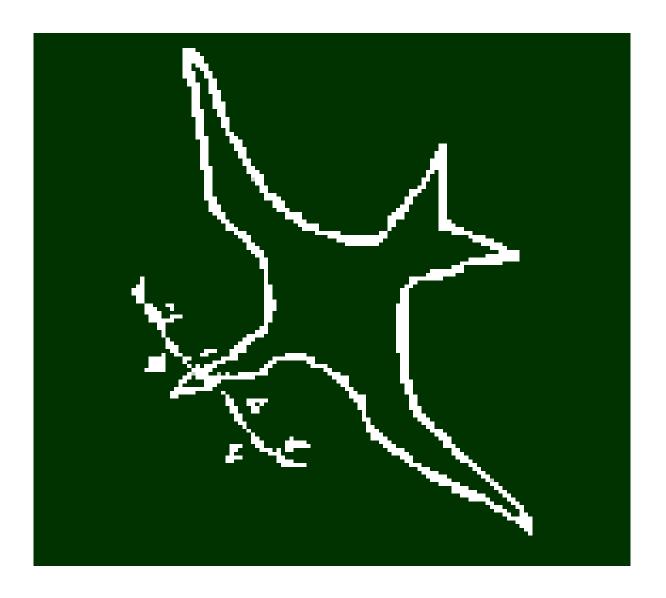# Gangs and Adolescent Violence

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INTRODUCTION

In 1964, Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif, pioneers in the study of group processes among youth, argued that "the conception of gangs as unique formations in a class of their own makes advance in the analysis of their formation and the behavioral consequences of membership well-nigh impossible" (1964, p. 48). Their point was that groups that are called gangs are not all alike and that gangs are similar in important respects to other collectivities that are not so labeled. Similar group and comparison processes take place in many collectivities, including "gangs," and these processes are critical in determining the behavior of all groups.

The problems of labeling and defining gangs are compounded when the phenomena researchers wish to explain—for example, violent behavior—are included in the definition of gangs, as is commonly done by even the most persistent and careful students of gangs, such as Malcolm Klein and Walter Miller (see Klein, 1995; Miller, 1975). So vexing is the problem of definition that some researchers have abandoned the term "gangs," opting instead to study "co-offending" (Reiss, 1986), "bands of teenagers congregating on street corners" (Skogan, 1990), "unsupervised peer groups" (Sampson & Groves, 1989), "networks" of juveniles who violate the law (Sarnecki, 1986), or simply "delinquent groups" (Warr, 1996). Because "gangs" are so much a part of popular, official, and scientific concerns with violence, however, I have chosen to retain the term while exercising greater rigor in its usage, especially with respect to its relevance to violence.

I begin this paper by distinguishing between groups and other collectivities and then offer a definition of gangs as unsupervised youth groups. Next, I discuss the relationship between ethnic conflict and youth violence and discuss violence in the context of drug use and selling. The following sections are devoted to street gang prevalence and street gangs and homicide, after which I attempt to describe and explain gang violence. In the latter section, several topics are discussed, including socialization into violence, the individual and microsocial levels of explanation of gang violence, the role of pathology in gangs, gang fighting and status, reactions to status threats, normative properties of gangs, and the role of group cohesiveness in violence. Next is a brief discussion of gangs and communities, immigration, race, ethnicity, and poverty as factors in youth violence, followed by a section on social capital, crime, and violence. I close the paper by presenting brief agendas for research on gangs and adolescent violence and social policy related to the problem.

Distinguishing Between Group and Other Collective Behavior Processes

Collective violence among young people is not always attributable to gangs, however they are defined. Nor is it always possible to distinguish violent behavior—descriptively or analytically—from many other types of criminal or deviant behaviors. That is, violence often is a component of other behaviors. Moreover, similar group and other behavior processes occur in gangs and in other collectivities, and these processes often are involved in gang formation, identity, and behavior.

Evidence of these similarities has come from field studies in a variety of settings. In one study, anthropologist Gary Schwartz and his colleagues looked at "authority relationships" between

young people and adults in six Illinois communities during the early 1970s (see Horowitz, 1983; Horowitz & Schwartz, 1974). The study linked community culture, family relationships, and other intergenerational relationships with youth behavior, including violence. A major conclusion of the study was that community and youth cultures mutually determine one another. The following field observer report is representative of much youth collective behavior centered around drugs and fighting, which involved a broad spectrum of the youth in "Cambridge," the pseudonym for one of the communities Schwartz and his colleagues studied (from Schwartz, 1987, p. 145). Note that no reference is made to gangs.

> These guys from Newton had been selling everybody dope, and last night they waited a few hours for everybody to get "greased" and came back and started trouble. Supposedly they beat up four guys and two girls and put them in the hospital. So everybody is going to be ready for them this time.

> We went down this road that leads into the forest preserve. It's about a mile long and there is no outlet. You have to turn around to get out. It was getting dark and you could see that people were waiting for somebody to make the first move. I talked to an older guy who is about twenty-five. He said, "We're going to be ready for those mother fuckers this time," and pulled a big pistol he had stuck in his belt. He told me they heard the guys from Newton had guns. Nobody was kidding, and it was tense. A car from Newton drove by or at least they thought it was a car from Newton and this guy from the outpost ran over with a bat and broke the back window in. There were two cars, and they broke the windows in both cars but of course the cars didn't stop. I looked up and saw the metropolitan police (from the nearby city) surrounding the area quietly. It took about twenty minutes to get the place cleared out.

> If you can imagine a concrete road maybe 200 yards long with about a hundred cars lined up on each side. Quite a few of them have radios, tape players, or stereo speakers on top of the car. And about 400 or 500 kids, mainly 15-, 16-, 17-year old girls, a few younger kids, and guys about 17, 18, 19, with a few older guys. Everybody is drinking beer, and every now and then a little fight breaks out. Kids are always coming up to you asking for some kind of dope–if you want to buy or sell it.

"What is important in the culture of Cambridge," Schwartz observed, "is the tenuousness of the bridge between the generations." The observer noted that "the expressive significance" of the behavior of these young people—drugs, threats, and fighting alike—"lies in being together with one's friends in a way that does not enable adults to place restrictions on one's freedom" (p. 146). It is possible that the "guys from Newton" who supplied drugs may have been gang members. Many gang members sell drugs, but so do others, and the relationship between gangs and drug selling is extremely variable (Klein, 1995; Moore, 1991, 1993; Moore, Garcia, Garcia, Cerda, & Valencia, 1978). The violence and drug-related behavior described in the field observer report illustrate "elementary collective behavior" processes, rather than group, or gang, processes, though the distinction is not always easy to make (see Short, 1974).

Milling crowds of young people may, however, also take on a group identity. The crowds may identify themselves, and be identified by others, as gangs. Richard Brymer's (1967) description of street life among adolescents in San Antonio during the 1960s is apposite. Brymer observed that the small, relatively stable friendship cliques in that city sometimes acquired a common identity as a gang among themselves and others, usually as a result of conflicts and threats but also as a result of police pressure and media coverage. Brymer illustrated this transformation in the following field observation report:

> Upon passing a neighborhood drive-in restaurant with around 200-300 teenagers in front, the clique group identified the crowd in terms of membership in various neighborhood cliques, e.g., Joe's group, Henry and them, etc. A short time later, we again passed the drive-in, and something in the situation had changed so as to provoke an identification of the crowd in front of the restaurant as "El Circle" gang. The characteristics of the situation which apparently induced this change in designation were that all of the persons in the crowd were facing the street in a tense, quiet atmosphere; this contrasted with an earlier loud, boisterous situation with all persons talking in their respective clique groups, with some "clique-hopping." Upon investigation, it was learned that a rival "gang" passed by in a car and shouted certain epithets about the mothers of the "Circle" boys, as well as challenges. Objectively, it was probably a clique that had passed by, but it had been identified by the persons in the crowd as a "gang" (Brymer, 1967, reprinted in Short, 1974, pp. 416-417).

Much that passes as gang behavior is situational in nature, which contributes to the confusion on the part of observers concerning gangs, their behavior, and its etiology. Indeed, the attribution of hostile or delinquent behavior to a "gang" may contribute to gang formation and identity. Brymer cited the case of a boy who was shot at in a hostile neighborhood. The boy reported to his clique that the shots were fired by a rival gang, and discussion followed on "what to do." Often, the action taken involves retaliation, with the result that the identity of a group as a gang is reinforced by the conflict with another putative gang. The attribution of gang membership or behavior may also occur when neighbors, police, school authorities, or others identify unsupervised groups of young people as gangs. In effect, the phenomenon that is feared, gang formation, thus may be enhanced—or even created—by those who wish to prevent or discourage it.

Defining Gangs as Unsupervised Youth Groups

Gangs have been the subject of numerous studies since early in the 20th century. From the beginning, conflict between groups has been observed as an important characteristic of gangs, often as a defining characteristic. Frederic M. Thrasher, the first social scientist to study gangs systematically, defined the gang as "an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict" (Thrasher, 1927, p. 57). Several recent studies confirm the importance—if not the universality—of conflict for gang formation and identity, as well as the importance of conflict in the life histories of gang members (see, especially, Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Klein, 1995; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Sullivan, 1989).

The definition of gangs employed in this paper is based upon common elements in virtually all serious studies of gangs: *Gangs are groups whose members meet together with some regularity, over time, on the basis of group-defined criteria of membership and group-defined organizational characteristics; that is, gangs are non-adult-sponsored, self-determining groups that demonstrate continuity over time.* In these terms, the milling crowd described earlier by Schwartz clearly was not a gang. In the incident described by Brymer, cliques coalesced into a gang as a result of provocation.

While the criteria in the definition to be used in this paper lack precision, they are meant to distinguish gangs from groups that come together only briefly or upon few occasions (see discussion later in this paper and Reiss, 1986; Reiss & Tonry, 1986; Sanders, 1994), as well as from larger collectivities of young people, such as milling crowds, in which gang members may participate but

gang membership is not salient to the behavior of interest. In this view, street gangs are to be distinguished, also, from certain other groups to be noted later in this paper.

Note that this definition does not specify that gang members define themselves as a gang. Empirically, some do, and some do not (see Short, 1968). Street groups that by this definition are gangs often define themselves by other terms, for example, as clubs (see Suttles, 1968), as in "We a defensive club, man" (Klein, 1995, p. 5).

Defining gangs in this way avoids the logical circularity of including in the definition the behavior that is to be explained.[1] There is a great deal of variation to be explained, within and between gangs and other collectivities. Indeed, a variety of subspecies, as it were, have been distinguished (see, e.g., Fagan, 1989; Klein, 1995; Miller, 1980; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Spergel, 1995). However, most of these distinctions have not proven to be useful, empirically or theoretically. Gangs vary a great deal in organization, appearance, leadership structure, behavior, and viability—and in characteristics that often are attributed to them or used to define them (such as affectations of clothing, names, and behaviors such as fighting, drug use, and property crime). A viable typology of youth collectivities, including gangs, would be extremely useful for understanding and controlling violence and other criminal behavior among such collectivities (as noted in the concluding section of this paper) (see also Moore, 1993).

Malcolm Klein emphasized the versatile behavior repertoire of "street gangs," but he included "commitment to a criminal orientation" among his defining criteria. He attempted to finesse the logic problem by focusing attention on "the tipping point beyond which we say 'aha—that sure sounds like a street gang to me'" (Klein, 1995, pp. 27, 29-30, 75). From this perspective, "play groups" are not gangs. Yet, as Klein acknowledged, quite ordinary play groups often become delinquent and so acquire the gang appellation (see Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Thrasher, 1927). The gangs that my colleagues and I studied in Chicago (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965) showed little commitment to a criminal orientation, though they were heavily involved in a broad array of delinquent behaviors.

In what follows, except as otherwise noted, "gangs" and "street gangs" are used interchangeably but without the definitional requirement of commitment to a criminal orientation. Most play groups of unsupervised youths are not so committed, though many engage in occasional delinquent episodes—individually and collectively—such as vandalism, fighting within and between groups, thefts of a minor nature, substance abuse, and drug selling. Gangs that become committed to a criminal orientation, of course, pose far more serious problems than those that do not for the individuals, families, and communities that become their victims, as well as for the gang members themselves. Note that Klein's emphasis on "tipping points" and the definition of gangs employed here both focus on processes and circumstances that may result in criminal or otherwise seriously objectionable behavior by youth groups—and, for some gangs, in a criminal orientation. What is known about these processes and circumstances?

When John Moland and I followed up on two of the African-American gangs that we had studied in the 1960s in Chicago, what we learned painted a revealing portrait of one gang that had passed the

tipping point from play group to delinquent gang. Among the 16 gangs we had studied most intensively, the "Nobles" (we first called them the "Chiefs") had ranked in the top third in "conflict" behaviors. They were the most involved of all the gangs we studied in sexual activities, and they ranked second highest in drug use and drug selling. They were also a very "social" gang, ranking third in sports and other social activities (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 95). The following excerpt from an extensive interview we conducted in the mid-1970s with a former member of the gang suggests how the transition from sports and other nondelinquent, "hanging" behavior to delinquent behavior occurred (adapted from Short & Moland, 1976, pp. 166-167):

> The Nobles was originally a baseball team. I came into contact with them when I was in the seventh grade. I played softball pretty good. After the game we would hang out and have a little fun, you know. After awhile the group began to grow and gather in an area called Ellis Park. A lot of girls used to be around and we would go to parties. The Nobles used to hang around in little bunches and hit on people for money and if you got into it with one of them you would have to deal with a group of them. The thing about the Nobles was that a lot of people were not actually members, insofar as being in the club is concerned, but you wouldn't be able to distinguish between those who were members and those who were not. They were beginning to hang together. For example, if they would go into the [public housing] project for a party or something and they would get into a humbug, well then they would send somebody around to the hanging place for the whole area, the poolroom where they all hung out at. And there was a long open courtway where a lot of people hung out over there for there was a lot of drugs over there and a lot of "slick" things happened over there. There were a lot of people over there who were not actual members of the club but they were under the group banner thing. So the group began to expand on that level. Actually when you would be dealing with Nobles as a club you would not be dealing with that mass. But when you got down to some action as an outsider you wouldn't be able to distinguish as to who [was a member and who was not].

Although they were heavily involved in delinquency, individually and as a group, the Nobles never developed a criminal orientation as a group. We had classified them as a "conflict gang" because of their occasional involvement in fighting with other gangs. However, the Nobles never got caught up in the (sometimes protracted) "gang wars" of so many Chicago gangs of the period. They were essentially a play group, despite frequent run-ins with the law, a lot of fighting (group and individual), drug use (mainly alcohol and marijuana) and selling (mainly marijuana, though one core member was addicted to heroin and had been convicted of selling heroin), and a very high rate of illegitimate parenthood. A decade later, of the 19 core members of the original gang for whom we were able to obtain such information, 13 were employed, 3 were dead, and 3 were unemployed and heavily involved with drugs. The Nobles had grown less cohesive over the 2 years following our initial study, despite a brief and futile attempt by members of the gang to formally reorganize. They virtually lost any group identity shortly thereafter (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 34).

In our terms of reference, the Nobles were a street gang whose members were heavily involved in delinquent behavior, including a good deal of violence. Their turf was located in an area (Douglas) long characterized by high rates of crime and delinquency, but in which the population composition and community institutions were relatively stable compared to other black communities in the city (McKay, 1969). Douglas had, in fact, experienced the largest *decrease* in rates of official delinquency of all Chicago communities between 1958 and 1961, which coincided approximately with the period of our most intensive field studies. The community stability, together with the Nobles' lack of a criminal orientation and the lack of cohesion of the gang and despite the existence

of heavy drug traffic in the area, helps to explain the relatively successful adult adjustment of members of the Nobles.

