's office, with two directors and two coordinators as senior staff; hiring of 30-40 street workers began at once, and by November the number of workers had reached 60. In April representatives of the Police, Probation, Courts and Private agencies provided the names of a minimum of 25 to 30 "formal" gangs in Detroit, and allowed for the possibility of an additional 75 formal or informal gangs and groups. One Veteran police officer said that he could provide 100 gang names for the Eastside alone, although many of these, he claimed, were either very small, claimed gang status on shaky grounds, were short-lived, or some combination of these.

In April a media story reported that most of the Eastside residents still attributed the bulk of continuing gang violence to the Bishops and Chains, when in fact most of the original members had moved away from serious gang crime; the real perpetrators of violence, the story said, was a new generation of smaller gangs in the area (including the Baby Bishops and Little Chains). Attempts by the original Bishops and Chains to set up commercial ventures had, by and large, failed.

In September, the mayor, responding to continuing demands by Eastside residents, ordered the establishment of a new gang unit within the police department. The new unit, comprising 16 special officers under the command of a lieutenant, was established within the Major Crimes Section of the Department rather than the Youth Bureau, on the grounds that the seriousness of current gang crimi-

nality called for the special skills of officers accustomed to dealing with crimes such as homicide, armed robbery, rape, and similar offenses. The jurisdiction of the new unit was not, however, citywide, but confined to the 4 Eastside precincts with the most serious problems. Even within this limited area of jurisdiction--with major police attention directed to the activities of about 10 particularly criminal gangs with a membership of about 200 youths, almost 40 gang-member arrests were made during the unit's first two months of operation. By November police attributed 12 gang-related killings to these gangs only; information as to gang killings in the rest of the city was not available. During the same month city officials cited names of at least a dozen new gangs in addition to those noted in April, producing a minimum estimate of 40 named gangs in the city for 1975. At year's end it appeared clear that gangs and gang violence were continuing to proliferate in Detroit.

Detroit's experience with youth gangs during the 1965-75 decade can be divided into three periods. Between 1965 and 1967 there was sporadic gang activity and several killings, but the pattern of well-developed, turf-oriented fighting gangs of the 1950's had weakened substantially. The period between 1968 and 1972 saw the growth and development of two major Eastside gangs--the Bishops and Chains--and their involvement in classic forms of gang conflict, except that firearms and automobiles played a larger role than in the past. Neither the activities of the Eastside gangs nor those of the additional 10 to 16 gangs estimated by the

police commanded much public or official attention, and local officials compared their city favorably to others such as Chicago and Philadelphia with respect to gang problems. In a third phase, 1973 to 1975, gang violence moved rapidly into a priority position as one of the serious crime problems in the city, with attention focussed particularly on school-related gang activities. Organizational units in the Police Department, Mayor's Office, and Private Agencies were newly formed or augmented to cope with gang problems; names of at least 40 gangs were cited by officials, along with the existence of scores of additional "informal gangs", of the type here termed "law-violating youth groups". Violent activities by the city's two largest and most publicized gangs had decreased, but increasingly serious violent crime was continued by a proliferation of smaller, less-well-organized, and more mobile gangs and groups.

San Francisco: Although it is the smallest of the six gang-problem cities (1970 population 704,000), San Francisco has an unusually high degree of ethnic diversity, and the character of gang problems within the past decade reflects this diversity. The year 1965 appeared as a turning point in the character of gang activity. The city had experienced a persisting problem with traditional types of fighting gangs for roughly ten years prior to this date; many of the "rumbling" gangs were black, but Hispanic, Anglo, and Asian youth were also involved. By 1965 this traditional type of gang fighting had virtually disappeared, and with it the more "organized" type of black and Hispanic gangs. In 1962 the first and smaller of

two waves of new Chinese immigrants began to arrive, and in 1964 a number of smaller cliques of immigrant youth federated into a larger gang they called the "Hwa Ching" (Chinese Youth).

In 1965 a second and much larger wave of Chinese immigrants arrived (new immigration regulations in that year dropped long-standing quotas), and the ranks of the Hwa Ching were augmented by new immigrants. Police reported that the gang consisted of about 2-300 youths aged roughly 14 to 20. At first the Hwa Ching directed their hostile actions toward native-born Chinese youth and adults; as they grew in numbers and power, they undertook an extensive program of extortion of local Chinese business people. During one year the gang collected $10,000 in protection money from a single Chinese theater owner. By 1970 the immigrant youth had developed three separate gangs which began to compete with each other for the lucrative extortion market, and in the course of this rivalry to kill each other.

In 1972 police attributed approximately 15 killings over a three year period to rivalry among the gangs and their extortion activities (gang members claimed that there had in fact been 96 to 98 killings during this period), and organized a new anti-crime detail specifically to deal with gang warfare in Chinatown. Both state and federal authorities were involved in the planning process, since it appeared that the Hwa Ching and its companion gangs were spreading not only to other parts of the state (particularly Los Angeles), but to other parts of the nation. The state Justice Department set up a centralized file on gang members. Killings

attributed to the Chinese gangs continued to rise, and by 1975 police figures for homicides since 1969 had risen to 22. In the same year, however, a major police campaign against the Hwa Ching produced 11 convictions of gang members on murder charges. In late 1975 intelligence sources in the police department were predicting "a massive clash of gang armies", attendant on intensifying rivalry between two major Chinese gangs--both of whom were reputed to be recruiting heavily in local schools.

In the meantime, sharp increases in the numbers of a new group of Asian immigrants, Filipinos, complicated the gang situation. Extensive immigration of Filipinos began about 1970, and young males began to form themselves into rival gangs almost at once. In 1974 police attributed 6 killings in two years to conflict among three major Filipino gangs of 50 to 60 members each, and respondents reported that the numbers and criminal activities of the Filipino gangs were continuing to increase.

During this same period an additional development began to affect the San Francisco gang situation--increasing violence in the schools--some attendant on the introduction of blacks into previously primarily Chinese schools. One city high school was the scene of armed clashes between Chinese gang members and gang-like groups of blacks. At the same time predatory groups of four to eight black youths were expanding their operations throughout the city--particularly in connection with the transportation system. As these incidents multiplied in frequency and severity, an emergency meeting of the county governing board in November called for the establish-

ment of a special police unit to combat what the press called "rampages by teen-aged gangs". The mayor announced that "We are not going to let juvenile terrorists invade our busses"; the proposed police units ranged from 60 to 120 officers, with costs estimated between two and a half and four and a half million dollars a year. A police officer at the hearings reported that groups of black youths had committed 63 known violent crimes and an estimated 65 additional crimes on transportation vehicles in the first eighteen days of the month.

Although the term "gang" was used frequently and freely by the media and public officials in describing these incidents, the degree of participation by gangs as defined in this report is not clear. There is little doubt that some clearly fit the definitional criteria, but since much of the violence involved larger groups of high-school students, the actual numbers of the "new" black gangs is difficult to estimate. It can be said that events in the latter part of the year were not inconsistent with predictions of informants earlier in the year of a possible resurgence of black gang activity, relatively quiescent since 1965.

The past decade in San Francisco has also witnessed the formation and expansion of new types of Asian gangs--some extensively involved in theft and criminal extortion, with a concomitant growth of gang-related killings. Black and Hispanic gangs were relatively inactive during the ten year period, but recent developments indicate the possibility of increased activity, particularly by blacks.

Summary: Gang-problem Trends in Six Cities

To the question posed at the beginning of this section--"Is a 'new wave' of gang violence affecting American cities?" the answer derived from the decade reviews of six cities is "Yes", but a qualified yes. Using the year 1970 as a baseline, the notion of a "new wave" of gang violence applies definitely to New York, Los Angeles, and Detroit; the "wave" is present but less new in Chicago and Philadelphia, which have experienced serious gang problems for all or most of the past decade; in San Francisco, the "new wave" has affected Asian communities primarily; the rest of the city is not characterizable in these terms, unless current trends toward a possible resurgence of black gang activity become more pronounced.

