CRIME, YOUTH GANGS, AND URBAN TRANSITION: THE SOCIAL DISLOCATIONS OF POSTINDUSTRIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

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On the basis of a multivariate analysis of quantitative data from all U.S. cities of 25,000 or more in 1970 and 1980, this paper investigates the impact of recent economic changes and population shifts on the levels of violent and property crime. Further investigation of a subset of cities yields information on the effect of these shifts for the development of youth gangs. The findings illustrate the criminogenic consequences of transition from a manufacturing to a service economy, where changes in technological conditions undermine the comparative locational advantages of cities as industrial centers and worsen economic opportunities for the unskilled urban poor. The results suggest that higher crime rates and more youth gangs are among the unintended consequences of the nation's patterns of postindustrial development.

Policy makers and scholars recently have provided detailed testimony of the transformation of the U.S. economy from manufacturing-based to service-based (Berg 1981; Bradbury, Downs, and Small 1982; Stanback and Noyelle 1981). Current analyses have begun to explore the impact of this transformation on the urban center and the largely minority populations left behind within its boundaries. Evident in this new urban reality (cf. Peterson 1985) are the dislocations associated with economic decline, including increases in the rate of violent crime and in reliance on government-provided income assistance programs (cf. Wilson 1987). Development and exacerbation of urban youth gang problems have been traced to recent declines in opportunities for unskilled labor (cf. Hagedorn and Macon 1988). Several other types of anecdotal evidence also have illustrated the problems resulting from a national economic transformation that left in its wake unskilled laborers without access to opportunities for retraining at the level required

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for success in the new technological environment (cf. Berry 1985; Downs 1985; Kasarda 1985).

Thus far, however, a national analysis of the effect of recent economic and social transitions on the level and nature of crime in cities and on the development of youth gangs throughout the United States has not been undertaken. Some researchers have investigated Wilson's (1987) arguments concerning class-related changes in the residential segregation of minority groups—for example, Massey and Eggers's (1990) analysis of whether middle-class minority members in 60 U.S. metropolitan areas really have removed themselves spatially from the poor. Studies also have addressed the effectiveness of varying types of city-level response to youth gang problems (cf. Spergel, Curry, Ross, and Chance 1989). Yet the impact of recent well-recognized demographic and economic transitions (cf. P. Peterson 1985) on crime and youth gangs has not been scrutinized directly in U.S. urban centers nationwide, or with appropriate attention to the influence of regional variations in these transitions.

This study fills that gap. Its central thesis is that demographic and economic transition have contributed to crime and to the presence of youth gangs in U.S. cities, even in the presence of controls for the following possibly competing explanations: opportunity factors related to the ease and profit of crime, age structure, racial and income heterogeneity, and economic deprivation. I also investigate the impact of regional variations in growth and decline on the crime rate in accordance with Wilson's prediction that such differences should be reflected in the severity of urban social dislocations.

POPULATION, DATA, AND HYPOTHESES

The research is based on a multivariate analysis of quantitative data from all U.S. cities of 25,000 or more in 1970 and 1980. Further investigation of a subset of the cities in this analysis yields information on the impact of these shifts for the development of youth gangs. Data were obtained from the U.S. Census of Population (1970, 1980), the Uniform Crime Report (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1980), and the 1981 National Juvenile Assessment Center survey regarding youth gangs (Needle and Stapleton 1983).

I use ordinary least squares regression and logistic regression. The dependent variables of the analysis are urban crime rates and the presence of urban youth gangs. In this paper I devote primary attention to the influence of population and economic transition on the level of crime and on the presence of youth gangs. I also include the following independent variables to test the competing

theoretical explanations noted above: city population size and density, climate, household activity ratio, ratio of blacks' to whites' median income, percent poor, percent unemployed, racial composition measures, and percent youth (ages 15 to 24). The operationalization of each variable is described below.

Demographic and Economic Transition

Taken together, recent work by Wilson (1987) and by Hagedorn and Macon (1988) directly advances the proposition that crime and youth gangs are among the social dislocations resulting from the U.S. transition from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy. Wilson argues that a rise in the proportion of female-headed households, increased reliance on welfare, and a greater level of violent crime are all, in one way or another, manifestations of the social disorganization consequent to urban losses in opportunities for unskilled workers. Hagedorn, with Macon, applies this argument to his analysis of current trends in gang development in Milwaukee; he predicts that youth gangs will assume an increasing presence throughout the United States in those urban centers most affected by the demographic and economic decline inherent in the nation's postindustrial economic transition.