In contrast with the Nobles, the "Vice Lords" ("Vice Kings" in Short & Strodtbeck, 1965) were never a play group. Created out of alliances and conquests in the cauldron of gang conflict on Chicago's West Side (see Dawley, 1973; Kaiser, 1969), the Vice Lords became one of Chicago's "supergangs" during the late 1960s, primarily as a result of factors associated with street gang rivalries. Lincoln Kaiser (1969) listed these factors as (1) the release from jail of several Vice Lord leaders; (2) newspaper publicity portraying another gang (the "Blackstone Rangers") as "the toughest, best organized gang" in Chicago, which was a serious challenge to the Vice Lords; (3) "hostile incidents" between the Vice Lords and other gangs; and (4) the perceived failure of nationalist groups to deliver on promises, compromising the appeal of black nationalism to the gang.

Like the Nobles, the Vice Lords exhibited a versatile repertoire of behaviors—delinquent and nondelinquent—but they were a "conflict gang" above all. Among the gangs we studied, they ranked first in conflict and third in sexual activities but only ninth in drug behaviors, sports, and other social activities.

The Vice Lords' turf was located in Lawndale, the Chicago community that experienced the largest *increase* in rates of official delinquency between 1958 and 1961 (see McKay, 1969). Lawndale was, at that time, in the midst of a rapid population turnover (it was shifting from a predominantly white population to an overwhelmingly black population), with much attendant disruption of community institutions. In contrast to the Nobles, members of the Vice Lords continued to be heavily involved in drug traffic and in drug use, as well as in other criminal activities, in the decade following our initial study.

Whatever the dynamics of supergang formation during the 1960s, large aggregations of "gang nations" have dominated public, and to some extent law enforcement, preoccupation with gangs in more recent years. Attention has focused particularly on gang nations in Chicago and Los Angeles and their alleged expansionist tendencies in pursuit of new drug markets. Good evidence exists that gangs have proliferated in the United States and that they can now be found increasingly in cities where previously they did not exist (Klein, 1995, p. 31).

Klein (1995) conducted personal phone interviews with a large number of police gang experts. Among those from cities with populations of 100,000 or more, 94% "reported a genuine gang presence" in their cities. For a random sample of 60 cities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000, this figure was 38%, confirming the general impression that gang problems are located primarily in large cities. Klein noted, however, that as many as 800 to 900 of the approximately 2,250 smaller cities he surveyed also reported having experienced gang problems.

Data collected by Klein and Cheryl Maxson suggest that the "gang problem" in the United States has escalated rapidly. About half of the cities they studied reported the emergence of gangs only since 1985. As they and others have reported, gangs in "new gang" cities sometimes imitate gangs in other cities, especially Chicago and Los Angeles, often adopting similar names and other symbols. More

direct influence also occurs, such as when gang members from cities with well-established gangs move to other cities. Research, however, suggests that most gangs are "homegrown," rather than initiated by outsiders (in addition to Klein, 1995, see Hagedorn & Macon, 1988).[2]

How, then, do these homegrown gangs develop? Some—research has not shown how many or what proportion—form for entirely nondelinquent purposes. Joan Moore, for example, reported that the Chicano gangs she and her colleagues studied in Los Angeles "generally started out ... as adolescent friendship groups" (1993, p. 35). Several of the Milwaukee gangs studied by John Hagedorn (Hagedorn & Macon, 1988) began as "break-dancing" groups that were solidified by conflict with rival dancing groups. Others were "corner groups of friends" who became gangs after conflict with other corner groups. Still others had "direct roots in Chicago," the result of "former Chicago gang members [moving] to Milwaukee, where their children formed gangs named after their old Chicago gang" (Hagedorn & Macon, 1988, p. 59). Some gangs begin simply as "hanging groups" but become progressively involved in delinquent behavior (e.g., the Nobles, whom we studied in Chicago, and MacLeod's "Hallway Hangers" [1987]; see also Sullivan, 1989), whereas others engage in virtually no delinquent behavior (MacLeod's "Brothers").[3]

As many observers have noted, most male adolescent groups—including those that are adult sponsored and supervised—engage in a good deal of rough-and-tumble play and display. Among unsupervised groups, status often becomes associated with fighting prowess, particularly among lower- and working-class males. Walter Miller and his colleagues found that 7 out of 10 aggressive acts committed by members of the "Junior Outlaws" were directed at others within the gang. The vast majority (94%) of the aggressive acts they observed were verbal, rather than physical, with most of them reflecting gang-serving qualities and behaviors, such as increasing group solidarity and cohesion, facilitating and coordinating collective action, securing and maintaining relations of mutual equality among group members, ensuring reciprocity in intragroup relations, and displaying personal qualities that served "as criteria of group acceptance" and "prestige conferral" (Miller, Geertz, & Cutter, 1961).

Graffiti has been shown to be important both in establishing gang identity and in serving as a symbolic form of gang conflict (Klein, 1995). Some individual "taggers" and "tagger groups" have become conflict-oriented gangs as a result of conflict over graffiti. Ray Hutchison and Charles Kyle (1993) documented the many functions played by gang graffiti in the barrios of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Chicago. The functions ranged from merely identifying a particular gang or demarcating its territory to expanding the status and reputation of the gang or its alliances with other gangs. Additionally, defacing a rival gang's graffiti serves to insult or taunt rival gangs. Although some gang graffiti advertises gangs to the larger community, other graffiti, Hutchison observed, is so esoteric that it is accessible only to participants in the local gang subculture (see also Conquergood, 1993).

To summarize, street gangs (unsupervised youth groups) appear to become violent as a result of one or more of the following processes: (1) escalation of the natural rough-and-tumble punching and wrestling that occurs among most male groups and the association of status with fighting prowess; (2) competition with rival gangs, often leading to conflict over status-enhancing behaviors, such as

graffiti, dancing, or athletic contests; (3) the imposition of definitions by others, and the behavior of others toward the gang, that push a violent identity on the gang; and (4) group processes that create or reinforce group cohesion based on violent or otherwise delinquent behavior, often involving individual and group status considerations (see Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Jansyn, 1966; Klein & Crawford, 1967; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965).

Though precise distinctions are hard to make, for heuristic purposes street gangs as defined here can be distinguished from several other forms of youth groups. Klein noted, for example, that neither "skinheads" nor "bikers" are street gangs. Skinheads are "inside, they're working on their written materials, or if outside they're looking for a target not just lounging." Bikers are "focused on their machines, or cruising, or dealing drugs in an organized manner ... Street gangs seem aimless; skinheads and bikers are focused, planful. Street gangs get into any and every kind of trouble" (Klein, 1995, p. 53).[4] Similarly, the large collectivities of British and other European football (soccer) "thugs" that journalist Bill Bufford (1991) and others have written about clearly are not street gangs. Nor, for the most part, are they groups, but rather they are floating crowds or mobs that coalesce at times into highly violent groupings with little structure (see also Van Limbergen, Colaers, & Walgrave, 1989). These collectivities are less likely than gangs to be composed entirely of adolescents, though, as will be shown later, the age range of some gangs has expanded to include young adults as well as adolescents. The violence—real and potential—of each of these types of collectivities is undeniable but is beyond the focus of this paper.

Ethnic Conflict and Youth Violence:
Street Gangs, "Wilding" Groups, and Other Violent Collectivities

Ethnic antagonism often has been the basis for community and gang conflict (see Schwartz, 1987; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Thrasher, 1927). For the most part, street gangs tend to be composed of young people, mainly male, with similar ethnic or racial backgrounds, though exceptions have been noted. For example, Sanchez-Jankowski (1991) found that 9 of the 37 gangs he studied consisted of both black and Latino members. Black gangs, in his classification, included African-Americans and Jamaicans; Latino gangs included "Chicanos (Mexican-Americans and Mexicans), Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, and Nicaraguans" (p. 324). Regrettably, Sanchez-Jankowski provided little information concerning the role of ethnic or racial identity in the behavior of the gangs he studied.

Klein's surveys of police, and his assessment of other reports, led him to conclude that the great majority of gangs are racially homogeneous and that ethnic similarity is the general rule. He also noted that white gangs have become increasingly rare and that most gangs tend to be either black or Hispanic-Latino. He cited Chicago Police Department data gathered by George Knox indicating "average black gang homogeneity at 96 percent, average Hispanic homogeneity at 94 percent, and average white homogeneity (nine cases) at 88 percent" (Klein, 1995, pp. 106-107).

A variety of Asian gangs have been noted, but little studied, in recent years. Exceptions include studies of Chinese gangs in New York by Ko-lin Chin (1990a, 1990b, 1996), who also reviewed the scant research literature, and in San Francisco by Calvin Toy (1992). Chinese gangs appear to be

oriented primarily toward economic crimes such as gambling, extortion, and drug smuggling and distribution, and gang violence typically is related to those activities. William Sanders (1994) reported that a few of the children in the first wave of Southeast Asian refugees in San Diego became affiliated with multiethnic gangs. He noted that Southeast Asian gangs later emerged, partly in response to "bullying" by Mexican- and African-American gangs, who also served as role models of organization and behavior.

In contrast with other researchers, Dwight Conquergood argued that Chicago's two gang nations are both multiracial and multiethnic (1993, p. 8). Further, noting that the "primary unit in Chicago gang organization is the turf-based branch, named after the street corner where the local homeboys hang out," he argued that the "local street gang will be ethnically homogeneous only if the neighborhood is residentially segregated" (pp. 9, 32). Conquergood cited numerous examples of racially and ethnically mixed gangs, such as the following: "In April, 1991, a Future Puerto Rican Stone, who actually was a Romanian refugee youth, was killed in my neighborhood allegedly by a Spanish Cobra, who actually was a Vietnamese youth" (p. 32).

Conquergood's interpretations differ markedly from findings reported by the great majority of investigators. Chicago's gang nations appear to be unique (Klein, 1995). Moreover, it seems likely, though it has not been systematically studied, that the branches of Chicago's gang nations may themselves be violent rivals upon occasion, as is the case among Los Angeles's "Crips" and "Bloods."

Though they may be increasing in prevalence, racially and ethnically mixed gangs continue to be relatively rare (Miller, 1975),[5] and ethnic identity continues to be important to many gangs and communities (see, e.g., among others, Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Horowitz, 1983; Klein, 1971, 1995; Miller, 1975; Moore et al., 1978; Padilla, 1992; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Sullivan, 1989; Vigil, 1988). Because they were based on intimate observations at the local level and did not examine city-wide data or employ systematic quantitative assessment, Conquergood's observations and interpretations are difficult to evaluate.

Gangs, Wilding Groups, and Hate-Motivated Crowds

It is useful to distinguish the violence of street gangs (including those that become conflict-oriented toward other street gangs) from violence committed by what have come to be called "wilding" groups and from that committed by loosely organized crowds of young people. "Conflict gangs" typically are street gangs that achieve a reputation for fighting and become invested in that reputation (see Decker, 1993; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965), though in reality they spend little time fighting other gangs. In contrast, wilding groups apparently have little preexisting structure. Much of their violent behavior appears to be directed to "spur of the moment" targets of opportunity, though a measure of planning has been apparent in some instances. Scott Cummings's study of wilding groups in a community of about 10,000 in the Ft. Worth, Texas, metropolitan area is apposite (Cummings, 1993).

Cummings's wilders were "a small group of [black] teenagers who terrorized the [white] elderly in an area that had experienced rapid racial turnover between 1960 and 1980," leaving approximately 250 elderly whites scattered throughout the community, isolated and easy victims. Although Cummings concluded that "wilding groups are a type of violent gang," it is not clear that the group he studied satisfies the definition of a street gang proposed here. Cummings noted that gang activity occurred in both black and Chicano areas at the time of the wilding incidents but he also stated that "none of the wilding participants were affiliated with established gangs." Instead, he argued that the wilding groups appeared to be "comprised of marginal and pathological individuals who operate on the fringes of social groups and other adolescent subcultures" (p. 67).

Cummings observed that wilding may not be "compatible with the protection of turf, the maintenance of group honor and reputation, or the monopolization of the drug marketplace"—all but the latter being common street gang activities. All of these observations suggest that if wilding groups are street gangs, they are a subcategory of the general type. Composed of adolescents, and unsupervised, the wilding groups Cummings observed met with some regularity and over time. Illustrating this constancy, Cummings reported, "The two Coleman brothers, in association with two to four other teenagers, systematically prowled the streets of Rosedale" (p. 58). Importantly, violent behavior committed by this wilding gang escalated via commonly observed group processes, albeit to greater excess than is characteristic of street gangs.

Wilding burst upon the public consciousness in 1989, when a young white female jogger was beaten and raped by a group of black adolescents in New York's Central Park. The brutality of the attack extended beyond any discernible sexual motive. The victim was beaten into unconsciousness and her face was disfigured. Though the case bore similarities to the stabbing and brutal beating of a white adolescent crippled by polio by a largely black and Puerto Rican street gang in the same city more than 30 years earlier (see Yablonsky, 1962), the 1989 assailants apparently were not a group with a history of gathering regularly; they were not a gang.

Despite the sensational nature of wilding crime, little systematic research exists that would explain such behavior. Cummings's study is the major exception. Interviews with the boys in the wilding group Cummings studied indicated that competition among group members led to the escalation of violence and brutality, as can be seen in Cummings's description of the murder of one elderly victim (p. 67):

> After being pulled from her bathtub, slaps in the face led to dragging her from room to room to identify where money or other valuables were hidden. She was then pushed to the floor, and kicked and stomped in the head. The violence then escalated to multiple stabbings, the insertion of a broom handle down her throat, and further desecration of the unconscious body through spray painting the genitals and other body parts. The wilding participants were high on drugs, the brutality being accompanied by laughter and surrealistic amusement.

Other murders committed by the gang featured similar competitive escalations of brutality. In one incident, following the murder of the husband of an elderly couple, "the group beat the elderly wife who was confined to a wheelchair" (p. 67).

Interpreting the Texas wilding incidents, Cummings emphasized the importance of racial antagonisms and the social marginality and unstable personalities of the participants. It is possible that such personal characteristics set the wilding groups apart from gangs. Whereas individual gang members may exhibit these characteristics, the research literature suggests that they are not typical of street gang members. Yablonsky's description of "The Violent Gang" is the major exception, and like Yablonsky, Cummings stressed the "strong influence on the behavior of group members [of] pathological and socially marginal" group leaders—again, an exception to the view of most gang researchers. In any case, the hypothesis seems warranted that wilders, in contrast to most street gang members, exhibit pathological personal characteristics that may, in combination with commonly observed group processes, help to explain their excessively violent behavior. Wilding can be tentatively classified as a variant of gang behavior, to be distinguished from "garden variety" street gang behavior.

A type of largely youthful collective violence that falls more clearly outside the gang classification—though gang members may participate—is that committed by loosely formed crowds of young people who attack "outsiders" (mainly whites attacking minorities) who, often innocently or inadvertently, come into their communities. Such "communal" collective violence has erupted many times throughout history in the United States and elsewhere, but a change occurred in the 1960s, when collective violence in U.S. cities became more "commodity-oriented" (see Janowitz, 1969). Since that time, such large-scale rioting has occurred in only two U.S. cities—in Miami during the 1980s and in Los Angeles in 1992 (see Ball-Rokeach & Short, 1985; Short & Jenness, 1994). More often, racially motivated violence has taken the form of brutal attacks by crowds of young people upon isolated individuals.

As part of a larger study of young people in New York City—where racially motivated violence rose dramatically during the 1980s—Howard Pinderhughes (1993) studied youth in two neighborhoods that had experienced some of the most widely reported incidents of racially motivated violence. Pinderhughes's portrait is of racial and ethnic antagonism based on lack of economic opportunity, fear of black power, and perceptions that blacks and other minorities are troublemakers who nevertheless are given favored treatment in the media and in competition for jobs. Although many of the youth committing racially motivated violence were outcasts in their own communities, antagonism toward anyone who did not "belong" in the neighborhood served as the rationale for group "missions" in which strangers were attacked, many times viciously. Pinderhughes described the prototypical scenario of such "bias-related" crimes:

> A young African American male is walking through a white neighborhood, some might say he's in the "wrong part of town," when he's attacked by a group of white kids from the neighborhood. The kids, all male and between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one, are not members of an organized group; it is just a gathering of neighborhood teens who regularly hang out together getting high and partying. The youth were pretty high and drunk when they heard that an African American man was walking through their neighborhood. Somebody in the group vociferously suggested that the group "take care" of the intruder. The weapons of choice are baseball bats or heavy sticks which have been brought in anticipation of the night's activities. The group found the African American man easily and attacked him with the bats and sticks, while yelling racial epithets and warning him to stay out of their neighborhood.