In highly condensed form, the experience of the six cities during the decade is as follows. New York apparently experienced a lull in gang violence between 1965 and '71, then a rapid rise in the numbers of gangs and gang crimes up to 1973. Since that year the numbers of reported gangs, gang members and gang-member arrests have remained consistent and at a high level, but the number of gang-related killings appears to have dropped off markedly. Chicago experienced the rise and fall of a number of well-publicized "supergangs" between 1965 and '73, with a peak of gang killings in 1969, and a proliferation of smaller, more traditional gangs and rising gang-member arrest rates in subsequent years. In Los Angeles, traditional Hispanic gangs posed problems between 1965 and '71, primarily in established Hispanic communities. After an apparent lull in black gang activity, black gangs began to pro-

[illegible] decade, 1972, and contributed the bulk of rapidly rising [illegible] gang killings which at present have reached record high [illegible]. In Philadelphia, problems with violent gangs, mostly black, [illegible] extremely near the beginning of the decade, with police [illegible] an average of about 40 gang-related killings each year [illegible] the next middle years of the decade. During the past two years [illegible] of gang-related killings have diminished, but the [illegible] number of gangs and gang members remains at the high level [illegible] during the past five years. Detroit reported a decline [illegible] earlier gang situation during the earlier years [illegible] decade, experienced growth of a small number of larger gangs between 1968 and '73, and a proliferation of smaller gangs, mostly [illegible] between that year and the present. Gang-related killings [illegible] stand at record levels. San Francisco also saw a decline [illegible] violent development of black gangs early in the decade, accompanied by the establishment of a small number of highly criminal Chinese gangs. Between 1971 and '74 there was an increase in the numbers of relatively small Asian gangs, particularly Filipino, and an increase in lethal incidents involving the Chinese gangs. Between 1973 and the present there has apparently been a decline in the violence of Chinese gangs, accompanied by a possible re-emergence of black gangs, particularly in the school context.

For present purposes, the major reason for the six-city decade [illegible] lies in their potential for indicating the direction of future development. As shown earlier, there are a variety of possible indicators of the seriousness of gang problems. These

include the numbers of gangs and/or troublesome youth groups in the cities; the numbers of members of such groups; the volume of complaints about or arrests of gang members for all crimes, for violent crimes, for murders; the perceptions of police, municipal agencies and other agencies as to the priority of gang problems among urban problems; the numbers and kinds of public and private programs organized to deal primarily or in part with gang problems.

Measures of only two of these indicators will be considered here. These are the numbers of reported gangs and gang members, and the amount of violence attributed to gangs. With respect to numbers, two of the cities, New York and Philadelphia, show considerable stability over the past 3 to 5 years in reported numbers of gangs and gang members, and four show an increase in numbers--Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and San Francisco. For none of the cities does evidence indicate any significant decline.

Using only gang-related killings as a measure of violence, it is noteworthy that two of the cities showed peak figures about five years ago (Chicago, 150, 1969; Philadelphia, 47, 1970) one about three years ago (New York, 57, 1972) and three others this year or last (Los Angeles, 80; Detroit, minimum of 12, nine months of 1975; San Francisco, 20, '74-'75).

With respect to violent crime in general, it would appear that Detroit, Los Angeles and San Francisco are experiencing increases, New York and Chicago are remaining relatively stable, and Philadelphia is showing a decrease. Using these recent trends as a basis of prediction, one could expect gang problems in the near

future to worsen in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Detroit, remain at similar levels in New York and Chicago, and lessen in Philadelphia. A variety of contingencies, to be discussed in subsequent sections, could, however, invalidate each of these predictions.

Extrapolations from the recent past provide one basis for predicting future trends. Another method is to query knowledgeable local persons as to their perceptions of the future of gang violence and related phenomena in their cities. Questions concerning predictions appear under item II.5 in the Survey Guide (Appendix A). Those respondents who reported the existence of gang problems were asked to forecast the future of such problems, either over the short term (two to five years), the long term (ten years or more), or both. Respondents who reported the existence of group but not gang problems were asked to estimate the likelihood that such problems might become gang problems, or that group problems would improve or worsen. In some instances, respondents were queried as to their notions of the future of youth crime in general or violent crime in particular--during the near future, over the long term, or both.

Following sections present findings relating to predictions made by respondents in the six gang-problem cities. These refer almost entirely to the projected activities of youth gangs per se; predictions concerning the future of youth group violence and youth violence in general will be presented in future reports.

Understandably, most respondents were reluctant to offer unqualified predictions, and in many instances phrased their forecasts in conditional terms such as "If unemployment worsens, or federal funds diminish, then gang problems will worsen". Despite such qualifications, it was possible to assign 45 out of 56 codable predictions to one of five predictive categories, as shown in Table XXV. These categories are: 1. Gang problems will become worse, are currently increasing in seriousness; 2. Problems will become worse over the short term, better over the long; 3. Problems will remain at levels similar to the present, have peaked or levelled off; 4. Problems will get better over the short run, worse over the long; 5. Problems will improve, are currently decreasing in seriousness.

Table XXIV shows the number of responses falling under each of these categories, and Table XXV ranks the six cities according to the percentage of respondents predicting problems would worsen, and the percentage predicting problems would either worsen or remain at levels similar to the present.

Table XXIV

Gang-Problem Cities: Predictions of Trends in Near Future

N Responses = 56

	SF	Det.	Phil.	L.A.	Chi.	NY	Six Cities No.	Six Cities %
Gang Problems will:								
Worsen, Increase	4	4	2	1	15	-	21	37.5
Worsen, but Improve	-	2	-	-	1	1	4	7.1
Remain at Similar Level	3	1	1	4	4	1	14	25.0
Improve, Not Worsen	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	3.6
Improve, Decrease	-	-	2	1	1	-	4	7.1
Response Equivocal, Ambiguous	-	2	-	2	6	1	11	19.6
Total Responses	7	9	5	9	20	6	56	99.9

Table XXV

Gang-Problem Cities Ranked by Proportions of Respondents Predicting No Improvement of Gang Problems in Near Future

N = 45

City	Percent Predicting Problems will Worsen
Chicago	78.6
Detroit	71.4
San Fran.	57.1
Phila.	40.0
NYC	25.0
LA	14.3
Six Cities	55.3

City	Percent Predicting Problems will Worsen or Remain at Similar Level
Detroit	100.0
San Fran.	100.0
Chicago	92.8
NYC	80.0
LA	71.4
Phila.	60.0
	86.7

to see saw a deterioration, and in two others, New York and Los Angeles, fewer than one-fifth expected gang problems to worsen.[1]

Figures combining predictions that gang problems would either worsen or remain at similar levels show considerably higher percentages. Almost nine out of ten respondents (87%) in the six cities felt that gang problems in their city would not improve during the next several years. In three cities, Detroit, San Francisco, and Chicago, all or almost all respondents foresaw that gang problems would either worsen or remain at similar levels; in two others, New York and Los Angeles, 70-80% offered similar predictions. In the least pessimistic city, Philadelphia, 60% felt that gang problems would remain at similar levels or increase. This last finding--that the proportion of Philadelphia respondents anticipating decreased gang problems was the highest of the six cities is of interest in light of evidence reported earlier that lethal gang violence in that city appears to have declined between 1973 and 1975.

---

[1] Events occuring subsequent to these predictions, as reported in previous sections, indicate that the Los Angelenos were the poorest prophets--at least with respect to the near future. Los Angeles, which ranked lowest (14%) in the proportion predicting worsening problems, in fact experienced the sharpest increase in gang violence of any of the six cities in the year following the predictions. Detroiters were most prescient in anticipating worsening problems, and Philadelphians, with 60% predicting that violence would not worsen, were also quite close to the mark.

It is possible to use the findings reported in Table XXV as a basis for qualified predictions as to the future of gang violence problems during the next two to five years. Over half of the respondents in three cities--Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco--foresaw worsening problems, and it seems reasonable to assume that gang problems will not improve appreciably in these cities in the near future. For the three cities where fewer than one half predicted worsening problems, developments reported in previous years suggest that some of the more violent aspects of gang activity in New York and Philadelphia might ameliorate in the near future. In the case of Los Angeles, however, respondents appear to have been far too optimistic, and failed conspicuously to anticipate a serious deterioration in gang violence problems in the year following their predictions.