These propositions advanced by Wilson and Hagedorn have solid foundations in the now-classic work of Durkheim ([1893] 1965, [1895] 1965, [1897] 1951) and of Shaw and McKay (1942), in which crime and youth gangs are treated directly as consequences of the impact of demographic and economic transition on anomie and social disorganization. More current research provides further support for these links. Work by both Chamlin (1989) and Sampson and Groves (1989, for example, underscores the continued criminogenic importance of urban change. Chamlin (1989) studied the determinants of robbery and homicide in 109 large cities and demonstrated the criminogenic impact of urban structural changes that weaken social cohesion. Sampson and Groves's (1989) research on British localities provides evidence of the influence of community social disorganization on criminal victimization and offending.

Urban centers declined economically during the 1970s with the movement of manufacturing and wholesale operations, their initial reason for existence, to foreign and suburban locations, and with the national economic shift toward a service-based economy requiring technologically sophisticated training for many of the new positions it created. Kasarda's (1985) recent study of the growth of jobs with low educational requirements demonstrates

that the suburbs and the exurbs have absorbed most of these positions. Herbert Jacobs (1985) examines the criminogenic implications of these changes.

In their recent book on gangs, crime, and the underclass, after reviewing the literature on gang information, Hagedorn and Macon (1988: 21) note that we do not know why gangs form in some cities but not in others, or how gangs in smaller cities are similar to or different from gangs in larger cities. They point to the drastically changed economic conditions in poor, minority urban neighborhoods as having contributed to the "institutionalization of gangs as a means for young adults to cope with economic distress and social isolation" (Hagedorn and Macon 1988: 111).

Theories stressing economic and social marginality as triggers of gang formation (cf. Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Miller 1975; Moore et. al. 1978, 1983) still apply, but because adulthood does not bring new opportunities for achievement, the movement up and out of the zone of transition does not occur for minority group members as it did for the European immigrants studied by the earliest researchers in this area. Hagedorn and Macon stress that "the significance of the formation of a minority urban underclass and the simultaneous emergence and entrenchment of gangs is completely overlooked" (1988: 25-26). The interstitial nature of gangs—as a bridge between youth and adulthood, occurring in the transitional zones between disorganized and stable communities—may have changed, insofar as the gang experience for many continues with joblessness and meaningless part-time work into the adult years. Work by Curry and Spergel (1988) and by Sampson and Groves (1989) underscores the effect of socioeconomic disorganization on gang activity, supporting Hagedorn and Macon's argument that recent demographic and economic changes have contributed to the development of youth gangs.

Because they reflect demographic and economic transition, economic instability and population decline are expected to be significant predictors of higher crime rates in this study, especially for crimes of violence (cf. H. Jacobs 1985: 230), and to contribute to the presence of youth gangs. The percentage change in civilian labor force opportunities in manufacturing and in wholesale and retail trades between 1970 and 1980 are included in the investigation as indicators of economic instability. Their decline represents a diminution of employment opportunities for unskilled, less educated city residents (cf. Kasarda 1985; Wilson 1987).

Percentages of city residents born in the state where they are now living (1980) and percentage of population change (1970-1980) provide indicators of long- and short-term demographic change in

the city. Population decline has been viewed as indicative of "a declining city syndrome" (Clark 1985: 254; Muller 1975; G. Peterson 1976) and as a measure of "urban distress" (Clark 1985: 259; Nathon and Dommel 1977). Throughout the United States, particularly in the northeastern and north central regions, large central cities lost population during the 1970s. The declines may have reflected the loss of employment opportunities in these regions, a loss that triggered urban fiscal and social problems.