Pinderhughes noted that this scenario fit the widely publicized murders of Michael Griffith, in 1986 in the Howard Beach section of Queens, and Yusuf Hawkins, in 1989 in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. Both cases involved young African-American men who were attacked by crowds of "over twenty white youth" with little pretext (Pinderhughes, 1993, p. 76).[6]

In seeking to interpret this type of collective violence, Pinderhughes conducted individual and focus-group interviews in two Brooklyn neighborhoods that had experienced extensive racially motivated violence—Gravesend and Bensonhurst. He found that the role of peer collectivities was critical (p. 83):

> All of the youth interviewed talked openly and excitedly about going on "missions." The entire ambience of the interview would change when they began to describe going on missions (a late night search to find individuals who did not belong in the neighborhood). The youth seemed to get a sense of self-worth and individual power, which was otherwise lacking in their lives... Their sense of group cohesion and group solidarity was heightened if the victim was from another racial or ethnic group, high on the list of desirable targets. Their feeling of powerlessness because of their economic position and prospects and their social position in their community contributed to the visceral nature of the attitudes they had toward other races and ethnicities. They felt economically powerless and expressed frustrations that their community was politically powerless.

Although neither the wilding groups nor the community-based crowds described earlier in this section are garden-variety street gangs, one can note similarities between these loosely structured crowds and a gathering of teenagers from several white street gangs on Chicago's South Side approximately 30 years ago (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, pp. 112-114):

> At approximately 12:30 at night, I was hanging with a group of teenage kids at the corner of the park, which is immediately across the street from the Catholic church. The group was a mixed one of boys and girls ranging in age from 16 to 20. There were approximately 15-20 teenagers, and, for the most part, they were sitting or reclining in the park, talking, drinking beer, or wrestling with the girls. I had parked my car adjacent to where the group was gathered and was leaning on the fender, talking to two boys about the remainder of the softball season. The group consisted of members of the Amboys, Bengals, Sharks, and a few Mafia. They were not unusually loud or boisterous this particular hot and humid evening because a policeman on a three-wheeler had been by a half-hour earlier and had warned them of the lateness of the hour.
>
> While I was talking to two of the Amboys, I noticed a solitary teenage figure ambling along on the sidewalk heading toward the Avenue. I paid no particular heed, thinking it was just another teenager walking over to join the park group. However, as the figure neared the group, he made no effort to swerve over and join the group but continued by with no sign of recognition. This was an oddity, so I watched the youth as he passed the gathered teenagers and neared the curb where I was sitting. At this point, I suddenly realized that the boy was black, and in danger if detected. I did not dare do or say anything for fear of alerting the kids in the park, and for a few minutes I thought the black youth could pass by without detection. However, Butch, a Bengal who had been drinking beer, spotted the youth and immediately asked some of the other teenagers, "Am I drunk or is that a Nigger on the corner?" The attention of the entire group was then focused on the black youth, who by this time had stepped off the curb and was walking in the center of the street toward the opposite curb. The youth was oblivious to everything and was just strolling along as if without a care in the world.
>
> Behind him, however, consternation and anger arose spontaneously like a mushroom cloud after an atomic explosion. I heard muttered threats of "Let's kill the bastard," "Get the mother-fucker," "Come on, let's get going." Even the girls in the crowd readily and verbally agreed.

Within seconds, about a dozen of the kids began running in the direction of the black youth. Realizing that I was unable to stem the tide, I yelled out to the black youth something to the effect of "Hey man, look alive." The boy heard me as he paused in midstride, but did not turn around. Again, I found it necessary to shout a warning as the white teenagers were rapidly overtaking him. At my second outcry, the black youth turned around and saw the white kids closing in on him. Without hesitation, he took off at full speed with the white mob at his heels yelling shouts of "Kill the bastard—don't let him get away."

I remained standing by my car and was joined by three Amboys who did not participate in the chase. The president of the Amboys sadly shook his head, stating that his guys reacted like a bunch of kids whenever they saw a colored guy, and openly expressed his wish that the boy would get away. Another Amboy in an alibi tone of voice excused his nonparticipation in the chase by explaining that he couldn't run fast enough to catch anybody. Harry merely stated that the black kid didn't bother him, so why should he be tossed in jail for the assault of a stranger.

As we stood by the car, we could hear the progress of the chase from the next block. There were shouts and outcries as the pursued ran down the street and his whereabouts were echoed by the bedlam created by his pursuers. Finally, there was silence and we waited for approximately 15 minutes before the guys began to straggle back from the chase. As they returned to my car and to the girls sitting nearby, each recited his share of the chase. Barney laughingly related that Guy had hurdled a parked car in an effort to tackle the kid, who had swerved out into the street. He said that he himself had entered a coal yard looking around in an effort to find where the boy had hidden, when an adult from a second floor back porch warned that he had better get out of there as the coal yard was protected by a large and vicious Great Dane.

The black youth apparently had decided that he couldn't outrun his tormentors and had begun to go in and out of backyards until he was able to find a hiding place, at which point he disappeared. His pursuers then began to make a systematic search of the alleys, garages, backyards, corridors, etc. *The boys were spurred on to greater efforts by the adults of the area who offered advice and encouragement.* One youth laughingly related that a woman, from her bedroom window, kept pointing out probable hiding places in her backyard so that he would not overlook any sanctuary. This advice included looking behind tall shrubbery by the fence, on top of a tool crib by the alley, and underneath the back porch. Other youths related similar experiences as the adults along the Avenue entered gleefully in the "hide-and-seek." Glen related that as the youths turned onto X street, he began to shout to the people ahead in the block that "a Nigger was coming" so that someone ahead might catch or at least head off the boy. The other pursuers also took up the hue and cry, which accounted for all the loud noises I heard.

Case studies such as this one document the often mutually ambivalent attitudes that gangs and communities have toward one another. Sanchez-Jankowski noted similar instances of community support for white (Irish) gangs' efforts to prevent nonwhites from moving into their neighborhoods (1991, p. 191). The gang involvement in incidents such as these is less important to understanding the violence, however, than are the attitudes and supports given to the young by others in the community—attitudes and supports that reinforce prejudices and behaviors toward strangers, especially strangers of different races and ethnicities. The white gang members involved in the incident on Chicago's South Side were often openly at odds with the adult community, "particularly concerning rowdyism, drinking (which is well-nigh universal) and drug use (which is rare), and sexual delinquency" (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 112). However, because the community was undergoing racial transition, the gang members' rowdyism—when directed against blacks—was actively encouraged by adults. Similarly, the Brooklyn youth studied by Pinderhughes (1993) were "outcasts from the school system and within their community," but their violent, bias-related

behavior was "an extension of neighborhood and societal attitudes and ideologies translated to the street" (p. 89). Pinderhughes found support for this type of youth-adult relationship in other communities, as well. While especially brutal incidents such as those that occurred in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst may be extreme, differences between them and less extreme episodes are matters of degree rather than of kind. Little is known about the prevalence of such extreme examples of violence, but the literature indicates that compared to street gangs, both wilding gangs and violent crowds are rare. The need for better data concerning bias-related "hate crimes" is clear and urgent (see Jenness, 1994, 1995; Reiss & Roth, 1993).

Bias-related hate crimes are not restricted to racial or ethnic conflict. U.S. Department of Justice (FBI) data suggest that "violence motivated by homophobia and heterosexism represents the most frequent, visible, violent, culturally-legitimated, and rapidly-growing type of hate crime in this country" (Jenness, 1995). Although data limitations prevent firm conclusions, public sensibilities regarding all categories of hate crimes clearly have increased in recent years, as evidenced by legal and journalistic writing on the subject, by recent legislation at every level of government designed to curb the prevalence of bias-related hate crimes and punish their perpetrators, and by the early findings of social science research in this area (Levin & McDevitt, 1993; see also Jenness, 1995).

Violence in the Context of Drugs:
Street Gangs, Crews, and Other "Drug Gangs"

Because drug use and drug selling feature so prominently in the popular mythology concerning gangs, it is important to distinguish between street gangs and small groups that are organized only for the commission of drug-related crime (such as drug-selling "crews") as well as larger-scale organizations, such as syndicates, that control—or seek to control—drug traffic in a given city or region. Such organizations are more entrepreneurial than street gangs and otherwise more instrumental in their behavior (Fagan, in press; Klein, 1995; Skolnick, Bluthenthal, & Correl, 1993). Violence and threats play important roles in these organizations, as they do in street gangs, but the differences between them and street gangs are more important than this similarity, with respect to both etiology and control.

Drug use and selling are common activities among many street gangs, but most researchers reject the commonly held view that equates street gangs and drug gangs. In a review of gang research conducted in East Los Angeles and in Milwaukee, Moore noted that the stereotype that "today's gang violence ... stems from gang involvement in increasingly violent drug marketing ... is apparently valid for some gangs and some offenses in Milwaukee ... but it has not been valid in East Los Angeles" (Moore, 1993, p. 38). According to Moore, both in adolescence and young adulthood, individual gang members commit offenses—usually small-scale property offenses—and hang around "a drug-related street lifestyle, with continuous 'ripping and running.' Some of the drug users market drugs—and so do some of the nonusers: It is a lucrative business until you are caught. Almost inevitably, dealers turn to their homeboys and homegirls when they do go into business. Some of the drug deals go sour and there is violence" (pp. 38-39). The gang is relevant to this activity in a facilitative context—and many gang members become involved in other petty hustles, as well (Fleisher, 1995).

Only 14% of the police respondents to Klein's survey reported a strong gang-crack connection, and the majority did not indicate the existence of separate "drug gangs" or "crack gangs" in their cities. Nearly three-quarters reported the gang-crack connection to be moderate, weak, or nonexistent (Klein, 1995), confirming earlier Los Angeles Police Department data. Although arrests for selling drugs increased markedly during the 1980s, the overwhelming majority of arrests did not involve gang members. Moreover, most gang member arrests were for small-scale dealing and were no more likely to involve violence than were arrests of nongang members. Drug motives for homicide increased among nongang members but not among gang members (Klein, Maxson, & Cunningham, 1991).

Controversy concerning methods of study, data reliability and validity, and theoretical considerations clouds understanding of the connection between street gangs, drugs, and violence. Klein severely criticized the few studies that reported a close connection between gangs, drugs, and violence on methodological grounds—studies in Detroit by Taylor (1990a, 1990b), in Los Angeles by Sanchez-Jankowski (1991) and Skolnick et al. (1993), in Boston and New York by Sanchez-Jankowski (1991), and in Chicago by Padilla (1992, 1993). Some of the problem may be semantic. Padilla described the "Diamonds" as a "working gang" heavily involved in stealing and selling stolen goods within the Puerto Rican community, as well as in selling drugs in and outside that community. This highly entrepreneurial gang may have evolved from a street gang, but the nature of the transformation is not clear. Padilla suggested that the organization of Chicago's gangs into two gang nations, the "People Nation" and the "Folks Nation," resulted in "moderate and congenial relations" between rival gangs, which then permitted the Diamonds to carry out their entrepreneurial activities without the constant threat of violence from rival gangs. The Diamonds were deeply embedded in the local community, culturally and economically. Ethnic solidarity within the Puerto Rican community provided "a base of local consumers or people who are referred by friends" who became "faithful customers" (Padilla, 1993, p. 177).

The fact that Chicago appears to be unique among U.S. cities in having the gang nation type of organization underlines the importance of the local (city, community) context for gang organization and culture. Klein noted that the often violent rivalries among, as well as between, Crips and Bloods gangs belie this type of superorganization in Los Angeles. It should be noted, also, that Padilla's report of harmonious relations between rival gangs is disputed by other researchers of gangs in that city (see, e.g., Conquergood, 1993; Hutchison & Kyle, 1993).

Entrepreneurial and violent behavior occurred together in the gangs studied by Sanchez-Jankowski (1991). The influence of the "defiant individualism" attributed to gang members dominates Sanchez-Jankowski's analysis. Individual versus gang behavior data were not systematically presented, but the interplay between individual competitiveness and organizational needs was said to determine the nature of gang (as opposed gang member) involvement in both entrepreneurial and violent behavior. Perhaps this was the case with Taylor's (1990a, 1990b) Detroit gangs. Taylor emphasized the evolution from petty hustling entrepreneurial activity to corporate-style organization and pursuit of economic goals. Detroit may, indeed, be different from other cities, but Taylor's reliance on media sources, his research methods—reliance on information obtained from interviews conducted by

members of a private security force of which Taylor was the director—and the lack of adequate data analysis or conceptualization in the study lead to skepticism.

A different sort of problem hinders the interpretation of Jerome Skolnick's provocative thesis (Skolnick et al., 1993) that some traditional "cultural" (street) gangs in California have been transformed into "instrumental" (entrepreneurial) gangs and that, seemingly paradoxically, the superior "cultural resources" of these gangs provide them with advantages that enhance their success in migrating to other cities for the purpose of selling drugs. The validity of this portrayal depends heavily on the investigators' interviews with incarcerated gang members. The latter's stories of skilled, well-organized drug dealing gangs may reflect rationalizations of phenomena that are neither as rational nor as successful as the interviewees may wish to convey, their validity being compromised by apprehension, conviction, and incarceration and the desire to appear knowledgeable.

A more general methodological principle also may mar Skolnick's interpretation—that is, that distortions in data reliability and validity are likely to be exacerbated when researchers accept at face value the statements of persons who are unsophisticated in research methods and theory (such as convicts, gang members, and, for the most part, law enforcement personnel) concerning somewhat esoteric phenomena about which they are knowledgeable and about which they have a stake in displaying their expertise and/or in rationalizing their own behavior. Gang researchers quickly learn to guard against too literal interpretations of "war stories" by gang members, as distinguished from behavior that is observed (see Fleisher, 1995; Hagedorn, 1990; Klein, 1995).

Skolnick and his colleagues are, of course, aware of the limitations of relying on the statements of gang members. It is possible—even likely—that the incarcerated gang members they interviewed sincerely believed the claims they made of their personal skills, organizational sophistication, and success in migrating to other cities and developing and managing complex drug markets. It is possible—but unlikely, in view of the accumulated evidence—that they successfully developed such markets. Drug selling and drug abuse are common among gang members. Studies of street gangs, as they have been defined here, however, have found that they rarely possess the organizational resources (leadership, cohesion, and know-how) to become successful entrepreneurial gangs, whether of drugs or other commodities (Fleisher, 1995; Quicker et al., forthcoming, cited in Klein, 1995, p. 123; Waldorf, also cited in Klein, 1995, p. 314).

Other investigators of gangs have also questioned the close gangs-drugs-violence connection (see Decker, 1995; Fagan, 1989; Klein et al., 1991; Maxson, Gordon, & Klein, 1985). From a 3-year ethnographic study of gang members in St. Louis, Scott Decker and his associates found that drugs and violence were the two most frequently mentioned activities by gang members but that drug selling was not a factor in recruiting gang members. Further, although drug selling was common among gang members, it was not well organized in or by the gang and did not "produce commitment to a central goal" by individual members (Decker, 1993, p. 16).

Regardless of the form of group organization and the nature of the association between organizational form and drug use or selling, the connection between drug traffic and violence is well

established. Street gangs appear not to be major purveyors of drugs, but drugs are a major preoccupation of many gang members, and many gang members sell drugs and therefore become part of the drugs-violence relationship.

Whether they evolve from street gangs or are formed separately, drug gangs differ in several ways from street gangs. Drug gangs are smaller, more cohesive, and command more group loyalty; their members tend to be older, on average, and to come from a more restricted age range than do street gang members; they have a more centralized leadership and have market-defined roles for the gang members; their turf is defined by market considerations rather than residential territory; and they more effectively control market competition than do street gangs (see Klein, 1995).