Conditions Affecting Future Trends: Many of the predictions forwarded by respondents are characterized above as having been "qualified". What was the nature of these qualifications? Responses by the fifty-six respondents who made predictions included citations of 80 conditions which they felt had the capacity to affect future trends in gang or group crime and violence. The seven conditions cited most frequently are listed in Table XXVI according to frequency of citation. The conditions most often mentioned were: police policies, availability of public (particularly federal) funds for service programs, the state of the economy (particularly job availability), school desegregation programs (particularly those entailing compulsory busing), the future size

Table XXVI

Conditions Cited as Affecting Future of Gang Problems

N = 57

Condition	Nature of Effect	No. Citing	No. Citing	% Citing
Police Policies			12	21.0
	Firmer policies, fewer gang problems	8		
	Firmer policies, more gang problems	4		
Availability of Public Funds for Service Programs			11*	19.3
	More funds, fewer gang problems	7		
	More funds, more gang problems	3		
State of Economy			9*	15.8
	Economy worse, gang problems worse	6		
	Economy worse, gang problems better	2		
School Desegregation Programs			7	12.3
	Worsen gang problems	7		
	Improve gang problems	0		
Future Size of Adolescent Population			6	10.5
	Fewer adolescents, fewer problems	5		
	Fewer center city adolescents, more problems	1		
Population Movements			6	10.5
	Middle class move out of city, lower income pops. move in, more gang problems	3		
	Lower income pops. move out, more problems	2		
	Middle class pops. move in, more problems	1		
Cyclical Trends			6	10.5
	Cycle has been down, will now go up	2		
	Cycle has been up, will now go down	4		
			57	99.9

*Condition cited, impact not specified, by one respondent

of the adolescent population, population movements (particularly movements in and out of central cities), and the cyclical nature of gang prevalence and/or violence.

It is of particular interest to note that for each of the three most frequently cited conditions, respondents were split into two opposing groups with respect to the impact of the condition at issue. As to police policies, some respondents argued that gang problems would be substantially mitigated if "hard-line" policies of intensive surveillance and arrest were continued or instituted, while others asserted that such policies would actually strengthen gang organization and increase violence-producing resentment.

Concerning the availability of public funds, the majority maintained that federal or local cutbacks of financial support for current or planned social service or law-enforcement programs (an eventuality feared by many) would inevitably lead to a worsening of gang problems; a minority argues that the more governmental attention to and support of gang-related programs, the greater the incentive for youth to form themselves into gangs or better consolidate existing groups in order to make themselves eligible for such support. With respect to the state of the economy, the majority predicted that worsening economic conditions, and particularly decreasing job availability, would put more jobless and moneyless youth out on the streets, thus spurring gang formation and predatory crime; a minority argues that depression conditions would inhibit the rate of population movement, resulting in more stable local communities with an enhanced capacity for exercising parental

and neighborhood control over the behavior of youth.

Respondents who cited school desegregation programs as a factor in future gang developments were unaminous in the opinion that such programs would engender gang formation and violence. No respondent forwarded the argument, noted earlier, that transferring local students to different neighborhoods might serve to weaken the territorial basis of gang membership. Of those who cited population movements, some argued that continuing movement of higher status populations from the center city, and their replacement by low income populations, would increase the numbers and density of the kinds of populations most likely to produce gangs; others maintained that as low income populations moved out of the central city areas, they would import their gangs and gang traditions into new areas, thus increasing the spread and scope of gang problems. Exponents of the influence of cyclical trends were essentially in agreement as to their impact; they argued that gang activity is cyclical, and once it reaches a certain level of intensity it tends to diminish relatively independently of the kinds of social, demographic, and program developments just cited; conversely, after a sufficient period of quiescence, it was felt that gangs and the gang tradition inevitably re-emerge as a natural development. Cities cited as ripe for cyclical declines were New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia; cited as ready for a cyclical resurgence was the city of Detroit.

These differences among respondents in assaying the effects on gang problems of various kinds of developments--in some instances involving the postulation of directly opposite effects of the same

condition--raise again the complex issue of the "causes" or correlates of trends in gang formation, prevalence, and crime. The conspicuous lack of consensus by well-informed respondents respecting this issue indicates anew the importance of further research on the impact of the cited conditions, as well as others, on observed trends in gang activity.

Age-group Projections: One of the conditions cited by respondents, while not mentioned as frequently as other factors seen to affect the future of gangs, nevertheless merits special attention at this point. This factor is the size of the youth population (See Table XXVI). A major reason for such attention is that social analysts, in contrast to the primarily service-oriented respondents of the present study, are more likely to grant major importance to this factor in projecting future developments. Since the age group between 14 and 24 accounts for a higher proportion of violent and predatory crimes than any other, the future size of the gang-age group (approximately 10-20) is relevant to considerably broader areas of criminal behavior than those which relate specifically to the future of gangs. This age group is the "high risk" category for violent and predatory crimes, and its numbers, both absolute and proportional, bear directly on the future volume of street crime in general, and more violent forms of crime in particular.

It is widely accepted, not only by informed professionals but by many demographers, that the size of the "high risk" crime population will decline over the next decade, and thus the crime problems associated with this population will also decline. A corrolary

of this position is that the currently unprecedented volume of serious crime is in large part attributable to the disproportionate size of the youth population, which in turn is a consequence of the "baby boom" of 1956 to 1965, whose products, in the mid-1970's, are aged roughly 10 to 19.[1] This position further asserts that since birth rates fell off after 1965, as the baby-boom generation progressively moves out of the high risk age period (in 1980 they will be aged 15 to 24, and in 1985 20 to 29), youth-contributed crime rates, and thus total crime rates, will decrease.

This analysis, while of obvious relevance to issues such as the amount of classroom space needed or the size of the rock music record market in 1980, must be looked at more carefully in predicting the future of youth gangs and associated forms of collective youth crime. Many of the demographic projections on which these projections are based apply to populations undifferentiated by region, locale, social status, ethnic status, and other major differentiating characteristics. Chapter IV shows that members of gangs and law violating youth groups are drawn disproportionately from male central city populations of "minority" (Asian, African, Hispanic origins) status. Birth rates and age-group projections for populations sharing <u>these</u> characteristics, rather than those of the youth population as a whole, must thus be considered when

---

[1]See, for example, the discussion in J.Q. Wilson, Thinking about Crime: Basic Books, 1975, pp. 12-18. Wilson, while stressing the importance of increases in the numbers of youth in connection with current crime rates, also cites studies which indicate that increases in crime during the coming-of-age of the baby-boom generation were larger than would have been predicted on the basis of population increases alone.

and emigration are extremely difficult to anticipate. Despite the risks involved, however, the present report will present figures intended to provide a very crude test of the proposition, forwarded by survey respondents and others, that reductions in the size of the adolescent recruitment pool for gang and group members will lead to a diminution of problems associated with such groups. Table XXVII presents the results of an extremely simple calculation based on 1970 decennial census figures.

Confining its consideration to the six gang-problem cities, it addresses this question. What was the size of the male population aged 0-9 years in municipal and metropolitan areas in 1970 compared to the size of the 10-19 year-old group? If one makes the assumptions that there will be no mortality among the younger age-group and no population movement in or out of the areas at issue, those aged 0-9 in 1970 would be 10 to 19 in 1980. This would mean that comparing the size of the 0-9 and 10-19 age groups in 1970 would enable one to predict the degree and direction of changes between 1970 and 1980 in the size of the youth population.

the right to set disciplinary policy, the right to collect fees from fellow students for such privileges as attending school,

Table XXVII

Comparison of 1970 Male Youth Population
with Projected Population for 1980[1]
Six Gang-Problem Cities

White Males: Metropolitan Areas	Non-White Males Municipal Areas	Black Males Municipal Areas
No. Males 10-19, 2,700;[2,3]	No. males 10-19, 525.8	No. males 10-19, 478.4
No. Males 0-9, 2,646	No. males 0-9, 570.1	No. males 0-9, 523.5
City	# difference[4]	% difference	% difference
NYC	-4.5	+14.5	+14.6
Chi.	-4.8	+ 4.3	+ 7.0
L.A.	-3.6	+14.7	+16.7
Phila.	-8.1	+ 5.3	+ 4.7
Detr.	-6.0	+ 1.9	+ 1.7
S.F.	-7.3	- 3.1	+ 5.2
Six Cities	-5.2	+ 8.4	+ 9.4

[1]Assuming no changes via mortality, population movement: see text.

[2]In thousands.

[3]All figures from 1970 Census: Bureau of Census, PHC (1) Series

[4]Difference between No. persons 10-19 and No. 0-9.