Competing Theoretical Explanations

Routine activities (cf. Cohen and Felson 1979), economic deprivation and relative deprivation (cf. Danziger and Wheeler 1975; D. Jacobs 1982; Massey and Eggers 1990; Shelley 1980), heterogeneity (cf. Blau and Blau 1982), and the age structure of a city (cf. Hindelang and McDermott 1981) may explain any observed impact of demographic and economic transition on both crime and youth gang presence. To test the influence of these competing explanations in comparison to that of the central proposition of this analysis, I bring into the analysis indicators of economic deprivation, the age structure of the population, routine activities related to the ease and profit of crime, and population heterogeneity.

Percent poor and percent unemployed in 1980 represent long- and short-term conditions of economic deprivation; the ratio of blacks' to whites' median income reflects relative deprivation. Percent black and percent Hispanic indicate population heterogeneity. In addition to these variables I include the household activity ratio—"the sum of the number of married, husband-present, female labor-force participants and the number of non-husband-wife households, divided by the sum of the total number of households." This is Cohen and Felson's (1979: 200) indicator of the number of households likely to be without guardians because of the occupants' employment. The index provides a measure of the dispersion of activities away from the home; as a measures of the absence of guardians, I expect it to be related positively to the level of crime in cities. In addition, I expect this index to have increased along with recent urban population and economic transitions because economic instability increases the proportion of female-headed families (cf. Sampson 1987), which contribute to the number of nonhusband-wife households.

I include city population size, density, and climate in the analysis as structural indicators of the ease of crime commission in a city and because they are associated with population and economic transition, the main independent variables of this investigation.

The largest, most densely settled U.S. cities are known to have experienced the greatest demographic and economic decline, especially in the northeast and north central regions, where the mean January temperature is lowest. The link between these demographic characteristics and crime is also well established. For example, I expect population size and density to influence the ease of crime commission because they heighten anonymity, reduce social cohesion, and strain law enforcement resources (cf. Boggs 1965; Harries 1975, Jackson 1984; Reppetto 1974). Climate, measured here by mean January temperature, may influence the likelihood of larceny, burglary, robbery, auto theft, and arson because milder temperatures encourage more socializing outside the home, thus increasing the vulnerability of dwellings and vehicles.

Dependent Variables

This analysis includes two dependent variables: urban crime rates and the development of urban youth gangs. I obtained information on urban crime rates from the Uniform Crime Report (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1980). Wilson's analysis of the determinants of urban social dislocations focuses on rates of violent crime in cities. In the present analysis, however, I investigate separately the determinants for each of the eight Part I index offenses because each of these direct contact predatory crimes (cf. Cohen and Felson 1979: 589) may respond to different social pressures. For example, the frustration produced by anomie and social disorganization may result in a link between crimes of violence and economic and social transition (cf. Bernard 1990). Although property crimes also may be influenced by transition, as deviant subcultures replace conventional normative structures eroded by change, different causal processes are at work (cf. Messner and J. Blau 1987). Hence the strength of these links may differ.

To test the effect of economic and population transition on gangs, I use as a dependent variable data gathered in 1981 by the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Center (Needle and Stapleton 1983) on the existence of gangs in a random, representative sample of 60 U.S. cities of 100,000 or more. In each city police department, the authors interviewed gang control and youth personnel as to the existence of gangs in the city. The investigation of recognized urban gangs was based on analysis of these 60 cities which the authors selected "using population size and geographic region as major criteria for sampling" (Needle and Stapleton 1983: 1). For this subgroup of the present study's larger population of

cities, I investigate the determinants of the existence of gangs recognized by the police using a dichotomous indicator of gang presence, where 0 = no police-provided evidence of gangs in the city and 1 = police-provided evidence of gangs.[1] Unfortunately the small size of this subsample precludes investigation of the regional differences that I explore in the prediction of urban crime rates.

RESULTS

Table 1 contains associations among pairs of the urban sociopolitical characteristics included in the study. Although they are a useful starting point, these Pearson's correlation coefficients reflect only bivariate associations without controls for other possible determinants of the association. The multivariate equations in a later table are a more accurate gauge of the extent to which each independent variable influence specific crime rates and the incidence of gangs after other urban characteristics are controlled.