For the most part, these characteristics describe the drug selling "crew" studied by Terry Williams (1989). "The Cocaine Kids" comprised seven teenagers, all but two of whom were male and Dominican. The exceptions were an African-American 18-year-old male who, because he had "taken three martial arts courses and learned how to shoot a gun" (p. 20), had the job of bodyguard at "*la oficina*," the crew's office, and a woman named Kitty. Kitty's husband, Splib, dealt crack as an independent but sometimes became an eighth member of the crew. The Kids were rationally organized, and they were organized for the sole purpose of making money. They depended on the intelligent and "streetwise" leadership of Max, their dealer-entrepreneur.

Dealing cocaine successfully was demanding and dangerous for the crew, requiring entrepreneurship and organizational skills, long and unpredictable hours, and constant vigilance. In a business based largely on trust, one's partners often proved untrustworthy. Threats of discovery by officials and threats from armed competitors and/or customers were omnipresent. Money and status were the common denominators in the "cocaine culture," as is illustrated in the following quote attributed to Ramon, Splib's "supplier of last resort": "To live in A-mer-rica, you must have money my friend. I have tried to work for the white man here, I have tried very hard. But the more you work, the richer he gets."

Ramon was known as a man given to extreme acts of violence against anyone whoever happened to get in his way, especially dealers he had trusted with cocaine who reneged on their promises. Ramon had threatened to kill Splib if he did not return two ounces of cocaine consigned to him. Dealing cocaine meant living life in the fast lane, with its own criteria of status and accomplishment. Williams described these criteria succinctly: "Staying on top in the cocaine culture is not easy. Even for the most fortunate ones, high status is ephemeral... Dealers fear arrest, but their deepest concern is loss of status, not the possibility of serving time in jail" (Williams, 1989, p. 102).

Max, the crew's leader, was only 14 when Williams met him. Before forming the Cocaine Kids, he attempted to form a partnership with two of his brothers, but the partnership proved unsuccessful. Williams, summarizing discussions with Max, said, "They had been giving the cocaine away to girls, partying, showing off with friends and otherwise doing things that were not good business. Max had to begin the selection process all over again" (p. 14). It took him some time to assemble a new crew.

Williams reported that the crew members were as varied in motivation and personality as any collection of young people. "Masterrap," who had "his heart set on a musical career" and had "written many 'rap' songs," told him, "Coke is just a way for me to make some money and do some things I would otherwise not have the chance of doing in the real world. Coke ain't real. All this stuff and the things we do ain't real" (p. 20).

About 5 years after Williams began observing the crew, Max estimated that he had made "about $8 million" for his connection (p. 123). He had saved a good deal of money, but he was burned out. He left the cocaine trade and moved to Florida with his wife. One member of the crew was shot by a customer and moved to the Dominican Republic to be with his family. Max's older brother also returned to the Dominican Republic. Kitty left the crew and, after dealing on her own for a time, broke up with Splib, found a new boyfriend with whom she had a baby, and got out of the cocaine trade. After his girlfriend became pregnant, Masterrap took a job as an assistant to a Dominican chef he had met through selling cocaine. Charlie stopped selling and enrolled in a New York City community college. So, after nearly 5 years of observation, the crew was no more, and only Jake continued to sell cocaine. Williams observed that except for Jake, all the Kids "had a stake in something... For them, I believe, the cocaine trade was only a stepping-stone to the realities of surviving in the larger world." He also noted that "a new generation of Cocaine Kids" had replaced those he studied (p. 131).[7]

As reported by Williams, the Kids knew that the threat of violence hung over virtually every aspect of the cocaine trade. So, apparently, do others. The result of a 1988 Urban Institute survey of 9th and 10th grade males in high-risk areas of Washington, DC, illustrated this point. The survey revealed that drug selling was more common than drug use (16% versus 11%) and that high percentages of frequent sellers and other respondents perceived the risk of severe injury or death as "very likely in a year of drug dealing" (50% of frequent dealers; 61% of others). Frequent dealers were more likely to view selling as profitable, however (see Reuter, MacCoun, & Murphy, 1990).

Unlike street gangs, the Cocaine Kids were highly specialized in their illegal behavior. In addition, the violence to which they were subjected and against which they armed themselves was different from that of "garden-variety" street gangs (see Cohen & Short, 1958; Klein, 1971, 1995; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965). Enough street gangs have been observed in enough cities to caution against easy generalization, however.

Street Gang Prevalence: Evidence From General Population Surveys

Gang researchers have rarely drawn upon general population samples, choosing instead to focus on particular gangs, occasionally comparing gang members with nongang adolescents from the same communities (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965) or comparing self-reported gang members with self-reported nonmembers in samples drawn from schools and dropouts (Fagan, 1990). In the late 1980s, prospective longitudinal studies of general populations of young people residing in selected areas of Rochester, New York, Denver, Colorado, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were launched. The Rochester and Denver studies have begun to provide information concerning the prevalence of gang membership and the association of gang membership with violence. Because their focus is on youth

who are at "high risk for committing serious delinquent behavior" (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wierschem, 1993) and on children growing up in "highly criminogenic environments" (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993), only high crime areas are being studied. Both studies have oversampled minority populations. The numbers of African-American and Hispanic youth were approximately equal in the Denver study. More than 60% of the Rochester sample were African-American, while the remainder were approximately equally divided between Hispanics and whites. Within the limits thus imposed, the studies have provided new and better estimates of some parameters of gangs, violence, and other types of behavior, and of community and neighborhood influences.

Personal interviews conducted annually with the youth in Denver found that about 5% of those aged 7 to 18 indicated "they were gang members in any given year" (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993, p. 569). The numbers were small—39 in year 1, when the youth were aged 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15; 37 the following year; 41 in year 3; and 76 in year 4, when the youth were aged 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18. These numbers were further reduced (to 27 in year 1; 33 in year 2; 32 in year 3; and 68 in year 4) when some youth were dropped from the gang member classification because they did not indicate that their gang was involved in fights with other gangs or participated in illegal activities. These reductions increased the delinquency rate of the gang members, by definition. Correspondingly, they decreased the delinquency rate of those who did not belong to gangs.

Nevertheless, the fact that prevalence rates of all types of delinquency (self-reports) were much higher for both male and female gang members than for nongang youth suggests that gang membership is associated with higher rates of offending. Differences for more serious "street" offenses and for violent offenses were especially great. Indeed, prevalence rates for female gang members were higher than those for males who were not gang members. Individual rates of offending for male gang members were "two to three times greater than those of nongang males involved in each specific activity, with the exception of drug sales." The situation for females was different. "Nongang females who were involved in delinquent activity, whether assault, theft, or drug use, reported nearly the same level of activity" as did their gang counterparts (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993, p. 574).

Unlike nongang members, the demographic distributions of the Denver gang members varied a great deal from year to year. The percentage of gang members who were female, for example, varied from 46% in year 1 to 25% in year 3 (20% in years 2 and 4). The percentage of gang members who were African-American was only 26% in year 1 but was 48% in year 3 (42% in each of the other years). The percentage of Hispanic gang members varied almost as much, ranging from a high of 60% in year 1 to lows of 42% and 43% in each of the other years. The age distribution of gang members also varied, but most respondents indicated that they "did not join until their teenage years" (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993, p. 573).

Gang membership in Denver is thus characterized by shifting membership and limited cohesion, much as has been portrayed in several other detailed studies of gangs. When they were asked "what role they would like to have or what role they expect to have in the gang someday," over 60% of year-4 gang members in the Denver study indicated that they would like to *not* be a member of the

gang and expected to *not* be a member sometime in the future (Esbensen & Huizinga, p. 570). Gang membership for most of these youth was quite transitory, as the researchers made clear in the following statement: "Of the 90 gang youths for whom we have complete data for all four years, 67% were members in only one year, 24% belonged for two years, 6% belonged for three years, and only 3% belonged for all four years" (p. 575).

Similarly, Thornberry et al. (1993) reported that 55% of the self-reported gang members they observed in Rochester were members for only 1 year. Respondents in the Rochester study were not asked about gang membership until they were between 13 and 15 years of age—ages more prone to gang involvement. Still, the 20% prevalence rate of gang membership reported by the Rochester researchers (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993) was higher than the comparable rate in Denver. (During year 4, when Denver respondents were aged 12 to 18 years, gang membership was acknowledged by only 7% of the respondents.) The Rochester researchers apparently identified gang membership solely on the basis of one question concerning such membership. The researchers attempted to distinguish between gangs and other friendship groups by eliminating respondents who claimed gang membership but did not give a name for their gang, or who said they belonged to a gang with fewer than six members. However, the effort was abandoned because it eliminated few respondents. (In no set of interviews could more than three respondents be so eliminated.)

The relationship between gang membership and involvement in delinquent behavior was similar in the two cities. Due to the longitudinal nature of the studies, delinquent behavior could be examined in temporal relation to gang membership. Both studies found that gang members "are not uniformly delinquent; when they are in a gang their frequency of general delinquency is high, when they are not in a gang, it is substantially lower" (Thornberry et al., 1993, p. 69). Stable gang members in Rochester (those who were gang members for at least two consecutive years) had "generally higher rates of delinquency than nongang members and transient gang members" (those who reported gang membership for only one year) (p. 70).

For all types of delinquency, both prevalence rates and individual offending rates were highest during gang members' year(s) of membership than they were prior to or following gang membership. When types of delinquent behavior are distinguished, additional insight is gained into the behavior of gang members and the role of gangs in those behaviors. Whereas selling illegal drugs was common among gang members in both studies, for example, in neither study did gangs participate in drug sales as an organized gang activity. From the self-reports, Thornberry et al. concluded that drug selling by male gang members differed little from that of male nongang members. Involvement in drug selling tended to be higher during active years of gang membership, however, and "differences between gang members and nongang members [were] more pronounced during these years" (p. 77). Drug use followed a similar pattern, except that when the males were not gang members their rate of drug use was similar to that of nongang members.

Violent behavior patterns were found to be similar to these drug-related patterns, with higher rates of offending during periods of active gang membership. Thornberry et al. reported that "when they are not active, gang members—both transient and stable ones—are not particularly different than nongang members in terms of person offenses" (p. 73). Gang membership was not, however,

consistently related to crimes against property in the Rochester study. Self-reported property offenses of transient gang members, in particular, differed little from those of nongang members. The Denver researchers reported that "core" gang members ("leaders or one of the top persons" in the gang) did not differ in self-reported delinquency from other ("peripheral") members.

These findings suggest that individual characteristics of gang members cannot explain their involvement in violence and other forms of delinquent behavior. Rather, in the words of Esbensen and Huizinga (1993), "factors within the gang milieu" clearly are involved in such behavior.

Fagan's (1990) self-report study of a general sample of high school students and a "snowball" sample of school dropouts in three cities adds to these findings. Higher percentages of gang members than nongang members reported participation in 12 delinquent behaviors. In view of the generally much higher involvement of males than females in law violation, an association between gang membership and delinquent behavior for females as well as males is suggested by the finding that "prevalence rates for female gang members exceed the rates for nongang males for all 12 behavior categories" (p. 12). Behaviors defined as violent in Fagan's study included felony assault, minor assault, robbery, property damage, and carrying weapons. However, among those who reported any participation in violent offenses, the frequency with which they committed such offenses differed little by either gender or gang membership. This finding strongly suggests that similar processes produce frequent and persistent violent behavior in gang and nongang members alike. It also suggests that adolescents who commit violent offenses are more likely to expose themselves (or to be exposed) to personal involvements and/or situations that result in violence.

Street Gangs and Homicide

As with other gang research, conclusions about how much serious violence is attributable to gangs are compromised because definitions of "gang" are so varied. Cheryl Maxson and Malcolm Klein (1990), after carefully studying officially recorded gang homicides in Chicago and Los Angeles (the former city used a much more restrictive definition of gang homicides than the latter), concluded that "estimates of the *prevalence* of gang violence can vary widely" but that "the *character* of gang *homicides*" is similar despite differing official definitions (p. 91; emphasis added). Although their study did not explain differences between gang-related and other homicides, it did provide useful information.

Not surprisingly, the researchers found that gang-related homicides occurred more often in the street (about one-half versus one-third or less of nongang homicides) and were more likely to involve unidentified assailants (about one in five gang homicides versus one in ten nongang homicides) (Klein & Maxson, 1989). Klein (1995, p. 236) cited a confirming study conducted by Gary Bailey and Prabha Unnithan. In that study, gang homicides, more often than others, were attributed to fear of retaliation (about 25% versus 10% or less). Both gang homicide suspects and victims tended to be younger than nongang suspects and victims (approximately 19 years and 24 years of age for gang suspects and victims, respectively, versus 24 years and 29 years for nongang suspects and victims), and gang homicides more often involved victims with no prior contact with their assailants (approximately one-half versus one-quarter for nongang homicides). Gang homicides more often

involved "clearly gang victims" (between 40% and 50% versus less than 5% for nongang homicides). Although less serious types of violent behavior are subject to greater reporting error and discretionary action by police, victims, and others than are homicides, the homicide data nevertheless suggest the importance of understanding what it is about gangs and gang members that accounts for high levels of interpersonal, intragang, and intergang violence (see also Curry & Spergel, 1988).

Describing and Explaining Gang Violence

With few exceptions, violent behavior among even the most violent gangs is relatively rare. Moreover, when violent episodes occur within or between gangs, or when gang members attack nongang members or destroy property, some gang members typically do not participate. Studies of gangs over many years and in many places have demonstrated great variability in the levels of violence within, as well as between, gangs (see, e.g., Klein, 1995, Moore, 1987; Sanders, 1994; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Spergel, 1995; Thrasher, 1927).

What causes such variation? The macrosocial-level observation that most—but not all—youth gangs are located in inner-city areas of poverty, physical deterioration, and institutional breakdown sheds some light. Because racial and ethnic minorities tend to be concentrated in such areas, many—but not all—gangs are composed of minority youth.[8] The macro level explanation sets the stage for consideration of both individual and microsocial levels of explanation.

Socialization Into Violence

Studies of young people in many places, over time, employing a variety of research methods, have confirmed that fighting with age peers, particularly among young males, is more characteristic of individuals and groups located in lower socioeconomic strata than among those in higher socioeconomic strata. Socialization into violence begins early in life for young people in areas where gangs are most commonly found. The American Psychological Association (APA) Commission on Youth and Violence reported that 45% of the first and second graders the commission studied in Washington, DC, stated they had witnessed muggings, 31% had witnessed shootings, and 39% had seen dead bodies (Hechinger, 1992). Such violence increasingly involves adolescents attacking other adolescents. Delbert Elliott's national self-report study found that by the age of 17 more than one third of black males and one quarter of non-Hispanic white males had committed at least one serious violent offense. For females, these figures were nearly 20% and 10%, respectively (Elliott, 1994). National school-based surveys have reported similar findings. According to these surveys, violence among juveniles—particularly among minority youth—increasingly involves firearms. Sixty percent of the more than 2,500 public and private school students, elementary through grade 12, surveyed by Louis Harris for the School of Public Health at Harvard, reported that they could get a handgun, many of them within an hour. The survey also found that most of the respondents disapproved of the gun culture and would like to see an end to it ("Saving Youth," 1994). The APA Commission on Youth and Violence (1993) estimated that 75% of adolescent killings are attributable to the ready availability of firearms.

In the ghettos and barrios of the inner city, socialization into violence occurs primarily on the street, "away from home, school, and other traditional institutions" (Vigil, 1993, p. 99). James Diego Vigil described the process of "choloization" ("the street style in Chicano barrios"), through which many preteen Chicanos achieve their personal identity, as one of ecological, economic, social, cultural, and psychological "marginality"—the product of "being outside the mainstream of Anglo-American society and its access to wealth and power." Cholo, according to Vigil, is a way of coping with these multiple marginalities.

Residing "in crowded housing conditions where private space is limited" and being largely unsupervised, these young people "are driven into the public space of the streets where peers and teenaged males, with whom they must contend, dominate... Thus, *one of the first goals in the streets is to determine where one fits in the hierarchy of dominance and aggression that the street requires for survival*" (Vigil, 1993, pp. 99-100; emphasis added). Bonding and networking with peers and older boys, Vigil observed, provide fertile ground for gang affairs.