Both of these assumptions, are, of course, untenable to different degrees. While the likelihood that any significant number of 0-9 year olds will die between 1970 and 1980 is very low. the likelihood of population movements--both emigration from and immigration to the municipal and metropolitan areas--is very high. The immigration factor--particularly illegal immigration from Mexico and other foreign countries--is of direct importance. Given the artificiality of the assumptions underlying these projections, the results nonetheless are of considerable interest.

Column one of Table XXVII gives results in line with the general "baby-boom" thesis that adolescent populations will decline in size. Looking at the metropolitan areas which include the suburbs of the six gang-problem cities, and considering only white male populations, the figures show that there were approximately 2,800,000 males 10-19 in 1970, while the number of their younger brothers, who will be 10 to 19 in 1980, was approximately 2,650,000--a difference of approximately -[illegible]. Percentage differences for the six cities are roughly similar--ranging from about -3.5% for Los Angeles to about -8.0% for Philadelphia.

If, on the other hand, one turns to consider the non-white population of the municipal cities themselves, an opposite trend appears. Non-white males 10-19 in the six cities numbered approximately 525,000 in 1970, but the 0-9 group numbered about 570,000--a difference of +8.4%. Increases appear in all cities but San Francisco--with the younger age group being almost 15% larger than the older in New York and Los Angeles. When one looks separately at the black portion of

the "non-white" populations, differences are even more pronounced. For the six cities, the younger age group is 9.4% larger than the older; there is no city in which the younger group is not larger, and in one, Los Angeles, it is almost 17% larger than the older.

It is important to reiterate that these figures, which appear on their face to run directly contrary to the notion that a declining youth population will result in less crime, and to suggest instead that there will be marked increases in the size of the population most likely to become members of gangs or youth groups and to engage in violent crime, are based on artificial assumptions. The most obvious ones are that few of the 0-9 group will die in ten years, that few will move out of the municipal city, and that there will be little movement of lower-status minority males into the municipal cities by 1980. In consideration of these assumptions, the most conservative conclusion one might draw from these figures is that they do not provide convincing support to the notion that the size of the high-risk adolescent population will decline markedly over the next five years.[7]

If, on the other hand, one wishes to venture less conservative predictions, an examination of the cited assumptions, rather than weakening predictions that the size of these high-risk youth populations will increase, seem to strengthen them, and raises the possibility of increases even larger than those suggested by Table XXVII.

Available evidence points to at least three relevant trends; a continuing exodus of higher status whites and non-whites from central city areas ("white flight"), and a consequent increase in the proportions of lower status "minorities" in municipal areas, a major movement since the 1950's, a slowdown and/or halting of the outmovement of lower status populations to outer city areas; and increases, in some cases very substantial, of inmovements of low-skilled foreign immigrants--some legal, many more illegal--into the municipal areas. One estimate reckons at least 8 million illegal immigrants (mostly Hispanic) in the U.S. in 1975, with approximately one million of these (about 13% of the population) in New York alone. The cumulative effect of these trends is quite clearly to increase the proportion of lower-status minority populations in the major municipal cities, and somewhat less clearly to increase the absolute numbers of these population categories. To the degree to which these trends obtain or continue between 1975 and 1980, there is a very high likelihood that the size of the recruitment pool from which members of youth gangs and law-violating youth groups are drawn will increase rather than decrease over the next five years.[1]

---

[1]The most recent population projections by the U.S. Census fail to support the "declining youth population" theses even on a nationwide basis, and strengthen the "less conservative" predictions presented here. These population figures show a 50-state figure of 40.6 million persons aged 14 to 24 in 1970 and a projected figure of 45.2 million

Summary: Acknowledging the risks inherent in delineating trends in criminal activity, particularly predictions, the importance of trend information for policy purposes justifies an examination of developments affecting gang violence during the past decade, and attempts to predict future trends. Developments in six major cities between 1965 and 1975 were as follows. New York experienced a period of reduced gang activity for about five years, followed by a sharp rise in the numbers of gangs and gang crimes. During the past [illegible] the numbers of homicides directly related to gang conflict has declined, but the numbers of gangs, gang members, and gang related arrests have remained high. Chicago continued to experience gang problems throughout the decade, with large "supergangs" located mostly in one urban area presenting the most serious problems during earlier years, and a proliferation of smaller gangs spread throughout the city characterizing recent years. At present the number of yearly gang member arrests is at an all-time high. Los Angeles has experienced continuing problems with Chicano gangs

---

in 1980--an increase of 11.3%. For whites in this age category the increase is 8.5%; for blacks, 25.7%--a figure substantially higher than the 9.4% increase projected for the selected urban areas shown in Table XXV. Projections to 1985 show an increase of 4% over 1970 of persons 14 to 24 (all categories), with the numbers of white youth almost exactly the same as in 1970, and black youth showing a population increase of 19%. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of American Youth: 1974"; Current Population Reports, Special Study P-23, No. 51, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1975, Tables 1,2, pp. 3,4.)

throughout the decade, with a sharp increase in the numbers and violent activities of black gangs during the past four or five years, resulting in a record high number of gang-related killings at the time of writing. Philadelphia has been struggling with serious gang problems throughout the decade. Violence by predominantly black gangs appears to have peaked off during the past five years, accompanied by declining rates of gang-related killings. However, numbers of gangs and gang members remain stable and high. In Detroit gang problems were less in evidence during the first part of the decade, but the number of gangs and violent gang crimes have risen sharply in the past 3 or 4 years and are still rising, with present levels of gang connected murders, robberies and extortions probably at an all-time high. San Francisco similarly experienced lower levels of gang activity earlier in the decade, but in the past five years has seen a marked increase in gang violence primarily involving Asian gangs, with a resurgence of black gang activity a present possibility.

Gang violence during the past five years has thus been characterized by sharp increases to record levels in Los Angeles and Detroit; increases and continuing high levels in Chicago and New York; increases in San Francisco, and probable decreases in Philadelphia. These trends would appear to support the conclusion that a "new wave" of violence is affecting these major cities, along with others not here examined. Predictions for the future made by respondents in the six cities correspond fairly well with the trend data. The majority of respondents in Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco

predicted that gang problems would worsen during the next few years; a majority in New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles predicted that problems would remain at similar levels or improve; currently worsening conditions in Los Angeles cast doubt upon the accuracy of the latter prediction.

Respondents cited over 80 different social, demographic, and economic conditions which they felt would affect future gang developments. Most frequently cited were: police policies, amount of financial support for social services, the state of the economy, school desegregation programs, size of the youth populations, and cyclical processes. Respondents in many instances differed as to the kind of impact on gang problems these conditions would exert.

The projected size of the youth population was given special consideration, since this condition affects not only the size of the "recruitment pool" for gang members, but potential numbers of persons presenting a high risk of involvement in youth group and other forms of collective youth crime, as well as youth violence and delinquency in general. A very rough analysis of youth populations in the major urban areas suggests that the commonly-held notion that the currently disproportionate representation of youth in the total population will decline significantly in coming years must be significantly modified when applied to "minority" youth in the largest cities. Rather than decreases, projections suggest rather sizable increases in the size of this population--a population which currently manifests the highest potential for involvement in violent and predatory crime.

None of these findings, some of them admittedly tentative, appear to support predictions that problems of violent crime by youth gangs and youth groups will diminish significantly over the next three to five years. While it is impossible to anticipate particular rate fluctuations in different cities at different times, the general outlook appears to be one of continuing high rates of gang crime in most of the largest cities, with probable increases in some and decreases in others averaging out to a continuing high all-city level.

In evaluating this conclusion, the following factors should be considered. Substantial changes in any or any combination of the above-cited conditions (e.g., massive infusions of federal gang-program money; massive jailings of gang members) could well negate this prediction. Although the cities on which conclusions are based include the five largest, developments in other cities, some of which will be examined in later phases of this survey, might affect predicted developments. The character of collective youth violence might change without much effect on its volume or seriousness; e.g., crime by youth participating in less formal youth groups might increase at the expense of crime committed by members of gangs as here defined. On the assumption that the probability of these or related developments are low, the likelihood that gang problems will continue to beset major cities during the next few years appears high.