The bivariate associations, however, provide reason for continuation of the analysis. For example, a statistically significant relationship exists between higher crime rates and decline in the percentage of the civilian labor force employed in wholesale and retail trades ($r = -.17$). A bivariate relationship also exists between the percentage of residents born in the state who still live there and the total rate of index crimes; higher crime rates are found in cities with more population transition ($r = -.24$). This measure of long-term population transition is associated with increases in the number of manufacturing positions ($r = -.25$), lower levels of poverty ($r = .14$), and higher mean January temperatures ($r = -.53$),

Decline in the percentage of the civilian labor force employed in wholesale and retail positions also predicts increases in the crime rate ($r = -.17$), as do greater unemployment ($r = .23$), greater income inequality between blacks and whites ($r = -.21$), dispersion of activity away from the home ($r = .37$), and climate conducive to recreation outside the home ($r = .23$).

With regard to gangs, the bivariate associations suggest that they are more likely to be present in large ($r = .27$), densely settled ($r = .21$) cities with a large Hispanic population ($r = .47$), greater long-term population transition ($r = -.37$), and greater declines in the number of wholesale and retail positions ($r = -.23$). The multivariate equations presented below test the theoretical importance of these associations, providing evidence of the

[1] Complete data on all independent variables are available for 51 of Needle and Stapleton's cities.

Table 1. Zero-Order Correlation Matrix with Means and Standard Deviations (All cities ⩾ 25,000, N=561) (Pearson's rs)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	$\bar{X}$	SD
Percent Black	—	.12[b]	−.17[c]	−.05	.41[c]	.40[c]	.13[b]	−.24[c]	.11[b]	.69[c]	−.27[c]	−.21[c]	−.07	.10[a]	.44[c]	−.13[b]	15.5	17.1
Density		—	.28[c]	−.11[b]	.15[c]	.25[c]	−.15[c]	−.22[c]	.25[c]	.18[c]	.11[b]	−.13[b]	−.15[c]	−.03	.03	.21[c]	4324.4	3722.9
Percent Hispanic			—	−.06	−.03	−.21[c]	−.34[c]	.22[c]	.07	.21[c]	.20[c]	−.07	.24[c]	.44[c]	.06	.47[c]	8.3	13.4
Population Age 15-24				—	−.06	.28[c]	.00	.09[a]	−.05	.02	−.12[b]	.18[c]	.05	−.12[b]	−.10[a]	−.01	2.1	.5
Percent Unemployed					—	−.02	.23[c]	−.29[c]	.05	.58[c]	−.03	.08[a]	−.28[c]	−.26[c]	.23[c]	−.01	7.0	3.0
Household Activity Ratio						—	−.02	−.21[c]	.10[a]	.23[c]	−.25[c]	−.18[c]	.01	−.11[b]	.37[c]	−.07	.7	.1
Residents Born in State							—	−.38[c]	−.05	.14[c]	−.05	.08[a]	−.25[c]	−.53[c]	−.24[c]	−.37[c]	60.0	16.2
Percent Population Change								—	−.03	−.19[c]	.07	.06	.21[c]	.38[c]	−.06	.05	7.3	22.0
Population Size									—	.12[b]	−.08[a]	−.06	−.01	.01	.09[a]	.27[c]	129.1	370.2
Percent Poor										—	−.25[c]	−.11[b]	.01	.17[c]	.44[c]	.11	10.3	5.4
Blacks'/Whites' Income											—	−.04	−.05	−.12[b]	−.21[c]	.14[c]	.7	.2
Wholesale/Retail Change												—	−.25[c]	−.08[a]	−.17[c]	−.23[c]	−.1	2.25
Manufacturing Change													—	.28[c]	.11[b]	.20[c]	−2.6	4.1
January Temperature														—	.23[c]	.28[c]	36.6	13.6
Index Crime Rate															—	.07	80.1	27.8
Gang Presence[d]																—	.5	.5

[a] $p < .05$ [b] $p < .01$ [c] $p < .001$ [d] gang presence correlation based on 51 cases.

impact of economic and demographic transition on crime and gang presence when the influence of other independent variables is controlled.

Table 2 suggests that the relationship between demographic and economic transition and urban crime rates withstands controls for other, possibly competing explanatory variables. Long-term population change, as reflected in the percentage of city residents born in the state where they are now living, has a statistically significant impact on the total rate of index crimes and on each of the individual crime rates except arson. This measure of long-term population change is one of the strongest predictors of each type of crime, an indication that the lower the percentage of city residents born in the state, the greater the rate of crime. The socially disorganizing effects of such population change appear to be reflected in urban crime levels.