By all accounts, gang life is more violent than life for those who do not belong to gangs. Scott Decker (1993), confirming what others have observed elsewhere, reported that participation in violence, especially expressive violence, "is a central feature of gang life" in St. Louis. Based on his three-cities study, Martin Sanchez-Jankowski concluded that "violence is the currency of life and becomes the currency of the economy of the gang" (1991, p. 139). The fact that intragang fighting is more common than is either intergang fighting or violent behavior directed outside the gang emphasizes the ubiquity of violence in the experience of gang members (see Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Miller et al., 1961).

Expressive violence is quite functional. Mercer Sullivan, for example, found that fighting with age peers, sometimes with serious consequences, occurred at an early age among the cliques of white, Hispanic, and black youth he studied in Brooklyn and that the experience gained by this fighting often was later "applied to the systematic pursuit of income" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 109). Although most fighting among boys in their early and middle teens is about *status* (Decker, 1993; Horowitz, 1983; MacLeod, 1987; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965), for some, the scarcity of resources, the symbolic significance attached to some types of property, and the lack of access to legitimate means of acquiring these types of property also translate into violence at an early age (Anderson, 1990).

The Individual Level of Explanation

There is no reason to believe that the processes of learning differ between members of gangs and others. Learning occurs among gang members as it does among nongang members, by observing what goes on around them and by the reinforcing mechanisms of rewards and punishments. The most important contexts within which these processes occur are intimate groups, such as the family and peer groups. The social nature of learning is not simply imitative, for as Albert Bandura noted, human beings possess certain distinctive human capabilities that enable us to be active agents in our own behavior (Bandura, 1986). Among these capabilities are the capacity to use symbols— fundamental to forethought—as well as "self-regulatory" and "self-reflective" capabilities.

Observational learning occurs in many ways. Among the most common and effective processes is learning from role models. The ready availability of criminal role models was impressed upon Fred Strodtbeck and me early in our Chicago gang project. A detached worker's incident report provides an example of the variety of role models available to members of the black gang with which he was working:

> That poolroom down there is nothing but hustlers—the worst type of people in the area, prostitutes dressed in shorts and kind of flashy, and their pimps, a dope addict, wears his shades. He recognized me and spoke to me and to the fellows.
>
> The three of us started shooting a game of bank on the back table. There was a conversation that the older fellows were having on one of the front tables about some kind of robbery that they had just pulled. They had been busted. It was funny, because they were all teasing one of the guys that was shooting, about the fact that he was caught. The police had him chained with another guy around a lamp post. And some way he got his hand out of one of the cuffs, but he still had one of the cuffs on. He couldn't get it off and they were teasing him. Everyone in the poolroom was aware of what was going on.
>
> Another thing that was funny, they were laughing about this one guy that didn't get away. He wasn't supposed to go on the robbery; he was just there. The guy that had thought up the whole scheme was the guy with the handcuff. They were shooting and talking back and forth to the man ringing the cash register. And these guys around the side were commenting, laughing! (Adapted from Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 108)

Chief among the role models who have especially significant relationships with young people are parents and other members of primary groups. As children age, however, the range of their "significant others" broadens to include role models who are only a few years older than they, such as the "older fellows" in the poolroom episode.

Because gang members are unsupervised, self-regulation is especially difficult for them. Constraints that operate in conventional institutional settings are absent, giving free rein to peer influences and group processes. Among the gang members my colleagues and I studied, this lack of self-regulation was evident in behaviors as disparate as boy-girl relationships and sexual behavior, fighting and other assaults, job performance, and relationships with adults. The gang members did not lack self-reflection, but pressures from within the gang often prevented its expression. Detached workers and graduate student observers often were approached by individual gang members seeking advice about a variety of "growing up" problems. Such serious discussions typically were terminated abruptly if other gang members came on the scene or sought to enter the conversation—evidence that the gang discouraged self-reflection on personal concerns. The gang members we studied were, as individuals, largely conventional in their values (see Gordon, Short, Cartwright, & Strodtbeck, 1963; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965). Similar findings have been reported more recently by John Hagedorn (1995).

The gang members' limited social horizons, somewhat lower intelligence scores relative to other adolescents from the same communities, and lack of sophistication and skills in such matters as interpersonal relationships, job requirements, and sexual knowledge (despite being sexually active) led us to hypothesize that gang members were characterized by "social disabilities" (Short &

Strodtbeck, 1965, chap. 10; see also Gordon, 1967). Malcolm Klein would likely agree. Among the individual characteristics he listed as predictive of gang membership, Klein included low self-concept, social disabilities or deficits, a limited repertoire of skills and interests, and poor impulse control. According to Klein, other macrosocial deficits, indicated by weak contacts with adults, defiance of parents, and perceptions of barriers to jobs and other opportunities, also predict gang membership, as do early conduct disorder, early delinquency onset, and admitted involvement in violence.

Like other personal characteristics, social abilities vary a great deal among gang members. Our Chicago data (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965) suggested that gang members with the greatest social skills were often more vulnerable than other gang members to delinquency involvement because their abilities thrust them into positions of leadership, which uniquely exposed them to group processes associated with such behavior.

Over a period of more than 10 years, Martin Sanchez-Jankowski observed 37 gangs located in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles. The title of the book he wrote about his findings, *Islands in the Street,* reflects the "character matrix" of gang members, their "intense sense of competitiveness," their "mistrust or wariness" of others, their "self-reliance," their sense of social isolation and social Darwinist [survivalist] worldview, and the "defiant air" they adopt in public appearances—characteristics that Sanchez-Jankowski summarized as "defiant individualism" (Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991, pp. 23-26). Sanchez-Jankowski reported that this characterization was "forced" on him by repeated observations over a long period. So important are these characteristics that a major organizational problem for the gangs he observed was to reconcile the conflicting needs and demands of the defiantly individualistic members of the group.[9] Although it is a variable quality in the gang, defiant individualism largely determines gang organization and functioning.

Sanchez-Jankowski argued that gang membership is a matter of individual and gang *choice* and that the behavior of gang members and gangs results from rational choices. However, he noted that these choices are both motivated and constrained by "the emotions of fear, ambition, frustration, and testing self-preparedness; and certain encounters in which these emotions are made manifest" (Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991, p. 141). Vigil (1988) attributed the necessity for *fear management* among Chicano gang members to similar emotions. According to Vigil, the "wildness or quasi-controlled insanity" ("locura") that facilitates Chicano gang violence is a "mind-set" that aids "fear management" (pp. 231 ff.; see also Padilla, 1993).

Fear clearly is rational for those who are exposed to chronic violence. For members of violent gangs, not to be fearful would be irrational. A high degree of self-centered and defiant behavior may thus be functional, and therefore rational. While gang membership involves special hazards, similar circumstances affect all people who live in violent homes and neighborhoods. For children in the ghetto underclass, the special problems of growing up and surviving are ubiquitous; these problems are not restricted to gang members.

The Role of Pathology in Gangs

Systematic comparisons of gang members with other young people have rarely been made, and researchers' reports of the personal characteristics of gang members are wildly variant. Some portray gang members as socially skilled and sophisticated; others portray them as severely emotionally handicapped (Fleisher, 1995) or motivated by the search for "sneaky thrills" or "bad-ass" means of overcoming humiliation and asserting moral superiority (Katz, 1988). In an early study of gang violence, Lewis Yablonsky (1962) characterized the gang members he studied—especially the leaders—as impulsive, sociopathic (unable to distinguish right from wrong or to empathize with others), and violently aggressive when their immediate needs were not satisfied.

Though each of these portrayals may capture what is going on inside *some* gang members, none is entirely convincing. Disagreement concerning these matters is hardly surprising, however. The influence of rationality and rational choice on individuals, groups, and organizations is much debated (see Cook & Levi, 1990). What may appear to be a gang member's irrational, impulsive, unmotivated behavior, or a behavior made without much reflection, may be quite rational given the available alternatives and the context within which choices are made. Little is known about such matters with respect to gang behavior. Nevertheless, a quality of mental toughness that was not apparent in earlier gang studies has come through in much of the recent research.

Whereas my colleagues and I emphasized the availability of unconventional role models in the gang communities we studied in Chicago, Sanchez-Jankowski saw the drug dealers, pimps, and petty criminals that inhabit gang communities as *competitors* who confirm the dog-eat-dog nature of life and reinforce the gang members' defiant individualism. He argued that "the unfortunates or 'failures' ... on the street, the women and men dependent on public assistance, and the men and women (including possibly their fathers and mothers) who have taken jobs in secondary or informal labor markets that lead nowhere represent to many young people those who have succumbed to the environment" (p. 25).

It is difficult to conceive of an environment that is as intensely competitive as the gang environment Sanchez-Jankowski has suggested or to conceive of groups composed of people with the extent of impulsivity and sociopathy reported by Yablonsky and Fleisher. Some of the differences in the portrayals of gang members may, of course, be matters of degree rather than of kind, but methodological limitations of the more extreme portrayals of gang member pathology are apparent.[10]

Other research has described gang members' personalities and motivations in quite different terms. Mercer Sullivan, for example, noted that for the Brooklyn boys he studied, criminal activities were not only economically rational, but they were rewarding in other ways as well:

> They call success in crime "getting paid" and "getting over," terms that convey a sense of triumph and irony which is not accounted for in the grim depiction of their acts as the economic strategies of the disadvantaged... "Getting over"... refers to success at any endeavor in which it seems that one is not expected to succeed. It is equivalent to "beating the system."... What they "get over on" is the system, a series of odds rigged against people like themselves. Both phrases are spoken in a tone of *defiant pride*. They are phrases in the shared language of youths who are out of school, out of work, and

seriously involved in crime. (Sullivan, 1989, p. 245; emphasis added; see also Hagedorn & Macon, 1988, p. 138)

"Crime as work" was also a major theme of Felix Padilla's (1992, 1993) research. The Diamonds gang he observed appeared to be oriented more toward "getting by" than "getting over," however. Padilla reported that the gang leaders, who controlled and profited the most from the distribution of drugs, shared their profits with other gang members.[11] Members saw their economic welfare as tied primarily to the collectivity (the gang), rather than to their efforts as individuals. They viewed what they were doing "as expressions of resistance, freedom, and election" and "as superior to the way of life and occupational choices of their 'conformist peers' or 'straight youth'" (p. 7). The gangs Padilla observed were part of a very violent world, and sharing within the gang offered a measure of protection from violence. Sharing thus may have been both economically rational and rational in promoting other group purposes.

Based on his own and others' observations, Klein (1995) concluded that young people who join gangs "are not so much different from other young people as they are caricatures [of them]" (p. 76). When Desmond Cartwright and his associates (1965) systematically compared gang members with nongang members on standardized protocols, gang boys were more self-critical and self-questioning than other boys. They were also more uncertain, less decisive, slower in making judgments, and more suggestible than other boys, and they had a poorer regard for self. They had poor immediate memory and were less effective than nongang boys in performance tests.[12] When they were asked to evaluate members of their own gangs, their evaluations were less positive than were the evaluations made by both lower-class and middle-class nongang members of their friends. Gang members appeared to be more cautious, more easily distracted, and more concerned than others with how they were doing relative to their fellow gang members.

These observations suggest that gang members, as Irving Spergel concluded, are not so much deviant, rebellious, or "attached to a set of different, deviant, or criminal norms and values and relationships" as they are "unattached to criminal or conventional systems" (1995, p. 168). The gang permits identification "with a status-providing system that emphasizes violence or the threat of violence as a key means to resolve uncertainty, ambiguity, and the lack of connectedness" with others. If this conclusion is accurate, then, as Klein noted, "for most gang members ... therapy is far less important than provision of education skills, job skills, and a chance to break out of the reliance on their peer group for ego satisfaction... Typically, members are surprisingly close to normalcy, given their pathogenic settings in the ghettoized areas of our cities" (1995, p. 72). Like Klein, my colleagues and I found that individual gang members who exhibited severe pathology typically were shunned by other gang members as unreliable or likely to involve the gang in unwanted conflict with other gangs or to attract the attention of police. Such shunning clearly occurred with a heroin addict member of the Nobles and with a "crazy acting" member of the Vice Lords whom we observed on many occasions.

Although no consistent "gang member personality" emerges from these studies, observational and laboratory research has painted a rather unflattering portrait of individual gang members. Some gang members doubtless suffer from various individual pathologies, but the role of such pathologies in gang behavior remains a mystery. Definitive data are lacking, and the role of emotions and

personality characteristics in gang violence is not well understood. Clearly, more and better studies are urgently needed.

Whatever the personal characteristics of gang members, gang violence often differs from nongang violence, and not only because of its higher incidence. The differences between gang and nongang homicides noted by Klein and Maxson (1989) suggest that, for example, gang homicides are not as closely related to intimate personal relationships as nongang homicides are and that membership in gangs often is implicated in both homicide perpetration and victimization. Fighting within and between gangs typically involves group processes that, although they may not be unique to gangs, are more likely to occur in gang settings because of the absence of constraining influences.

The Microsocial Level of Explanation: Group Processes

Field observations have suggested that much of the intra- and intergang fighting, and attacks on others, serves *group purposes*, such as demonstrating personal qualities that are highly valued by the gang, reinforcing group solidarity by disciplining members, or attacking a rival gang (Klein, 1971; Miller et al., 1961; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Sanders, 1994; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965). Violent behavior by individual gang members is also heavily influenced by group values and the perceived requirements of group membership or status within the group, as well as by the individual's sense of honor, self-respect, and self-esteem, which are also closely tied to group norms (see, in addition to the above, Horowitz, 1983; Horowitz & Schwartz, 1974; Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995).

Thus, gang conflict often occurs when a gang seeks to establish or maintain its reputation among other street gangs or when gang "turf" (territory) or resources (e.g., the gang's share of a drug market) are threatened by another gang. If gang members feel their status within the gang is threatened, they may react aggressively in response to the threat. The response may be direct, as in an attack on a threatening person. It may also be indirect, as when a gang leader, acting in response to a perceived threat to his status within the gang, acts to reestablish his position by acting violently, or otherwise aggressively, toward one or more persons outside the gang (see Short, 1990b).

The interpersonal and group dynamics of such behavior are not well understood. However, a small research literature suggests that such behavior should not be viewed as irrational or as entirely predictable based on knowledge of the personal characteristics of individual gang members. Group processes associated with particular roles or status in the gang, as well as status among rival gangs, are implicated in much gang violence (see Farrington, Berkowitz, & West, 1981; Klein, 1995; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Sanders, 1994; Short, 1990b; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965). At this microsocial level of explanation, a variety of factors may interact to produce violent exchanges, even to the extreme of "victim-precipitated" homicides (see Wolfgang, 1957).

Gang Fighting and Status

Microsocial analysis informs the operation of subcultural norms and how they function in relation to individual-level phenomena, such as self-concept. Again, a detached worker's incident report is enlightening (adapted from Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, pp. 199-202):

I was talking to a group of the Knights about my stand on guns, because they told me they had collected quite a few and were waiting for the Vice Kings to start some trouble. I told them flatly that it was better that I got the gun rather than the police, but they repeated that they were tired of running from the Vice Kings and from now on they were fighting back.

I had a chance to see what they meant because while I was sitting in the car talking to William, the remaining guys having gotten out of the car in pursuit of some girls, William told me that a couple of Vice Kings were approaching. Two Vice Kings and two girls were walking down the street by the car. I didn't know them as Vice Kings because I only know the chiefs, like Garroway, Pappy, etc. William then turned around and made the observation that there were about fifteen or twenty Vice Kings across the street in the alley and wandering up the street in ones and twos.

At this point, I heard three shots go off. I don't know who fired these shots, and no one else seemed to know, because the Vice Kings had encountered Commando, Jones, and a couple of other Knights who were coming around the corner talking to the girls. The Vice Kings yelled across the street to Commando and his boys, and Commando yelled back. They traded insults and challenges, Commando being the leader of the Knights and a guy named Bear being the leader of the Vice Kings. At this point I got out of the car to try to cool Commando down, inasmuch as he was halfway across the street hurling insults and daring the Vice Kings to do something about it, and they were doing the same thing to him. I grabbed Commando and began to pull him back across the street.