VIII: Urban Gang Violence in the 1970's: Summary and Conclusions

Between 1967 and 1973, three major multi-volume reports, each presenting comprehensive reviews of a wide range of major crime problems in the United States, were prepared by the staffs of federal-level commissions. The three 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 Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973). While varying in the nature and degree of attention devoted to youth gangs, all three conveyed a similar message. Youth gangs are not now or should not become a major object of concern in their own right; youth gang violence is not a major crime problem in the United States; what gang violence does exist can fairly readily be diverted into "constructive" channels, primarily through the provision of services by community-based agencies.[1]

---

1. "The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society" and accompanying Task Force Reports, The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, James Vorenberg, Executive Director, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967: "Crimes of Violence", Staff Reports submitted to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, D. Mulvihil and M. Tumin, Co-Directors, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969: "Report on Community Crime Prevention", National Advisory Commission on Criminal Standards and Goals, Executive Director, T. Madden, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973. In only one of these three sets of commission reports are youth gangs allocated a separate chapter or paper. This is the Klein paper included in the thirteenth supplementary volume of the Crime Commission reports--a high-quality, comprehensive review. (Klein, 1969, Op. Cit.) However, Klein's conclusion, noted earlier, is that youth gang violence is not a major social problem. In The President's Commission major summary report ("Challenge") which devotes approximately three paragraphs of its 340 pages to gangs, the problem does not even merit a topic heading, but appears as a minor subtopic of the "Youth in the Community" (p.67). Gangs are mentioned briefly

With these general conclusions serving as the best and most current diagnostic characterizations available to Federal authorities respecting the seriousness of youth gangs and their activities as a crime problem, one objective of the present survey has been to assess the current validity of these conclusions by bringing to bear newly-collected national-level information on the issue of gang violence. The conclusions of the survey as presented in previous sections diverge radically from those of the Federal Commissions. Youth gang violence in the United States in the mid-1970's appears as a crime problem of the utmost seriousness. Hundreds of gangs and thousands of gang members frequent the streets, buildings, and public facilities of major cities; whole communities are terrorized by the intensity and ubiquity of gang violence; many urban schools are in effect in a state of occupation by gangs, with teachers and students exploited and intimidated; violent crime by gang members is in some cities equivalent to as much as one-third of all violent crime by juveniles; efforts by local communities to cope with gang crime have, by and large, failed conspicuously; prospects for any significant amelioration of gang problems in the near future seem poor; many urban communities are gripped with a sense of hopelessness

---

1. (contd.) in some of the Task Force Reports of this series, but the largest of these reports "Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime", does not include a paper on gangs as one of the 22 separate juvenile justice topics treated in this volume (the paper on Juvenile Delinquency and the Family by Rodman and Grams includes a brief discussion of youth gang theories [p. 190]). The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals chose to include its brief references to gangs (four paragraphs) under the heading "After-School and Summer Employment" (p. 124). The question of why these Federal Commission reports, which include scores of separate volumes and many thousands of pages, so consistently underplay gang violence as a crime problem deserves some consideration, and an attempt at explanation will be included in the subsequent report.

that anything can be done to curb the unremitting menace of the gangs.

The major findings of this interim report may be summarized as follows. Of the nation's 15 largest metropolitan areas, local professionals interviewed directly reported the existence of problems with youth gangs or law-violating youth groups in all but five. Four of these five were not visited, and the possibility that all or most would also report such problems is good. In the fifth, Houston, respondents agreed unanimously that there is no gang problem, but were divided as to whether law-violating youth groups presented a problem. New Orleans, a city not included in the top 15 metropolitan areas, reported problems with groups but not gangs. Of the eleven cities reporting problems with gangs or groups, respondents in six characterized them as "extremely serious" relative to other major crime problems.

The concept of "gang" underlying these judgments was shared by a majority of respondents, with all or most differentiating between "gangs" and troublesome youth groups, and defining a "gang" by the criteria of organization, identifiable leadership, territorial identification, continuing association, and illegal involvement.

Figures as to the numbers of gangs and gang members in major cities are inexact, but available data permit estimates of a minimum of 760 gangs and 28,500 gang members in the six cities reporting serious gang problems (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, San Francisco), as well as a higher but probably still conservative estimate of 2,700 gangs and 81,500 gang members. The number of gang members reckoned under the minimum estimate substantially exceeds the total number of juveniles confined in all jails and

juvenile detention facilities in the 50 states. In addition to the cities just cited, the possibility exists that there are gang problems of varying degrees of seriousness in approximately 20 other major cities in the country.

Social characteristics of gang members in the mid 1970's resemble those reported for past periods. Gang members are predominantly male, range in age from about 10 to 21, originate in low-income communities, and are composed primarily of members of those ethnic groups most heavily represented in the lower educational and occupational categories. Some evidence suggests that active gang participation is beginning at younger ages. The bulk of gang members in the United States today are black or Hispanic, but gangs of a variety of Asian origins, a new phenomenon in American society, appear to be on the increase. Non-Hispanic white gangs have not disappeared, but most of them are probably found in circum-municipal "suburban" communities, and in smaller towns and cities.

Murder by firearms or other weapons, the central and most dangerous form of gang-member violence, in all probability stands today at the highest level it has reached in the history of the nation. The five cities with the most serious gang problems averaged a minimum of 175 gang-related killings a year between 1972 and 1974. These figures are equivalent to an average of about 25% of all juvenile homicides for the five cities, but reach a proportion of half or more in some. The three largest cities recorded approximately 13,000 gang member arrests in a single year, with about half of the arrests for violent crimes. The gang member ratio of one violent crime arrest for every two arrests compares to nation-wide ratios of one in five or one in

twenty, depending on the basis of calculation. Available evidence as to police reporting methods suggests that some of the gang crime figures may represent substantial undercounts.

Examination of the character of gang member violence indicates that gang members engage in combat with one another in a wide variety of ways. The classic "rumble" still occurs, but forays by small bands, armed and often motorized, appear to have become the dominant form of inter-gang violence. Prevalent notions that non-gang members have become the major victims of gang violence are not supported by available data; however, there does appear to be a definite trend toward increasing victimization of adults and children, particularly in the largest cities. Gang-member violence appears as well to be increasingly motiviated by desire for material gain and a related desire to exert "control" over public facilities and resources.

Probably the single most significant development affecting gang-member violence during the present period is an extraordinary increase in the availability and use of firearms to effect violent crimes. This development is in all likelihood the major reason behind the increasingly lethal nature of gang violence. It is probable that violence perpetrated by members of youth gangs in major cities is at present more lethal than at any time in history.

The present period is also unique in the degree to which gang activities are conducted within the public schools. Gangs are active at all three levels -- Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools. In some city schools, gangs claim 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 have been forced to adopt security measures of unprecedented scope, and to abandon a traditional policy of handling student discipline as an internal problem.

Comparing earlier with later periods of the past decade in the six gang-problem cities shows significant increases in levels of gang violence in New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, and San Francisco, justifying the notion of a "new wave" of gang violence in major United States cities. In Chicago such violence has remained high throughout the decade. Data relative to future trends suggest conditionally that gang problems during the next few years will worsen in Los Angeles, Detroit, and San Francisco, improve in Philadelphia, and remain fairly stable in New York and Chicago. Moreover, the notion of a coming decline in the size of the youth population which serves as a "recruitment pool" for gangs and other criminally-active youth does not appear to be supported by current demographic projections, which indicate increases rather than decreases in these youth populations during the next five to ten years.

The basic question -- "How serious are problems posed by youth gangs and youth groups today, and what priority should be granted

gang problems among a multitude of current crime problems?" must be approached with considerable caution, owing to a persisting tendency to exaggerate the seriousness of gang activity, and to represent the "gang of today" as more violent than at any time in the past. Exercising such caution, the materials presented in this report appear amply to support the conclusion that youth gang violence is more lethal today than ever before, that the security of a wider sector of the citizenry is threatened by gangs to a greater degree than ever before, and that violence and other illegal activities by members of youth gangs and groups in the United States of the mid-1970's represents a crime problem of the first magnitude which shows little prospect of early abatement.

Appendix A

Gang 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 ten-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 non-crime 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 in 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 leglislative

I.3.B. Cont. 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, related to specific events of, that city) with respect to activities, behavior patterns, of gangs/ youth groups/ troublesome youth in this city?

I.5. (Recapituate 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 all 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 dollar 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, two years, five years, ten 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 deliquency 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 socio-economic 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.

Gang Information Topics

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

Sources of Figures in Table XIV "Numbers of Gangs"

"High" Estimates

New York: New York City Police Department, Youth Aid Division figures, "324 known gangs, and 148 more under investigation" Reported in Wall St. Journal, Nov. 20, 1973.