Percentage of city population change during the decade (1970-1980), an indicator not only of social disorganization but also of urban socioeconomic decline, has a statistically significant impact on the rates of robbery, burglary, and auto theft; population decline predicts higher crime rates. In addition, decline in labor force opportunities in manufacturing between 1970 and 1980 contributes to higher rates of robbery and auto theft; similar declines in wholesale and retail trades trigger increases in rape, robbery, auto theft, and arson rates.

The contribution of other characteristics of city structure in explaining variations in crime rates also merits attention. Unemployment, for example, short-term by its official definition, is socially disorganizing and disrupts individuals' major link with conventional society. This variable is a positive significant predictor of the total rate of index crime and of each of the individual rates of direct contact predatory crime except larceny, even after other sociodemographic characteristics of cities have been controlled. Percent poor, reflecting the extent of longer-term economic detachment in the city, also has a positive significant impact on the total crime rate, as well as on the rates of homicide, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. Sampson's (1987) work suggests that this influence may result in part from the impact of economic deprivation on family structure.

Percent black and percent Hispanic, indicators of population heterogeneity, do not have a significant impact on the total rate of crime when the indicators of demographic and economic transition and the other control variables are held constant. Both, however, have a positive, statistically significant impact on the rates of three violent crimes: homicide, rape, and robbery. Percent black also

Table 2. Regression Equations for Index Crime Rates (1980) on Transition, Social Disorganization, Opportunity, and Other Social Characteristics of Cities (All cities ⩾ 25,000, N=561)

	Total Crime Rate	Nonnegligent Homicide	Forcible Rape	Aggravated Assault	Robbery	Burglary	Larceny	Auto Theft	Arson
Constant	−31.310	−.060	−.654	−2.420	−6.564	−9.011	−9.546	2.738	−1.839
Mean January Temperature, Standardized Coefficient (S)	.073	.099[b]	.068	.118[a]	.018	.156[c]	.029	−.063	.118[a]
Population Size S	.029	.143[c]	.081[b]	.009	.144[c]	.010	−.001	.053	.062
Percent Change in Wholesale/Retail S	−.031	−.045	−.063[a]	.004	−.083[b]	−.050	.021	−.115[c]	−.111[b]
Ratio of Blacks' to Whites' Median Income S	−.031	−.007	−.027	.009	.053[a]	−.018	−.080[a]	.098[b]	.089[a]
Proportion Age 15-24 S	−.204[c]	−.078[b]	−.032	−.045	−.129[c]	−.212[c]	−.163[c]	−.135[c]	−.064
Percent Unemployed S	.164[c]	.142[c]	.294[c]	.102[a]	.136[c]	.124[b]	.140[b]	.071	.275[c]
Density S	−.239[c]	−.132[c]	−.233[c]	−.097[a]	.083[b]	−.109[b]	−.397[c]	.221[c]	−.042
Percent Change in Manufacturing S	.019	−.044	−.018	−.039	−.105[c]	.026	.068	−.084[a]	−.018
Percent Population Change (1970-1980) S	−.057	−.043	−.040	−.037	−.104[c]	−.081[a]	−.005	−.085[a]	−.018
Household Activity Ratio S	.381[c]	.068[a]	.252[c]	.110[b]	.247[c]	.298[c]	.369[c]	.165[c]	.172[c]
Percent City Residents Born in State S	−.314[c]	−.104[b]	−.271[c]	−.154[c]	−.302[c]	−.227[c]	−.256[c]	−.232[c]	−.047
Percent Hispanic S	.017	.206[c]	.130[b]	.064	.147[c]	.025	−.060	.125[b]	.070
Percent Black S	.053	.489[c]	.375[c]	.290[c]	.309[c]	.128[b]	−.116[a]	.057	−.093
Percent Poor S	.271[c]	.145[b]	.020	.244[c]	.132[b]	.268[c]	.187[b]	.210[c]	−.012
R^2	.44[c]	.60[c]	.51[c]	.38[c]	.63[c]	.47[c]	.29[c]	.42[c]	.10[c]

[a] p (one-tailed test) < .05 [b] p < .01 [c] p < .001

has a positive impact on the rates of assault, burglary, and larceny; percent Hispanic influences the rate of auto theft.