By this time the Vice Kings had worked themselves into a rage, and three of them came across the street yelling that they were mighty Vice Kings and to attack Commando and the Knights. In trying to break this up, I was not too successful. I didn't know the Vice Kings involved, and they were really determined to swing on the Knights, so we had a little scuffle. I did see one Vice King I knew and I asked him to help me break it up. At this point, along the street comes Henry Brown, with a revolver, shooting at the Vice Kings. Everybody ducked and the Vice Kings ran, and Henry Brown ran around the corner. I began to throw Knights into my car because I knew the area was "hot," and I was trying to get them out of there. Henry Brown came back and leaped into my car also. I asked him if he had the gun, and he told me he did not, and since I was in a hurry, I pulled off in the car and took him and the rest of the boys with me.

Later, this worker continued his report in a conversation with me at our research offices. He described the behavior of the Knights in his car following the skirmish:

In the car, Commando and the other boys were extremely elated. There were expressions like: "Baby, did you see the way I swung on that kid"; "Man, did we tell them off"; "I really let that one kid have it"; "Did you see them take off when I leveled my gun on them"; "You were great, Baby. And did you see the way I...," etc. It was just like we used to feel when we got back from a patrol where everything went just right. [The worker had been a paratrooper in the Korean conflict.] The tension was relieved, we had performed well and could be proud.

In the Knights' expressions, my colleagues and I observed, "the status function of the conflict subculture is seen in bold relief" (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 202). More than a year after reporting this episode, the same detached worker called to report a conversation with Guy, a leader of the Vice Kings, concerning Big Jake, a leader of another gang. Guy warned the worker that he "had better watch Big Jake" because "he has to do something." When the worker protested that Big Jake had been "cooling it" in recent months, Guy explained, "He's got to build that rep again. He's been gone. Now he got to show everybody he's back!" (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 199).

The status-serving functions of gang conflict in the above incident between the Vice Kings and the Knights are illustrative of group processes that occur within and among many street gangs. Incidents are not always so easily and painlessly resolved, of course. Though the extent of violence and the amount of lethal weapons on the street are exaggerated in popular lore and media accounts, guns are now more accessible than ever before and gang membership attracts and facilitates gun ownership and use (Bjerregaard & Lizotte, 1995). Thus, casual encounters between gangs may result in serious injuries or death. William Sanders' analysis (1994) revealed that drive-by shootings in San Diego take place in a variety of contexts, including gang warfare, parties, and simply groups of gang members (both victims and offenders) "hanging out." Some of the contexts involve planning, whereas others appear to be spontaneous. Gang conflict often becomes a deadly zero-sum game.

Through field observations, other group processes have also been identified, such as individual and group reactions to status threats and the operation of group and community norms. These processes, or mechanisms, described in the following sections, suggest how individual-level factors may interact to produce threats, insults, and conflicts that escalate to produce violent behavior.

Reactions to Status Threats

This mechanism first came to my colleagues' and my attention when a strong gang leader in one of the Chicago gangs we were observing began "acting strangely" following his return from a brief period of jail detention. Duke was a very cool leader of a tough, conflict-oriented gang of black teenagers. More socially skilled than the others in the gang, he had maintained his position by cultivating nuturant relationships with other members and by negotiating with other leaders in intergang councils. The detached worker assigned to Duke's gang tried to explain his strange behavior:

> Maybe it's because he's been in jail and he's trying to release a lot of energy. Maybe after a while, he'll settle down. As of yet he hasn't settled down. He is one of the real instigators in fightin'. [The worker then described Duke's behavior at a basketball game that had been scheduled with the Jr. Lords.] Duke was calling them "mother-fucker," and "The Lords ain't shit." Duke walked up to them–Duke doin' all the talkin'–instigator. Bill next to him and Harry listening. Everybody was listening but Duke, and I was having a problem trying to get Duke down there so he could get himself dressed and leave. Duke walked up and said, "You ain't shit. The Jr. Lords ain't shit. Are you a Jr.?" The boys said, "No." And he said, "A fuckin' ole Lord, I'm King Rattler." Duke walked all through all of them, "You ain't shit," trying to get a fight. "Come on Duke," I said, trying to push him down the stairs. But each time he'd get away and go over there, "You Lords ain't shit ... we're Rattlers. We're Eastside Rattlers." (Adapted from Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, p. 188)

Shortly after this incident Duke returned to his cool ways. Our interpretation of his "strange" behavior was that after a brief period of catering to the most broadly held norms of the group, and following the reestablishment of his leadership role (with the support of the detached worker), Duke was able to resume his customary mode of relating to the group.

When seemingly similar cases came to our attention, we were able to discern what we believed to be the general mechanism at work. We recognized its operation among both gang leaders and gang members. A fundamental individual-level principle is that behavior is adaptive, or problem

solving—that is, reactive. The nature of the adaptation or reaction clearly depends on the nature of the problem to which the behavior is a response. The definition of states, statuses, or situations as problematic, in turn, is in large part determined by such macrosocial factors as socially and culturally defined desiderata (or, conversely, things to be avoided).[13]

In the street gang world of Chicago during the 1960s—and as seen in more recent research—status vis-a-vis one's peers is a major factor in gang violence. This finding is, perhaps, the most agreed-upon finding in the gang research literature. And whereas status among one's peers is important to virtually all adolescents, status problems are exaggerated and exacerbated among gang members. The salience of status as a problem and the intensity with which it is experienced vary a great deal in different situations and for people in different roles in the group. The solutions to the status problems in the situations we observed were deeply embedded in the normative properties and processes of the group.

Normative Properties of Gangs and Reactions to Status Threats

The status threat mechanism clearly applies to group, as well as to individual, behavior (see Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995; Vigil, 1993). In the Chicago project my colleagues and I conducted, a "humbug" (gang fight) that took place at the Chicago Amphitheater involved both threats to the newly acquired adult status of a gang leader (he had just turned 21 years old) and threats to the various gangs' identity among rival gangs. Detached workers observing the gangs had arranged to take some of the gang members to a professional basketball game. Events soon occurred that focused the attention of the boys on one another *as members of gangs* rather than on the basketball game.

> As described in the field report, several elements in the incident were status threatening. One of the workers challenged the right of the gang leader's *adulthood* to buy beer [on the grounds that he was participating in a YMCA program-sponsored activity]. This was an obvious "put down" of the young man in front of his own gang [the North Side Vice Kings] and degraded him in the eyes of members of another gang [the Junior Chiefs] whom he was trying to impress. The gang leader proceeded to instigate a fight between the North Side Vice Kings and members of the South Side Rattlers. To make matters worse, members of the North Side Vice Kings were humiliated when their worker decided that they all must leave because of the fracas. Both their position in the gang world [because the event was witnessed by members of a rival gang] and their treatment as a bunch of "kids" in public were status threatening.

> When they arrived on the scene, members of two other gangs [Cherokees and Midget Vice Kings] joined in the fighting, the former against the Vice Kings just as they had succeeded in routing the Rattlers, the latter as Vice King allies. However, members of the Junior Chiefs never became involved in the fighting, despite the fact that they witnessed the entire event, beginning with the initial conflict between the worker and the gang leader. Nor did members of the Junior Vice Kings, who arrived after the fighting had been controlled, though the fights were the topic of animated discussion among them and between them and other boys. (Adapted from Short & Strodtbeck, 1965, pp. 203-207)

Despite all the excitement in this incident, and a good deal of provocation that occurred but was not described in this excerpt, the fights were short lived. All of the boys, except those in the Vice Kings gang, who were most central to the incident and who experienced the greatest status threats, were brought under control reasonably quickly and stayed to watch the basketball game. The humbug

reinforced both individual and group status in the conflict gang social world. In the months that followed, however, no more humbugging between any of these gangs took place.

While this incident was relatively self-contained, it served to perpetuate the investment of these boys in their gang "rep." It also served the *image* of these boys as street warriors, whose group norms required their participation in conflict with rival gangs. Were it not for the detailed account of the incident available through the field research, such an interpretation would seem reasonable. It would then be necessary to discount the influence of the norms after the fights stopped, however. Why were the fights so *easily* stopped? Why did not all the boys participate in the fighting? With the exception of the Vice Kings, some members of *each gang* never became involved.

Careful review of the incident suggests that those boys most centrally involved were gang leaders, boys striving for leadership, and other core group members. Variation in individuals' roles within the gang and personal investment in and identity with the gang clearly influenced the likelihood of individual involvement in the give-and-take of the incident. However, no gang norm required that all members fight, even under these extremely provocative circumstances. Others have reported similar findings. Status relationships among gang members tend to be quite fragile, and status threats may emerge in almost any encounter between gangs (see, e.g., Sanders, 1994). The influence of gang norms among the gangs my colleagues and I studied was tenuous and largely situational. The gangs were loosely structured, with flexible criteria for membership. Membership changed from time to time, and group cohesion was not very strong, except under special circumstances that drew members together. Members of the gangs came and went for days or weeks at a time, and unless they occupied particularly strong leadership or other roles central to the group, most were hardly missed.

In the incident of humbugging just described, there clearly existed a threat to the gang leader's status as an adult as well as to his status as a gang leader, but the element of *status threat* may not have been the primary motivator for the several *group* responses noted. The incident might be seen as simply the gang members taking advantage of the opportunity of being at a basketball game to express youthful exuberance and group identity. Better decision rules for this elementary theory are needed for proper assignment of the significance of case materials. The fact that the gangs were known to be rivals, however, gives credence to the status threat interpretation.

The incidents discussed in this section were typical of intergang conflict during the period of our Chicago study, a fact confirmed by another Chicago project (see Carney, Mattick, & Calloway, 1969) and by Klein in Los Angeles (1971).

Field reports facilitate the linkage of micro- and macro-levels of explanation. While they provide systematic and sustained analysis at the micro level, they also include many examples of the operation of group processes (e.g., Horowitz, 1983, and Horowitz & Schwartz, 1974, who stress the importance of "honor" among Chicano gangs in Chicago; also, Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Klein, 1995; Sanders, 1994). Regrettably, researchers do not often systematically analyze their data in group-process terms. Thus, Martin Sanchez-Jankowski attributed "both individual and collective gang violence" to four "factors": fear, ambition, frustration, and personal/group testing of skills"

(1991, p. 140). His illustrations of how these factors motivate violence were drawn from personal observations and verbal depictions by gang members. However, both of these types of data suggest that these factors often take the form of status seeking, status enhancement, or reactions to status threats, much as earlier researchers found. Sanchez-Jankowski wrote of gang members behaving violently in order to "move up in the organization" (p. 144), for example, or because others failed to grant them respect (p. 152) or challenged their honor (p. 142). Noting that much violent behavior by gang members and by gangs arises in conjunction with economic activity, he reported that he observed 267 cases in which one gang attacked another "to gain control over a new territory for purposes of material improvement and/or growth in membership" (p. 344). The latter, of course, may be status motivated as well as economically motivated.

The Role of Group Cohesiveness

The relationship of group *cohesiveness* to delinquent and violent behavior is complex and dynamic. Malcolm Klein found that gang cohesiveness within Los Angeles gangs was positively related to delinquency (Klein, 1971, 1995; also, Klein & Crawford, 1967). This finding was replicated when detached worker strategies were manipulated to discourage cohesiveness. That is, when workers chose to work with gang members one-on-one, rather than by encouraging group activities, gang cohesiveness declined, and so did delinquent behavior. Leon Jansyn (1966), observing a gang in Chicago, found that both delinquent and nondelinquent behavior by members of the gang increased following low points of group cohesion. Gang activity appeared to be a response to low cohesiveness. Similarly, Sanchez-Jankowski reported that "fear of organizational decline" is sometimes "crucial in the leadership's decision to launch an attack on a rival gang" in the belief that "such conflict will deter internal conflict, encourage group cohesion, and create more control over members" (1991, p. 163).

Klein argued that "cohesiveness is the quintessential group process" (1995, p. 43). These apparently conflicting findings may, in fact, reflect different manifestations of this process. Klein cited a gang worker's experience with a "new group" who sought his help in "starting up the 'club' again." After he declined to meet with the group, larger delegations approached the worker. He then acceded to their request that he meet with the group, whereupon he was greeted by "approximately ninety youths, ages 11 to the early twenties... Seniors, juniors, unborns, and two girls' groups as well were ready for their meeting and their new sponsor" (Klein, 1995, p. 47). When, two and a half years later, the worker chose to deemphasize group activities, cohesiveness and delinquent behavior declined.

Gang workers in Klein's project were aggressive in promoting group activities, which was a different strategy than used in Jansyn's and Sanchez-Jankowski's studies. Neither of the latter sought to involve the gangs they worked with in programmed activities. Left to their own devices, the gangs Klein observed may have engaged in group behaviors in an attempt to increase cohesiveness, though the large age- and gender-mixed gathering just described would have been an unlikely street gang under any circumstances.

Klein's data are persuasive. Regrettably, my colleagues and I did not systematically measure cohesiveness among the gangs we studied, nor did we measure changes in behavior over time. The role of cohesiveness in gang behavior clearly requires further study, empirically and theoretically.[14]

Gangs and Communities

Surveys of gang members and nongang members in the same communities during the 1960s revealed that the former were less closely tied to conventional institutions than were the latter and were therefore less constrained by the social controls inherent in such institutions (Short, Rivera, & Marshall, 1964; Short, 1990a, 1990b). Fagan's more recent survey had similar results. More than twice the proportion of respondents who reported gang membership, compared to those that did not, were school dropouts (38.3% versus 17.1%). A measure of "conventional beliefs" (representing "belief in the legitimacy of law, the rejection of attitudes supporting violence, and perceived control over the events in one's life") differentiated gang from nongang members of both genders but was positive only for nongang females (Fagan, 1990, p. 204). Fagan concluded that "inner-city youths are not well rooted in their beliefs in the law" and that "weaker conventional beliefs among gangs youths ... further illustrate their marginal status within an already marginalized adolescent population" (p. 206).

Other recent research has also indicated that gang members tend to perform poorly in school (see, for example, MacLeod, 1987; Sullivan, 1989; Vigil, 1988). However, little recent, systematically obtained information is available concerning relationships between gangs and community institutions such as churches, synagogues, youth agencies, political organizations, and work-related institutions. An exception is Moore's (1989) observation that "except for the schools, [Hispanic community institutions] appear to be functional" (p. 276). Moore was careful to distinguish between different Hispanic groups and to note variations in their political and economic status as well as variations in the extent to which gangs were integrated into local community life.

Field research has portrayed extremely varied gang-community relationships. Hagedorn found that Milwaukee gangs were alienated from their local communities and isolated from the larger society. Several of the 19 gangs he studied began as corner groups but became gangs "after conflict with other corner groups," much as Thrasher (1927) had found. Others began as "dancing" groups but gained a gang identity following fights with rival dancing groups (Hagedorn & Macon, 1988, p. 59). Hagedorn and his colleagues interviewed the gang founders in the mid-1980s, when they were young adults. Unlike their predecessors in the 1950s and 1960s, these young people had found few opportunities for stable, well-paying jobs as they reached maturity. Milwaukee experienced a rapid loss of manufacturing industries between 1978 and 1985 with the result, for the gang members, of rapid downward mobility. The great majority of the gang members were unemployed and still actively involved with their gangs. Hagedorn contrasted these young people with the earlier generation of gang members (those in the 1950s and 1960s), who not only "'matured out of the gang' but vividly described the impact the civil rights movement had on their lives" (p. 138). In addition, by 1980 the gap between the black "middle class and the bulk of the black community [had] widened dramatically." The result for gang members, Hagedorn reported, was "alienation and

bitterness... directed not only against white society, but also toward institutions within the black community controlled by the black middle class" (p. 139).

In 1990, Hagedorn updated the status of founding members of three of the black gangs he had studied in the mid-1980s. Only seven of these people were working full-time. Twenty-two "had graduated from the gang into drug 'posses' or high-risk small businesses selling drugs." Thirty-two "had spent significant time in prison since 1986, most for drug offenses. Three-quarters had used cocaine regularly within the last three years and two [had] been murdered in drug-related shootings" (Hagedorn, 1991, p. 530).