Chicago: Figure reported by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, Birch Bayh, Chairman, April 15, 1975.

Los Angeles: Statement by Lt. Ted Cooke, Commanding Officer, Gang Activities Section of the Investigative Support Division of the Los Angeles Police Department,"There are thousands of gangs (in Los Angeles); every park has a gang, every bowling club has a gang...about 180 of these kidnap, rob, and kill" Reported in Long Beach Press, 3/2/75; L.A. Times 3/23/75.

Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Economy League, Report No. 375 "The Gang Problem in Philadelphia" page 99. "There are approximately 200 to 250 juvenile gangs and 'corner groups'." "There are another 100 to 150 groups, sometimes designated 'corner groups' and sometimes gangs, which have been called to the attention of the police...."June, 1974.

Detroit: Statement by Detroit Police Department Youth Service Bureau Officer for Precincts 5,6,12,13. "I could give you 100 names of different gangs that interlock throughout the whole East side." References by North and West side officers to about a dozen gangs outside the East side precincts. Interview, April 10, 1975.

San Francisco: Statements by members of the San Francisco Police Department Juvenile Bureau. Citations of "3 Chinese gangs, 16 Filipino gangs, and one Chicano gang" in the city. Interview, February 3, 1975.

"Low" Estimates

New York: New York City Police Department, Youth Aid Division, reported in the New York Times, 8/9/74.

Chicago:	Figure of 150 provided by Chicago Police Department Commander Thomas Hughes, Gang Crimes Investigation Unit, April 15, 1975. Figure of 220 quoted as Police Department figure in Newsweek, September 17, 1973.
Los Angeles:	Figure provided by William P. Hogoboom, former Chief Justice, Juvenile Court of the County of Los Angeles, January 30, 1975.
Philadelphia:	Figure provided by the Juvenile Aid Division, Philadelphia Police Department, to the Governor's Justice Commission. Cited in Pennsylvania Economy League report (see supra.), page 6, June, 1974.
Detroit:	Figure provided by Paul Hubbard, New Detroit Inc., from information furnished by the Detroit Board of Education, April 11, 1975.
San Francisco:	Same as "high" estimate.

VIOLENCE BY YOUTH GANGS AND YOUTH GROUPS IN MAJOR AMERICAN CITIES

SUMMARY REPORT

National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
U. S. Department of Justice

VIOLENCE BY YOUTH GANGS AND YOUTH GROUPS IN MAJOR AMERICAN CITIES

SUMMARY REPORT

This summary is based on a report by:

Walter B. Miller
Center for Criminal Justice
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Mass.

The project on which this summary is based was supported by Grant Number 74-NI-99047 awarded to the Center for Criminal Justice of the Harvard Law School by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U. S. Department of Justice, under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U. S. Department of Justice.

April 1976

National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
U. S. Department of Justice

FOREWORD

Many crime analysts in recent years have tended to overlook the problem of youth gang violence in our major cities. They shared the popular view that gangs were a problem of the 1950's but no longer.

Now, in the first nationwide study ever undertaken of the nature and extent of gang violence, Walter B. Miller reports that gangs in many cases have continued to be a problem for the last 20 years and in other cases have changed in their patterns -- such as increased use of guns, less formalized organizational structure, and greater activity in the schools -- previously considered "neutral turf."

How could there have been such a misreading of the national situation? According to Miller, the problem lies in the lack of any systematic method for gathering the right information.

Miller's study concentrated primarily on the eight largest U.S. cities. He finds gang violence levels high in: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Philadelphia and San Francisco. From available data, he estimates the youth gang population in these cities as ranging from 760 gangs and 28,500 members to 2,700 gangs and 81,500 members. Statistics kept by these cities show 525 gang-related murders in the three-year period from 1972 through 1974, or an equivalent of 25 percent of all juvenile homicides in the cities. Miller believes these figures may "represent substantial undercounts" because of the different definitions in use in the cities for classifying gang-related homicides.

In making these determinations, Miller relied on the judgments of criminal justice and social service personnel in the cities rather than undertaking an independent survey of gang members.

Miller already is expanding this study under a new grant from the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This second study will focus on additional cities and also will attempt to find, among other things, some explanations for the serious gang violence so prevalent today.

Milton Luger
Assistant Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

SUMMARY

Few Americans ever bought the romantic notion that big city youth gangs were composed of harmless, appealing youngsters who had stepped out of West Side Story. They understood the truth to be more threatening than that. Yet it's probably fair to say that most Americans today regard gangs as a problem of the 1950's, a happening whose vestiges are represented in the 1970's by small knots of teenagers congregating on street corners in the slums. The kids may cause a little trouble now and then but it's nothing that police and juvenile workers can't easily control.

That perception, according to a new study, is as flawed as the rejected romantic portrayal. Gangs are not only back -- but it appears that in many cases they never left.

Not content only to claim the street as their "turf," some youth gangs have shifted part of their operations to schools, where they have taken "control" of cafeterias, playgrounds, and hallways -- shaking down students for permission to use them and terrorizing teachers and administrators.

The move to the schools is one change in the habits and style of youth gangs of the mid-1970's. Another is the increased use of guns. A third is a tendency to spend less time and energy fighting each other in favor of preying on innocents. The result, says the author of the study, is that youth gangs in America today are more

lethal than ever before, are terrorizing greater numbers of people, and in general constitute a national crime problem of the first magnitude. At the same time, the gangs are not easily succumbing to attempts at suppressing them.

"...efforts by local communities to cope with gang crime have, by and large, failed conspicuously," writes Harvard's Walter B. Miller. "Many urban communities are gripped with a sense of hopelessness that anything can be done to curb the unremitting menace of the gangs."

Miller is a Research Fellow at Harvard Law School's Center for Criminal Justice. His year-long investigation took him to 12 of the Nation's largest cities. His study concentrated on the six cities which Miller ascertained faced the most severe youth gang problems--New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, and San Francisco. His grant was supported by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the research and evaluation arm of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in LEAA.

Stated in its broadest terms, Miller's goal was to determine the state of youth gangs in the mid-1970's, to compare them to their predecessors of 10 and 20 years ago in their operating techniques, their social characteristics and the danger and problem they posed to their communities. He was also interested in how gangs were perceived by outsiders. Among Miller's findings:

- From available data he estimates the youth gang population in the six cities as ranging from 760 gangs and 28,500 members to 2,700 gangs and 81,500 members. He describes the high side as "probably still conservative."

- Gang violence today is more lethal than during any previous period and the major reason appears to lie in the "extraordinary increase in the availability and use" of guns by gang members.

- Gangs can be found in elementary, junior and senior high schools and are generating levels of terror that reach frightening proportions. "There is no point in trying to exaggerate the situation," said a source familiar with gang activity in Philadelphia schools. "The truth by itself is devastating."

- Gang makeup by age, social position, and economic class remains much the same as it was in the 1950's. And despite claims that female criminality in recent years has become more prevalent and violent, urban youth gang activity continues to be "a predominantly male enterprise." Gangs exhibit a decidedly traditional attitude toward the roles females play. Girls carry weapons for boys, serve as auxiliaries, and frequently offer their impugned honor as justification for a rumble between gangs.

- The criminal justice establishment, including its academic members, and the media have generally failed to gauge the national dimensions of the youth gang problem. They have often misread trends in gang activity, with the result that the country has been lulled into thinking gangs are not a major problem; in actuality they constitute "a crime problem of the utmost seriousness."

Failure of Perception

Miller blames this failure of perception on the "peculiarly erratic, oblique, and misleading" way in which information on gangs has been acquired. Too much attention, he maintains, has been paid to the media's reports on gang activity, particularly those of the New York City media. The press there, he says, portrayed gangs during the 1950's as groups of black-jacketed youths roaming the city streets. "They bore romantic names such as Sharks and Jets, engaged one another periodically in planned rumbles which required courage of the participants ('heart') but were not particularly dangerous to the general public...."

During the 1960's gangs seemed to have virtually disappeared. Conventional thinking had them dissolving under the weight of law enforcement measures by police,

rehabilitation programs by social workers, and debilitating effects of drugs. What spirit had not been sapped was transferred to political activism. For close to a decade New Yorkers read or heard little of gangs.