Greater similarity of average blacks' and whites' incomes appears to contribute to the rates of robbery, auto theft, and arson in a city, even after other known crime determinants are controlled. Meriting future investigation is the question of whether this occurs because greater equality between racial groups reflects the greater criminal opportunity association with affluence or because greater interracial equality reflects widespread poverty and its associated criminogenic conditions.

City population size contributes to the rates of homicide, rape, and robbery even after demographic change, economic transition, and other predictors of the urban crime rate are controlled. The higher levels of anonymity, lower social cohesion, and weaker informal surveillance associated with large city size may undermine social restraints and provide greater opportunity for violent crime. Population density has a statistically significant negative impact on the total crime rate and on the homicide and rape rates, as well as on the rates of assault, burglary, and larceny; this finding suggests criminogenic conditions in cities with lower levels of density. Such cities were slightly more likely to be experiencing population transition in 1980 (Pearsons's r for density and population change = −.22) (cf. Frey and Speare 1988).

Dispersion of activities away from the home, as measured by the household activity ratio, has a positive significant impact on the total crime rate as well as on the rate of each individual index crime. Mean January temperature, a measure of climatic conditions conducive to interaction outside the home (cf. Cheatwood 1988), is a positive significant predictor of the rates of homicide, assault, burglary, and arson.

In summary, the multivariate equations show that urban crime rates are influenced by both long- and short-term city population change, as well as by declines in manufacturing and wholesale/retail positions, even in the face of controls for competing explanatory variables. The data support the central thesis of this paper regarding the impact of postindustrial change on crime in urban centers. Although competing explanations do not undermine this support, they shed additional light on the importance of urban characteristics that reflect the opportunity for crime. The anonymity and the household dispersion of modern life, as well as climatic conditions that encourage the pursuit of leisure and interaction outside the home, appear to be related to specific rates of urban crime.

Regional Variations

Wilson's analysis of urban deterioration in the 1970s suggests regional contextual differences that could affect the development of crime. For example, he writes that urban centers have undergone "an irreversible structural transition from centers of production and distribution of material goods to centers of administration, information exchange, and higher order provision," and notes that in northern areas in particular, city labor markets have been transformed from "centers of goods processing to centers of information processing," with consequent shifts in the educational requirements for employment (Wilson 1987: 39).

In the northeast and the midwest especially, Wilson illustrates that the jobless rate among 16- to 24-year-old black males increased sharply during the 1970s. At the same time, information processing centers have replaced jobs in manufacturing and other blue-collar industries in the north (Wilson 1987: 40). In the south and the west, he points out, the jobless rates among young black males in the central city has not risen as sharply; jobs with low educational prerequisites have not left these communities as consistently, and business migration to these areas has added others. Work by Massey and Eggers (1990: 1170) also suggests regional variations in the cumulative overall effect of these changes on urban centers, with the greatest dislocations in the northeast and the midwest.

One measure of decline in northeastern and north central cities is reflected in their 3.4 percent average population loss between 1970 and 1980. Cities in the south and the southwest, on the other hand, grew 16.4 percent on average during that decade. This growth was reflected in the fact that only 54 percent of the residents of these cities in 1980 were born in the state (44% in urban centers of the west, 62% in cities of the south). For northeastern and north central cities the figure is 68 percent, reflecting less population transition there during the decade. The average decline in manufacturing and in wholesale/retail employment was greater in northern/ north central cities, 4.18 percent and .083 percent respectively, than in southern and western cities, which showed declines of only 1.3 percent and .07 percent. Even so, both population decline in the north and population growth in the south and the west manifest transition, a condition known to be criminogenic in and of itself.

Despite some differences in the extent of unemployment, youth, poverty, and minority status—all conditions conducive to

the development of anomie—in 1980 the regional groupings of cities on average were not far apart on most of these control variables. Cities in the northeastern and north central regions averaged about 8 percent unemployment in 1980; the mean figure was 6 percent for southern and western cities. About 10 percent of the central city population was below the poverty level in the north, and about 11 percent in the southern/western group of cities. There was no appreciable difference in the relative size of the population aged 15 to 24, which averaged about 2 percent in each group. The proportion minority varied in expected directions. Northern cities had, on average, 14 percent black population and 4 percent from Hispanic groups. Cities in the south and west on average were 17 percent black and 12 percent Hispanic.