Sanchez-Jankowski rejected the view that gang members are alienated from their communities and inverted the social disorganization thesis by portraying gangs as "a formal element" operating "on an independent and equal basis with all the other organizations active in the low-income community" (Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991, p. 179). He discussed a variety of community roles played and services provided by the gangs, as well as the services that they, in turn, receive from their communities. The former range from the fulfillment of gang-community traditions and psychological identification with gang members who refuse to accept their lot in life to such services as providing escorts to the elderly or the infirm, protection for local businesses (or *against* those that exploit local residents) and protection against perceived threats from strangers and possible victimization by gangs from outside the neighborhood. The latter range from communities' providing safe havens from which gangs can operate to their facilitating the recruitment of new gang members and providing information that is vital to the gang. Sanchez-Jankowski reported that 31 of the 37 gangs he studied "had established some type of working relationship" with their communities (p. 179). Quotations from both community residents and gang members provide numerous examples of community-gang mutual support. The extent to which these data are representative of communities or gangs is unclear, however. In view of Sanchez-Jankowski's assertion that the "social contract" between gangs and communities is "at times quite fluid" and "very delicate and capricious" (pp. 179-180), more systematic data on variations among communities and gangs are needed. Although Sanchez-Jankowski argued that community support of gangs is so vital to the gangs that its withdrawal "ultimately serves as a fatal blow to the gang's existence' (p. 211), he provided no systematic documentation of this claim.

Significant variation in community relationships with gangs has been observed in other studies (see, e.g., Schwartz, 1987; Skogan, 1990; Sullivan, 1989; Suttles, 1968). Surveys of neighborhood residents and gang members conducted in three gang neighborhoods in Milwaukee in 1992-1993 are especially relevant. Moore and Hagedorn (1995) reported that slightly more than one third of all the residents surveyed named gangs as one of the three major problems facing their communities. The percentage of residents holding this view varied enormously in the three neighborhoods, however (2.5%, 36.1%, and 80.9%). Significantly, the neighborhood with the highest percentage of people holding this view had recently experienced serious intergang conflict. About one in five of all the people surveyed (21.4%) felt that "gangs are not all bad" (variation among neighborhoods, 18%-28%); however, 81% indicated that they would join an anti-gang organization (variation, 69.5%-91.3%).

Significantly, few of the *gang members* interviewed by Moore and Hagedorn reported that their gangs helped their communities, and two-thirds replied "not at all" to the question. Half of the gang members perceived the attitudes of neighborhood residents toward their gang as "neutral," but the gang members reported more positive perceptions than were relayed in interviews with residents. Misperception in this regard was greatest in "La Parcela," the Hispanic neighborhood that had experienced recent intergang violence (one third of the gang members perceived neighborhood attitudes toward the gang as positive, whereas 81% of the residents viewed gangs as a major problem and 69% indicated they would join an anti-gang organization). All three neighborhoods were "saturated with drug-selling" and many patrons were the neighborhood residents. However, according to the researchers, intergang violence in La Parcela "had little to do with" the drug economy (Moore & Hagedorn, 1995, pp. 14-15).

Moore and Hagedorn noted parallels between their findings and those of earlier studies of Chicano gangs in Los Angeles and Chicago (Horowitz, 1983; Moore et al., 1978). They concluded that more stable residents, "who may personalize gang members, know their families, and play down their negative impact," are likely to be more tolerant of gangs ("though very few discount the effects of drug dealing"), whereas "more marginal" residents may exhibit greater "anxiety," viewing gang members simply as "dangerous strangers." They noted further, however, that "only a minority of residents of these neighborhoods can be defined as stable. The majority rent, have lived there less than 5 years, feel negative about the neighborhood and recent changes in it, and feel unsafe in the streets and at home" (Moore & Hagedorn, 1995, p. 15; see also Bursik & Grasmick, 1993).

Sudhir A. Venkatesh, a participant-observer of gangs and community institutions in Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes, dramatically documented local consequences of William Julius Wilson's thesis concerning the underclass (Venkatesh, in press; Wilson, 1987). With the escalation of illicit economic activity in Chicago and elsewhere, "local youth gangs began to exert greater control" not only of drug distribution but of other illicit sources of income as well. Gang violence changed from "gang wars" to "drug wars," resulting in greater exposure of bystanders, including children, to danger. Although most residents did not participate in illicit activities, and all resented and were fearful of gang violence, the failure of law enforcement officials (police and housing authority) to protect the community has enhanced the role of gangs as "vigilante peer groups" who provide such security services as nightly escorts for young women (see Suttles, 1968). The complex picture sketched by Venkatesh defies easy characterization—or easy solution (see also Anderson, 1991).

Ko-lin Chin (1996) documented historical and contemporary connections between Chinese and Chinese-immigrant communities in the United States, their relationships with host U.S. cities, and the involvement of Chinese-American youth gangs in violent and predatory activities such as extortion. For these communities, too, the persistence of poverty has led to "enervated social institutions," and the presence of traditional adult criminal organizations in these communities has shaped the structure and behavior of street gangs.

The picture of gangs and gang members that emerges from this literature is complex and at times contradictory. Although some of the reported differences between gangs may be attributable to the research interests and methods of the researchers, many of the findings likely reflect real differences

among gangs, and gang members, in different communities and under different historical circumstances. Representative data from other gang communities, differentiated by ethnic and social class, clearly are needed if such contradictions and ambiguities are to be resolved.

Immigration, Race-Ethnicity, and the Ghetto Poor

Immigration to the United States and the socioeconomic position of ethnic and racial minorities in this country and in local communities have been major factors shaping youth gangs. Not only have ethnic antagonisms often been a source of youth gang violence (Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; MacLeod, 1987; Moore et al., 1978; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Sullivan, 1989; Vigil, 1987), but some ethnic traditions encourage violence (see Chin, 1990a, 1990b, 1996; Vigil, 1988; but see McCord, 1995).

Although much gang violence is directed against "outsiders" to the local community (typically with an ethnic tinge), within broad ethnic categories (Latino, African-American, "white") most intergang violence is intra-ethnic (see Curry & Spergel, 1992).[15] That is, the rivals of Mexican-American gangs typically are other Mexican-American gangs, African-American gangs typically fight other African-American gangs, and so forth. To William Sanders' questions about why most intergang violence is intra-ethnic, members of both African-American and Mexican-American gangs responded with the attitude of "live and let live" (Sanders, 1994, pp. 50-51): "Although Mexican-Americans outnumbered African-Americans by three to one, they believed that the Crips and Bloods were very powerful. The attitude expressed by both groups was summed up in the sentiment, 'Who needs more trouble? We've got enough to handle now.'"

Although plausible, this explanation is likely too simple. Residential segregation, the limited social horizons of gang members, their strong sense of ethnic identity, their fear of the unknown (implied in the Sanders quote), and the personal characteristics of individual gang members surely are involved, also.

As different ethnic and racial groups have come to the United States, they have settled most often in large inner-city areas. The ethnic character of violence and of gangs has reflected both the ethnic and the social class composition of the inner cities (see, e.g., Crutchfield, 1995; Hagan & Peterson, 1995; Hawkins, 1995). That it continues to do so today is evidenced by the emphasis among Hispanic groups on honor (see Crutchfield, 1995; Hagan & Peterson, 1995; Hawkins, 1995; Horowitz, 1983; Schwartz, 1987) and by the documentation of violent Chinese gangs associated with traditional Chinese tongs and triads (see Chin, 1990a, 1990b). Other variations in the ethnic character of gangs, and of violence, are related to the status of ethnic groups within U.S. society, in local communities, and in ecological settings.

Much non-Hispanic white youth violence–by street gangs and other collectivities—continues to be directed against minority youth, especially blacks (Cummings, 1993; Pinderhughes, 1993; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Sullivan, 1989) but at times Hispanics and others, as well (Moore, 1987). Like Thrasher (1927), recent researchers such as Suttles, Jansyn, and Skogan (in Chicago) and Sanchez-Jankowski (in largely Irish Boston communities) have observed that traditions of adult social and

athletic clubs are an important factor in community acceptance of street groups, which often compose the next generation of the clubs, despite community disapprobation of some of the activities of such groups (Suttles, 1968). Investigators have also reported that street gangs have become "quasi-institutionalized" in many Chicano communities of East Los Angeles since the 1930s (Moore, 1987, 1991; Moore et al., 1978; Vigil, 1987).

Macro-level influences on young people range from these family and social community contexts to the global economy. Local neighborhoods and communities are especially important influences in that they are the most immediately experienced social settings for young people (see Reiss & Tonry, 1986; Sampson, 1993; Schwartz, 1987). Sullivan (1989) noted that even the *meaning* of crime for the gangs he studied was shaped by "the local area in which they spend their time almost totally unsupervised and undirected by adults, and the *consumerist youth culture promoted in the mass media*" (p. 249, emphasis added). The relevance of this assessment for violence involving gangs is that the gang context is so often an arena in which the "code of the streets" (Anderson, 1994) demands retaliation for perceptions of even trivial indications of disrespect; it is an arena in which status threats and other group processes are played out. Opportunities for violence are greater in the gang context than in other contexts, especially for those who have been socialized into violence or who may lack skills that might enable them to avoid conflict. Adding competition over valued items of clothing, status-conferring behaviors, and especially drug markets—unregulated by law, except for the criminal law, or by other conventional institutions—produces a volatile mix that often results in violence.

Local influences are shaped by forces beyond ethnicity and social class. The extent and nature of "underclass" populations in the inner cities of the United States continues to be debated (Lynn & McGeary, 1990; Massey & Denton, 1993; Massey, Gross, & Shibuya, 1994; Wilson, 1987, 1994, 1996). However, there is ample documentation that young black males have been the primary victims of the "new urban poverty," defined by Wilson as "poor segregated neighborhoods in which a substantial majority of individual adults are either unemployed or have dropped out of the labor force" (Wilson, 1994, p. 4; see also Wilson, 1996). Although gang researchers are virtually unanimous in regarding the emergence of an underclass as critical to understanding contemporary gangs, local variations may account for some of the differences noted in gang-community relationships. Additionally, well-intended social policies may backfire. Hagedorn noted that gang formation and conflict in Milwaukee were exacerbated by the implementation of the school desegregation plan in that city. Fear of white opposition to school busing, he reported, resulted in mandatory busing only for black students. "Milwaukee's black children were literally scattered out of their communities. In one all-black neighborhood, children were bused to 95 of the Milwaukee Public School's 108 elementary schools" (Hagedorn & Macon, 1988, p. 133). Some black youngsters, harassed and banding together for protection, evolved into gangs. Parents and neighbors with children in different schools felt little collective responsibility. The gangs, according to Hagedorn, "felt no allegiance to school or neighborhood" (pp. 137-138). Hagedorn and others have suggested that another factor in the alienation of Milwaukee gangs from their communities was the economically segmented character of many gang neighborhoods (see Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Sullivan, 1989).

Virtually all recent field studies of gangs have revealed that many youth remain active in gangs rather than "growing out of them," as was the case in the past.[16] Marriage, family responsibilities, and jobs once were the normal route out of the gang, but good, stable job opportunities are no longer available. Recent research has documented the decline in manufacturing jobs available in many cities, the rise of a service economy that offers few opportunities for advancement, and an increasingly segmented labor force in which whites dominate better paying jobs in both manufacturing and service sectors while minorities are consigned to low-wage (often part-time) work, welfare, and the illegal economy (see Hagedorn & Macon, 1988; Sullivan, 1989; Wilson, 1987, 1994, 1996). Ironically, the success of affirmative action policies has contributed to the problem by allowing more affluent and stable segments of some minority populations to move out of slum communities, thus removing from these communities many of their most effective institutional and community leaders and contributing to the social isolation of those who remain and other underclass problems (see Anderson, 1990; Lemann, 1991).

Despite the developing consensus that a growing underclass contributes to the prevalence of street gangs and violence (see, e.g., Cummings & Monti, 1993; Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995), much is unknown about underclass phenomena and their effects on gangs and on gang violence (see Reiss & Roth, 1993). Recall the disparity in age ranges of minority, compared to white, gangs in Sanchez-Jankowski's study (note 5, above). Several field research studies have reported that the presence of older members in minority gangs has led to the gangs' more rational pursuit of economic gain than was observed in gang studies in the 1960s and earlier (but see Spergel, 1964). This occurs especially for gangs and cliques that become heavily involved in drug distribution and other economic activities. In those gangs, violence is likely to become more instrumental in character (see Chin, 1990a, 1990b, 1996; Taylor, 1990a, 1990b; Venkatesh, in press; Williams, 1989).

Social Capital, Crime, and Violence

Though gang researchers do not always use the term social capital, virtually all researchers in this field have reported that traditional forms of social capital produced by conventional intergenerational relationships in families and communities have changed dramatically. As defined by James Coleman and Thomas Hoffer (1987; Coleman, 1988), social capital reflects the quality of personal relationships in individuals' lives and in the lives of communities. Social capital, like physical capital (wealth and other economic assets) and human capital (education and personal networks), is both a personal and a community resource. The potential for the development of economic and human capital among the young, even for those who are initially advantaged by virtue of family wealth and education, may be severely limited if adequate social capital is lacking—if, for example, the human capital of parents "is employed exclusively at work or elsewhere outside the home" (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 221).

The importance of strong intergenerational relationships in positively shaping the behavior of children, which is fundamental to the development of social capital among the young, has been observed in a variety of family and community contexts. Members of street gangs appear to be especially deprived in this regard. In the Chicago study my colleagues and I conducted, the superior quality and quantity of relationships between adults and nongang members, as compared to the

relationships between adults and gang members, was clear. Further, middle-class boys clearly were advantaged when compared to all lower-class boys, as were whites compared to blacks (Short et al., 1964). When we asked boys in one black community to name the adults they knew best, gang members were able to name fewer adults than nongang members, and they saw them much more rarely in conventional institutional settings. Interviews with the adults named by gang members and by nongang boys confirmed the weaker and less conventional contacts of gang members. The absence of adults in caretaker roles in the lives of gang members was especially notable (Rivera & Short, 1967).

Sullivan (1989, pp. 201-202) addressed the relationship between human and social capital and violence more directly:

> The underlying similarity in the prevalence of adolescent street fighting [in two minority neighborhoods and one white neighborhood] establishes a baseline for comparing the extent to which youths from different neighborhoods then went on to apply violence to the pursuit of income. It appears that all these youths had an equal capacity for violence and that street fighting was equally common in all three neighborhoods but peaked well before the age of peak involvement in income-motivated crime. The fact that the youths from the two minority neighborhoods went on to participate in much more violent street crime must then be explained in the context of their *alternative legal and illegal opportunities for gaining income*. (emphasis added)

As they grew older, the young men in Hamilton Park (Sullivan's white group) were able to secure better-quality jobs than were the minority (Latino and black) youth. Hamilton Park youth had "found jobs more plentiful at all ages," and they were better able to hold on to jobs because "they had become more familiar with the discipline of the workplace" (an important type of human capital). Their familiarity with, and acquiescence to, the discipline of the workplace—the latter a special problem among the black gang members my colleagues and I studied in Chicago—were made possible by an important type of social capital—that is, the superior personal networks that these young men shared with adults in Hamilton Park. "Personal networks, not human capital in the form of either education or work experience, accounted for most of the disparities between the neighborhood groups" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 103). Sullivan summarized as follows (p. 105):

> Personal networks separated local neighborhood groups in their ease of access to the same sets of jobs. During the mid-teens these personal networks were solely responsible for allocating jobs to some groups and not to others. With increasing age youths did begin to move outside the local neighborhood and to come into more open competition for jobs. Personal networks still maintained a great deal of importance in finding adult jobs, however, and those with effective personal job networks were likely to carry the added advantage of the more extensive work experience that those same networks had already given them.

Thus, a type of social capital (interpersonal networks with the adult community) facilitated the acquisition of a type of human capital (work experience) for the young men from Hamilton Park. This type of social capital was seldom acquired by their minority counterparts in Projectville and La Barriada.