Then, in the Spring of 1971, gangs reappeared. They were discovered in the South Bronx and soon had spread to other parts of the city. They were more lethal and heavily armed than their predecessors, allowed themselves to be incited and directed by "violence hardened older men," and turned more toward victimizing innocent citizens rather than each other. In keeping with their new, deadly image, they adopted such names as Savage Skulls and Black Assassins. No lovable kids from West Side Story were these.

Many criminal justice professionals and members of the media viewed the New York developments as evidence of a sudden and somewhat mysterious re-emergence of youth gangs. The revival theory fit the conviction that had been held for the previous 10 years, namely that gangs were a thing of the past. And that, says Miller, is where they went wrong.

Whatever the accuracy of the New York portrayal, what the professionals overlooked was that the United States contained other cities, and that conditions in those cities were not necessarily the same as in New York. For example, notes Miller, in 1967, when New York was in the middle of its "no gang" period, the Mayor's office in Chicago was reporting 150 gang-related homicides --"probably the highest annual figure ever recorded for an American city." In the barrios of Los Angeles, meanwhile, gang members during the 1960's went on killing each other just as they had in the 1950's. In Philadelphia, police-reported gang killings started to climb in 1965. By 1968 the governor of Pennsylvania felt compelled to order the State Crime Commission to study the burgeoning problem of youth gang violence. In short, while the social scientists, journalists, and national law enforcement experts had relegated youth gangs to history, youth gangs themselves were thriving.

"How could so blatant a misreading of the overall national situation have occurred?" Miller asks. "The answer is simple. There was not at the time nor is there at present, any agency, in or out of government, that takes as a major responsibility the gathering of information as to gangs and gang activities on a nationwide basis."

Without such an objective source of information, Miller goes on, there was no way to evaluate the "often sensationalized" claims of the media that the country was undergoing a new wave of gang violence. It was in part to fill this information gap that Miller undertook his LEAA-supported study.

First Nationwide Survey

Miller visited 12 cities, contacted 61 public and private agencies and interviewed 148 people. He spent hours talking to juvenile and youth gang specialists connected with the police, social agencies, the courts, correction systems, and probation departments.

Because he has found youth gang members themselves to be unreliable as the major source of information, Miller relied largely on secondary sources. He spoke with juvenile and gang specialists in police departments and municipal, county, and private agencies and with probation, judicial, and corrections personnel. At times he had to use press reports of uneven quality. He warns that some of the data he has amassed from government sources must be considered in light of the potential bias on the part of those supplying the data. Municipal agencies, for example, often have a political or bureaucratic interest in exaggerating or underestimating the extent of gang violence. However, the use of a variety of sources of information (interviews, newspaper accounts, and official documents) served to compensate to a considerable degree for the possible inadequacies of any single source.

The limitations, says Miller, were inherent in the nature of the subject; i.e., despite their visibility, gangs usually conceal many of their most significant activities. Much of what gang members do can be brought to the surface only by those outsiders who have won their trust and who maintain close and continued contact with them. There were also limitations on time and resources available. Nevertheless and notwithstanding the qualifications, Miller asserts:

"So far as is known, the present study represents the first attempt to compile a national-level picture of youth gang and youth group problems, based on direct site visits to gang locales."

Miller plans to circulate the report and solicit reactions from the agencies and individuals he dealt with, as well as some authorities who were not interviewed. Their comments will help form a second study, which LEAA is also financing. That effort is attempting to find, among other things, explanations of serious youth gang violence.

A Serious Problem

In the meantime, Miller has tabulated a set of first-time statistics and collected verbal assessments from men and women in the field who have dealt with youth gangs. The findings and conclusions he draws from his evidence are at times startling, even frightening. They also seem likely to generate controversy among those who define what major crime problems face American society. Miller claims that most criminal justice professionals have given youth gang problems short shrift. He cites three major federally supported crime studies since 1967 and notes that only one, that of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, allocated a separate chapter or paper on the subject. Youth gangs were barely mentioned by the other two commissions, The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence and The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals.

"While varying in the nature and degree of attention devoted to youth gangs," writes Miller, "all three conveyed a similar message. Youth gangs are not now or should not become a major object of concern in their own right; youth gang violence is not a major crime problem in the United States; what gang violence does exist can fairly readily be diverted into 'constructive' channels, primarily through provision of services by community-based agencies."

Miller says one of the purposes of his study was to test the validity of that position. As he acknowledges, his conclusions "diverge radically" from those of the Federal commissions. He writes:

"Youth gang violence in the United States in the mid-1970's appears as a crime problem of the utmost seriousness. Hundreds of gangs and thousands of gang members frequent the streets, buildings, and public facilities of major cities; whole communities are terrorized by the intensity and ubiquity of gang violence; many urban schools are in effect in a state of occupation by gangs, with teachers and students exploited and intimidated; violent crime by gang members is in some cities equivalent to as much as one-third of all violent crime by juveniles...."

The sheer lethality of today's youth gangs comes through with terrifying vividness in the statistics that Miller has compiled on gang-related homicides in five of the target cities. (Data on Detroit were unavailable.) Miller concedes that some cities are exceedingly loose in defining a gang-connected homicide. Los Angeles, for example, includes in that category virtually any murder committed by an individual who happens to be a member of a gang--a youth gang as well as possibly adult groups such as motorcycle gangs and van clubs. Chicago police, on the other hand, classify a killing as gang-related only if it stems directly from a gang fight. Thus the retaliatory shooting of a lone gang member by a passing car-full of rival gang members would not be listed as a "youth-gang homicide," according to Miller.

Given the balancing factors, the inconsistency of definition does not seem critical and does not soften the

impact of the gang-related murder statistics: 525 for a three-year period from 1972 through 1974, or an equivalent of 25 percent of all juvenile homicides for those cities. The three largest cities, adds Miller, recorded about 13,000 gang member arrests in a single year, with about half of those linked to violent crimes. To make matters worse, Miller claims some of the gang crime figures "may represent substantial undercounts."

"It is probable," concludes Miller, "that violence perpetrated by members of youth gangs in major cities is at present more lethal than at any time in history." From the evidence he has assembled, says Miller, the violence that gang members direct against one another and against the general public is without precedent. "It is not unlikely," he says in summary, "that contemporary youth gangs pose a greater threat to public order, and greater danger to the safety of the citizenry, than at any time during the past."

Miller attributes the growth in gang violence largely to one factor: the gun.

"Probably the single most significant development affecting gang-member violence during the present period is an extraordinary increase in the availability and use of firearms to effect violent crimes. This development is in all likelihood the major reason behind the increasingly lethal nature of gang violence."

Miller also found that gang members had gone upwardly mobile in their choice of guns. Home-made zip guns of the type popularized in the 1950's were employed by a few younger gang members, Miller was told, "but several informants said that such crude weaponry was held in contempt by most gang members." Even Saturday Night Specials were not particularly popular (only in San Francisco were they regarded as a major gang weapon). Instead, the majority of hand guns used were of the quality used by police, such as the Smith and Wesson .38.

Arrest records provided Miller with a "very rough notion" of how prevalent guns were in the world of youth

gangs. Between 1972 and 1974, for example, New York police reported approximately 1,500 arrests of gang members for possession of dangerous weapons, a charge which he notes almost always relates to possession of firearms. Chicago, meanwhile, recorded 700 gang-member arrests for "possession of firearms" in 1974, the same year that Los Angeles recorded 1,100 gang-member arrests for "assault with a deadly weapon" and 115 more for "shooting at inhabited dwellings."

An authority interviewed by Miller in Los Angeles characterized the status that guns had achieved in his community:

"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."

Gangs in the Schools

What is perhaps most disturbing about Miller's discoveries is that gangs have carried their violence--or their fearsome reputation for it--into the public schools. School systems have strengthened security measures but violence still occurs. Victims of gang attacks include other gang members, students who are not gang members, and teachers.

"In all four of the largest cities," reports Miller, "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 report open gang fights occurring 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 non-gang students in Chicago and Los Angeles. Shootings and other assaults were also reported to have occurred in school cafeterias, auditoriums, and other internal locations."

Teachers in many schools, according to Miller, were so terrorized (and sometimes actually attacked) by gang

members that they were afraid to report illegal activities to police or testify at court proceedings. The violence and intimidation practiced by gangs has led to what Miller calls the "territorialization" of many schools.