The reciprocal nature of social capital, human capital, and crime is supported further by John Hagan's analysis of data from a longitudinal study of London youth. Hagan stressed the importance

for later employment and criminality of "early embeddedness among delinquent friends and... delinquent behavior" and stated further that "parental criminality plays a more salient role in the development of early adult unemployment than parental unemployment." According to Hagan, "criminal youths are embedded in contexts that isolate them from the likelihood of legitimate adult employment" (Hagan, 1993, pp. 486-487). Hagan cited U.S. data demonstrating "that with increasing age, from one-sixth to one-third of 18-to-34-year-old U.S. high school dropouts are under the supervision of the criminal justice system ... [and that] as many as three-quarters of 25-to-34-year-old black dropouts are under such supervision." He concluded that "criminal involvement has become so concentrated among young, impoverished black American males that it must be considered a major determinant of their prospective employment" (Hagan, 1993, p. 487).

Conventional families—perhaps the strongest source of social capital—are an important buffer against the pattern of youth pregnancy and single parenting that is associated with the poverty-ethnicity-violence cycle. In this regard, Elijah Anderson (1990, p. 153) wrote the following:

> When it exists, the conventional family unit is an important defense against youthful pregnancy ... Two parents, together with the extended network of cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, nieces, and nephews, can form a durable team, a viable supportive unit engaged to fight in a most committed manner the various problems confronting so many inner-city teenagers ... This unit ... tends to be equipped with a survivor's mentality. It has weathered a good many storms, which have given it wisdom and ... strength. The parents are known in the community as "strict" with their children; they impose curfews and tight supervision, demanding to know their children's whereabouts at all times. Determined that their children not become casualties of the inner-city environment, these parents scrutinize their children's friends and associates carefully, rejecting those who seem to be "no good" and encouraging others who seem to be on their way to "amount to something."

Other studies have also noted the importance of family relationships, associating deficits in this area with gang delinquency as well as delinquency in general (see, e.g., Decker, 1993; MacLeod, 1987; Sullivan, 1989). The research has shown that the most violent young people, and the most delinquent youth in other ways as well, are those for whom deficits in both human and social capital are greatest. With few exceptions (e.g., relatively stable non-Hispanic white communities, such as the Irish in Boston), the declining presence of "old heads" and other attractive, conventional role models is a further indication of deficits in social capital in underclass communities. Many "old heads"— respectable, and respected, middle- and working-class adults who made it a point to advise young people as to acceptable conduct—have left these communities. As noted earlier, those who remain in the communities often find themselves ignored, disparaged, or threatened. Younger, flashier, and at least temporarily successful drug dealers now influence and appeal to those even younger than they (Anderson, 1990).

Moore (1991) noted that the barrio gangs in the Hispanic communities in East Los Angeles have developed differently from the gangs in other cities and communities in which economic shifts have resulted in a heavy concentration of underclass residents. "Good jobs" that left the East Los Angeles area as a result of economic shifts have been replaced by "unstable, low wage, and unsheltered" jobs, much as has occurred in other cities. However, immigrants from Mexico compete with gang members and others for the jobs in these Hispanic communities, and the older gang members, many of whom have been in and out of prison for many years and whose family and community ties tend

to be weak, have not been able to find stable conventional jobs. They continue to hang around with younger gang members. The result, Moore reported, is that the gang is perpetuated as an agency of "street socialization" rather than its members becoming more integrated into conventional community life. The gangs have become quasi-institutionalized.

Moore also noted an increase in intergang violence in the barrios in 1990, following a period of quiet during the 1980s, reminding us that gangs have their own dynamic quite apart from macroeconomic and demographic changes and the effectiveness of formal and informal social control institutions and mechanisms. So, also, do youth culture and groups that gather in parks, malls, and drive-ins, where violent episodes often occur. To the extent that, as noted earlier in this paper, this type of behavior reflects "underlying tensions in working-class youth culture" and "the tenuousness of the bridge between the generations," social capital is once again implicated in violence (Schwartz, 1987, p. 146).

Some gang researchers have suggested that street gangs become a substitute source for intergenerational social capital formation. If they do provide this service, however, the social capital thus gained may be functional for survival on the street and in the street gang world, but its relevance to the harsh realities of survival in the world beyond the gang seems at best problematic.

Conclusion, and a Brief Agenda for Research and Social Policy Consideration

As noted earlier in this paper, at least some of the processes by which street gangs become violent are now understood. Important beginnings have also been made in identifying the nature of macro-level forces that lead to street gang formation or lead to the transformation of street gangs into other types of groups. Among these forces, the spread of gang culture, youth culture, and a growing underclass are paramount, but differentially so at the community level. More than ever before, young people, targeted for commercial exploitation and isolated from mainstream adult roles and institutions, are confronting economic conditions beyond their control. Economic decline, severe unemployment, and the unavailability of "good jobs" are associated not only with street gangs but also with their transformation into "economic gangs" (including drug gangs) and with ethnic, racial, and class-related identities and antagonisms that lead to other types of collective violence. These same forces alter both intergang relationships and relationships between gangs and their communities. Relationships between adults and young people, shaped by generational backgrounds and community cultures, "translate" these and other macro-level forces into forces that work at the local community level. To the extent that conventional institutions fail to protect local residents and to provide other services, the violent, status-, and economic-enhancing behaviors of gang members create opportunities for new accommodations between gangs and other community residents.

Although important beginnings have been made, the precise processes that result in interpersonal violence, gang violence, and other forms of collective violence remain a mystery and must remain a high priority for future research. Both local and larger, macro-level forces—labor force dynamics, economic well-being, family, public policy, and other institutional influences—must be studied (see Sampson & Wilson, 1995). It is at the level of community cultures and relationships that these larger political and economic forces converge with individual- and micro-level influences.

Research is also needed on the forces and processes that influence social capital formation and maintenance. When social capital is weakened by demographic and economic shifts that concentrate poverty and destabilize community institutions, conventional socialization and control processes fail. When intergenerational relationships break down or are distorted by such developments, the likelihood that gangs will emerge, flourish, and compete with one another, often with deadly consequences, is enhanced (see Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Social capital is weakened, also, when the legitimacy of the authority of institutions and the authority of the adults that are identified with them is weakened, as often happens when authority is perceived by young people as irrational, unreasonable, or both. As stated by Schwartz (1987, pp. 29-30), "To be reasonable, authority must be exercised in ways that respect the dignity of those subject to it... To be rational, authority must be a means to those ends that are meaningful to persons subject to it... Young people rarely directly challenge the legitimacy of instrumental rationality... American youth, from the most affluent to the most deprived, want to get a job and make money." When the authority of conventional "old heads" is undermined by their scarcity in neighborhoods, and by the availability to youth of illicit opportunities and the apparent success in such endeavors of only slightly older illegitimate entrepreneurs, the development and employment of social capital may be skewed toward illegitimate ends.

Finally, the nature of youth groups, including gangs, requires further explanation at all levels and integration among the different levels of explanation. Although group processes may help to bridge macro- and individual-levels of explanation, far too little is known about these group processes— their nature, the circumstances that bring them into play, and how they relate to behavior. This dynamic picture presents many challenges, to policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and social scientists, as well as to the communities that must live with gang realities.

For social science researchers, the challenges are methodological as well as substantive. Gang research suffers from such fundamental problems as lack of agreement on definitional criteria and lack of rigor in their application, lack of a comparative perspective (the result of too narrow and limited focus on particular gangs—some gang studies focus on a single gang or on individual gang members rather than on gangs as groups), and a general failure to develop formal theory. Understanding gang diversity and change requires that unsupervised youth groups be studied *before* they become involved in delinquency—at least before they become involved in serious delinquency—and before those that do become involved in delinquency become transformed into other types of organizations, such as "working gangs" (Padilla, 1993) or drug crews (see Short, 1995). Only then will it be possible to explain their sometimes violent and criminal behavior.

Perhaps the most daunting theoretical problem is the lack of a theoretically viable typology that situates gangs, or types of gangs, in a larger set of youth collectivities. The development of such a typology requires the identification of criteria (other than criminal behaviors) that distinguish different types of collectivities from one another. Several candidates for such criteria have been alluded to in this paper: the degree to which groups meet with some regularity, as opposed to transitory groupings; the distinction between crowds and groups, the former as well as the latter to be distinguished in terms of how regularly they gather; the differentiation of both crowds and groups

in terms of understood purposes (e.g., simply "hanging," gathering to have a good time or to keep unwanted persons out of the neighborhood, versus gathering spontaneously or on a one-time basis, perhaps under unique circumstances, such as celebratory or protest crowds). A particularly important criterion relevant to gang definitional issues concerns the role of adult supervision and sponsorship. Delinquent and criminal behaviors are not the exclusive province of unsupervised youth groups; much needs to be learned about the circumstances under which supervised and unsupervised youth groups become involved in such unwanted behaviors.

It is clear, however, that unsupervised youth groups are more likely than supervised groups to be violent and to be deviant in other ways. From a policy perspective, therefore, adult supervision is of critical importance. I do not mean to imply that all young people should at all times be directly supervised or responsible to adults. Young people need to develop independence and initiative. This long-standing dilemma notwithstanding, involvement of adults with youth groups, as opposed to adults' rejection, neglect, or domination of youth group activities, clearly is to be recommended. Adult intervention in violence-producing or threatening situations can be effective in many situations.

At the macro level, policies are needed that will strengthen, rather than weaken, families and community institutions. William Julius Wilson's policy agenda includes child-care services, subsidies to working-poor parents, and, above all, job creation, as implied in the title of his most recent book, *When Work Disappears* (1996). If the analysis presented in this paper is correct, Wilson's call for addressing the youth gang problem in this "more comprehensive way" is well taken. In addition, the role of the consumerist youth culture that drives the search for status and respect among young people must be recognized and dealt with. This problem, also, is probably best confronted by families and communities that value their youth and are enabled to work with them (see Center for Successful Child Development, 1993).

NOTES

1. This logical principal is not universally accepted. Most gang researchers include criminal behavior or "orientation" in their definitions of gangs. See discussions of this issue in Bursik and Grasmick (1993) and in Ball and Curry (1995). The differences between my definition and Klein's, which includes a criminal element, are not as great as might initially appear, as is explained later in this section. The consequences of the more restrictive definition, such as that used by Klein, in surveys of general populations of young people will be noted where appropriate.

2. I do not mean to say that gangs are never "exported" from one city to another. In Klein's survey, police in a few cities reported the presence of drug gangs "initiated from outside cities, including Detroit." (The cities reporting the outside influence were Erie and Ft. Wayne; the latter claiming outside influences from Chicago and Indianapolis as well as Detroit. See Klein, 1995.)

3. The objection that the definition of gangs employed here does not distinguish gangs from "hobby or personal interest groups," to quote one critic, misses this point. Note, also, that although lack of adult sponsorship and/or adult supervision distinguishes gangs from other youth groups, neither adult sponsorship nor supervision necessarily, or always, is successful in preventing delinquency or violence. Hobby groups—even church-sponsored groups—can become gangs, to the extent that they become independent of adult sponsorship and supervision. Few would argue, however, that adult sponsorship and supervision are irrelevant to adolescent behavior, in that they are likely to insulate groups from situations in which violence is likely to occur and to lessen the risk of delinquent behavior in other ways, for example, through the presence of control agents, role models, and teachers.

4. Note, however, that a full typology of youth collectivities would have to include both skinheads and bikers. An explanation of behavioral differences between these groups and street gangs would necessarily include differentiation on the basis of ideology and specialization of interests (street gangs have neither an ideology nor a specialization of interests, whereas skinheads are highly ideological and bikers are highly specialized interest groups). Both, by the definition here employed, are "subspecies" of gangs. So are the "surfer groups and doper groups" that San Diego police and William Sanders have not classified as gangs (see Sanders, 1994, p. 166).

5. Although Sanchez-Jankowski noted ethnic variation in the gangs he studied, he did not clarify the distinction between "Latino/black" and "black/Latino" gangs, and he concluded that "organizational concerns and operations" generally "muted" ethnic differences among the gangs (1991, p. 316). Further, he did not systematically analyze the ethnic variations he noted or relate them to other features of the gangs. The *age range* among the white gangs he studied, for example, was 14-26 years (mean = 7.6 years), whereas the figures for Latino gangs were 12-42 (mean = 12.5), for black gangs, 14-37 (mean = 12.3), for black/Latino gangs, 12-41 (mean = 22.25), and for Latino/black, 13-42 (mean = 13.2).

6. Griffith's car broke down; Hawkins and two companions had gone to Bensonhurst to look at a used car.

7. For an account of high-level drug dealing and its aftermath among dealers, see Adler and Adler (1983).

8. The makeup of the "minorities" in inner-city areas, as well as elsewhere, continues to change with tides of immigration and related social changes. Additionally, not all gangs are members of the underclass or are located in inner-city areas. Some of the gangs reviewed in this paper are composed of working-class youth. Most of those gangs, such as the Hamilton Park group studied by Sullivan (1989) and the "Irish" gangs studied by Sanchez-Jankowski (1991), are made up of non-Hispanic whites. Padilla (1992, 1993) studied Puerto Rican gangs from working-class areas in Chicago. Studies of middle- and upper-class gangs are rare (see Chambliss, 1973; Greeley & Casey, 1963; Muehlbauer & Dodder, 1983). Because middle- and upper-class youth are more likely to be channeled into adult-sponsored groups and activities, gangs among those youth are less prevalent than are gangs among youth in working- and lower-class areas (see Schwartz, 1987; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1985).

9. As is true of most gang research, Sanchez-Jankowski's study focused almost entirely on male gang members, individually and collectively. Anne Campbell (1990), the foremost student of female gangs in the United States, noted the lack of research on female participation in gangs. See also Campbell (1984); Chesney-Lind & Shelden (in press); Fishman (1995).

10. None of these researchers claim psychiatric expertise. Yablonsky and Fleisher studied only a few gang members, and Sanchez-Jankowski's research has been severely criticized (see Sullivan, 1994).

11. Earlier researchers also reported the dependence of gang leaders on other members of the gang for their legitimacy and authority (Moore et al., 1978; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965).

12. The measurement of personality characteristics we used in Chicago was designed by Desmond S. Cartwright. See Cartwright, Howard, and Reuterman (1980); Cartwright, Tomson, and Schwartz (1975); and Gordon et al. (1963).

13. Some problems and motivations for behavior may be rooted in biology or influenced by biological imperatives or limitations (see Gove & Wilmoth, 1990). However, even these problems are likely to be mediated by macro- and perhaps microsocial definitions, perceptions, and interactive effects.

14. The relationship of cohesiveness to behavior may also reflect a gang's *history* of cohesiveness. Klein's findings may be characteristic of street gangs that do not have a *history of cohesiveness,* in contrast to Jansyn's gang, which had such a history. When gangs

lacking cohesiveness become more cohesive, group activity (delinquent and nondelinquent) is likely to increase. The Chicago gangs that my colleagues and I studied were not as cohesive as Jansyn's gang. Our detached workers involved the gangs they worked with in some program activity, but not as aggressively as Klein's did. The gangs we studied appeared to become more cohesive in response to status threats to their leaders or to the gang, and on such occasions they were often more delinquent.

15. An exception was documented by Sanders (1994, p. 163). He noted that Southeast Asian gangs in San Diego were formed in response to "bullying" by Mexican-American and African-American gangs (which served, also, as role models for the emerging Southeast-Asian gangs).

16. This conclusion is supported by a working group of the Social Science Research Council Committee on the Urban Underclass. This working group has a broad mandate to study "the social and economic ecology of crime and drugs in inner cities." Its members are researchers who have, individually, been studying gangs in eight neighborhoods in five cities. The cities are Atlanta, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. The researchers are Darlene Conley, Richard Curtis, Julius Debro, Jeffrey Fagan, Ansley Hamid, Joan Moore, Felix Padilla, John Quicker, Carl Taylor, and J. Diego Vigil. Jeffrey Fagan chairs the working group. Note also the age spread of the gangs studied by Sanchez-Jankowski, cited in note 5.

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