"To a degree never before reported," he writes, "gang members have 'territorialized' the school buildings and their environments--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 have assumed the right to collect 'fees' from other students for a variety of 'privileges'--students going to school at all, passing through hallways, using gym facilities and, perhaps most common--that of 'protection'--the privilege of not being assaulted by gang members while in school."

Philadelphia, says Miller, was forced to close the cafeterias in several major high schools because gangs had claimed the right to control access and seating arrangements.

In many instances, adds Miller, school administrations have simply been overpowered by gangs and stand virtually helpless before them. In New York, one respondent told Miller, some of the semi-autonomous school districts created by the city's partial decentralization program had 'sold out' to the gangs, "granting them the privilege of recruiting members among the student body in return for promises to refrain from violence."

School principals and other administrators who once were hesitant to ask for help in coping with gangs--for fear that it would reflect on their managerial abilities--have now reversed their policy of concealment and some even exaggerate their problems in an effort to obtain assistance, according to Miller.

Why gangs have switched from the streets to the schools is one of the explanational avenues that Miller will pursue in his second study. But he offers one tentative reason that he feels is worthy of further exploration. During

the past decade, he notes, school systems have been under pressure to "hold" the maximum number of adolescents in schools. Many of the methods used in the past to keep problem youngsters out of school are no longer available.

Some Misconceptions

One of the more intriguing aspects of Miller's study was his comparison of gangs of the 1970's with those of the past. He took note of certain assumptions held today and set out to test their validity. Among his discoveries:

CLAIM. Gangs are moving out of inner city slums and into middle class suburbs. FINDING. By and large the "primary locus" of gang activity remains the slum sections of a city. What has happened in some metropolitan areas is that the slums and ghettos have moved out of the center city to the "outer city," to ring cities, or to formerly working class and middle class neighborhoods in the suburbs.

CLAIM. The age span of gang members is spreading; six- and seven-year-olds are engaging in violent gang activity while men in their twenties and thirties are playing a much larger role in gangs. FINDING. While there may have been some expansion in both directions, preliminary indications are that they are not substantial and that the predominant age range still lies somewhere between 12 and 21.

CLAIM. Females are more deeply involved in gangs and they are filling more active, violent roles. FINDING. Despite stories of serious criminal behavior by females today, arrest and other data as well as assessments by local authorities indicate that the part played by girls in the gangs of the 1970's does not differ significantly from that of the past. Most respondents felt females did not represent a particularly important element of gang problems.

Miller found that ethnicity was still the substance holding members of the same gang together but he also discovered changes in which ethnic groups were forming the

most gangs. Black and Hispanic gangs had overtaken gangs made up of white youths from blue collar families. A familiar American pattern is being played out. Those groups that have most recently migrated to the city are filling the ranks of youth gangs. (Miller has observed exceptions: in Los Angeles some "gang barrios" go back three or more generations; in northwest Chicago boys of Italian ancestry belong to the same gangs to which their fathers or even their grandfathers belonged.)

The newest and most surprising ethnic development that Miller discovered among gangs was the increase in the number of youths from Asian backgrounds.

"Accepted doctrine for many years has been that oriental youth pose negligible problems in juvenile delinquency or gang activity; this accepted tenet has been 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 is now almost equal to that of white gangs and may exceed their number in the near future," Miller writes.

Another change has taken place in the realm of inter-gang warfare. Miller found that gangs tend to engage less in the traditional large scale "rumble" in favor of "forays" by small armed and often motorized bands. Gang members are still the principal victims of gang violence but Miller spotted what he judges to be a trend toward increased victimization of adults and children.

A New Wave of Violence?

Serving as the crux of Miller's study has been the question he formulated and attempted to answer. Are American cities undergoing a "new wave" of gang violence? After tracing the history of youth gangs in his six target cities and examining the material he collected on gang activities in the mid-1970's, his answer is "a qualified yes."

Using 1970 as a base, Miller says the "new wave" characterization certainly fits New York, Los Angeles, and Detroit. "The 'wave' is present but less new in Chicago and Philadelphia, which have experienced serious gang problems for all or most of the past decade," he adds. San Francisco, Miller found, had experienced an increase of gang activity only in Asian neighborhoods, but he detected a few signs of a possible resurgence in black sections, which had seen a decline in youth gangs.

Miller proceeds gingerly in predicting what the future holds for American youth gangs. He notes the "rather poor track record" researchers have compiled in charting future crime trends and adds that forecasting behavior of youth and its sub-cultures is particularly vexing. Miller bases his predictions on extrapolations as well as opinions he solicited from the experts who took part in his survey.

The majority of those queried in Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco told Miller they thought gang problems would worsen in their cities during the next few years. In New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles most respondents predicted that gang crime would hold at current levels or improve. Miller says that except for Los Angeles, where conditions appear to be worsening, those predictions conform to his extrapolations.

Part of the reason for Miller's forecast was his discovery that demographic projections don't hold much encouragement for an easing of gang violence. National population forecasts these days dwell on the ending of the baby boom, an event which will lead to a decrease in the size of the teen-age population. Miller points out that while this may be true for the United States at large and for the middle class, it does not hold for minority group youngsters growing up in big cities, the youngsters who make up the primary recruitment pool for youth gangs.

"Rather than decreases," writes Miller, "projections suggest rather sizable increases in the size of this population--a population which currently manifests the highest potential for involvement in violent and predatory crime."

In view of the evidence, Miller concludes that "the general outlook appears to be one of continuing high rates of gang crime in most of the largest cities, with probable increases in some and decreases in others averaging out to a continuing high all-city level."

Miller acknowledges circumstances could emerge (such as "massive" infusions of Federal money to deal with youth gangs or "massive" jailings by police of youth gang members) that would alter this outlook. But he sees the probability of this happening as low and therefore "the likelihood that gang problems will continue to beset major cities during the next few years appears high."

What can be done about youth gangs will be explored in Miller's second study. For now he believes it will suffice to address ourselves to another question: "How serious are problems posed by youth gangs and youth groups today, and what priority should be granted gang problems among a multitude of current crime problems?" His answer:

"...the materials presented in this report appear amply to support the conclusion that youth gang violence is more lethal than ever before, that the security of a wider sector of the citizenry is threatened by gangs to greater degree than ever before, and that violence and other illegal activities by members of youth gangs and groups in the United States in the mid-1970's represents a crime problem of the first magnitude which shows little prospect of early abatement."

A HISTORY OF SIX CITIES

In attempting to ascertain the seriousness of youth gang problems today, Walter Miller found it necessary to trace the history of gangs in his six target cities. What follows is Miller's "highly condensed" version of the full histories he prepared, covering the decade from 1965 to 1975:

NEW YORK. Apparently experienced a lull in gang violence between 1965 and '71, then a rapid rise in the numbers of gangs and gang crimes up to 1973. Since that year the numbers of reported gangs, gang members and gang-member arrests have remained consistent and at a high level, but the number of gang-related killings appears to have dropped off markedly.

CHICAGO. Experienced the rise and fall of a number of well-publicized "supergangs" between 1965 and '73, with a peak of gang killings in 1969, and a proliferation of smaller, more traditional gangs and rising gang-member arrest rates in subsequent years.

LOS ANGELES. Traditional Hispanic gangs posed problems between 1965 and '71, primarily in established Hispanic communities. After an apparent lull in black gang activity, black gangs began to proliferate around 1972, and contributed the bulk of rapidly rising numbers of gang killings which at present have reached record high levels.

PHILADELPHIA. Problems with violent gangs, mostly black, began to intensify near the beginning of the ten year period, with police reporting an average of about 40 gang-related killings each year for the six middle years of the decade. During the past two years the numbers of gang-related killings have diminished, but the present number of gangs and gang members remains at the high level maintained during the past five years.

DETROIT. Reported a decline in a well-developed earlier gang situation during the earlier years of the decade, experienced growth of a small number of larger gangs between 1968 and '73, and a proliferation of smaller gangs, mostly black, between that year and the present. Gang-related killings currently stand at record levels.

SAN FRANCISCO. Also saw a decline in a previous development of black gangs early in the decade, accompanied by the establishment of a small number of highly criminal Chinese gangs. Between 1971 and '74 there was an increase in the numbers of relatively small Asian gangs, particularly Filipino, and an increase in lethal incidents involving the Chinese gangs. Between 1973 and the present there has apparently been a decline in the violence of Chinese gangs, accompanied by a possible resurgence of black gangs, particularly in the school context.