In 1980 the ratio of blacks' to whites' median income averaged .76 in northern cities and .68 in cities of the south and the west. Mean city population size in the north was 137,000, while it averaged about 123,000 in southern and western cities. Dispersion of activities away from the home, however, showed no major regional variation. Population density, at 5,367 persons per square mile, was considerably greater in cities of the north/north central region than in the south and the west, where cities averaged about 3,437 persons per square mile. Mean January temperature, 25 degrees in northern cities and 47 degrees in southern and western cities, indicates greater climatic conduciveness to recreation outside the home in cities of the west and the south.

In the multivariate equations for each of the regional groupings, the statistical influence of the indicators of demographic and economic transition, as well as the impact of most of the individual control variables, showed similar patterns across the regional divide. (The regional regression results are not shown in tabular form, but are available upon request.) Regional differences in the predictive ability of the model itself stand out, however. With regard to the total crime rate, for example, the model's predictive ability is more than 15 percent greater for northern cities than for southern and western cities; for homicide the difference is 18 percent; for rape, 35 percent; for robbery, 11 percent; for assault, 21 percent; for burglary, 20 percent; for arson, 12 percent. (For larceny and auto theft, there is no appreciable explanatory difference.) In every case, the explanatory difference shows that the model predicts the level of crime more accurately in northeastern and north central cities, where the greatest demographic and economic decline has occurred. In the south and the west, regions characterized by urban population growth rather than by decline,

the model's predictive deficit suggests the need to look for additional determinants of crime in the nation's growth regions.

Urban Gangs

The logistic regression equation in Table 3 demonstrates the impact of demographic and economic transition on gangs after

Table 3. Logistic Regression Model of Gang Presence (N=51)

Predictor	Logistic Coefficient	Standard Error
Intercept	4.666	6.895
Mean January Temperature	.028	.029
Population Size	.001	.001
Percent Change in Wholesale/Retail	−.525[a]	.293
Ratio of Blacks' to Whites' Median Income	2.175	2.451
Proportion Age 15-24	.031[a]	.015
Percent Unemployed	−.005	.162
Density	.000	.000
Percent Change in Manufacturing	−.093	.086
Percent Population Change (1970-1980)	−.014	.015
Household Activity Ratio	−12.208	−10.852
Percent City Residents Born in State	−.011	.025
Percent Hispanic	.041	.035
Percent Black	−.020	.030
Percent Poor	−.001	.118
Total Crime Rate	.007	.015

[a] $p < .05$

other competing explanatory variables are controlled.[2] The logit model shows that decline in the economic prospects for unskilled workers, as measured by the percentage of change in the number of wholesale and retail jobs, is a statistically significant determinant of metropolitan urban gangs. The only other significant predictor of gangs is the size of the population aged 15 to 24, the group most vulnerable to anomie and to the consequences of social disorganization.

[2] Because the dependent variable, presence or absence of police-reported gangs in a city, is dichotomous, the logit model is appropriate in that it is designed to provide for assessment of the impact of several interval-level independent variables on a truncated dependent variable.

These findings provide some support for Hagedorn and Macon's (1988) contention that modern urban gangs are one consequence of the inability of urban teens and young adults to achieve a firm foothold in the unskilled labor market. The anomie and the free time characteristic of youths in cities with declining economic prospects for unskilled labor may be conducive to the development and persistence of urban youth gangs—and to police reports of their presence.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Overall the results provide support for the central thesis of this paper. Demographic and economic transition seem to have some influence on crime and on the presence of youth gangs in U.S. cities even in the presence of controls for possibly competing explanations: opportunity factors related to the ease and profit of crime, age structure, racial and income heterogeneity, and economic and relative deprivation. Although the impact of demographic and economic change on crime rates remained stable across regions, regional differences in the model's predictive ability point to the need for further study of the impact of growth and decline on urban crime in cities.

The results of the logit model developed to explain gang presence show that decline in wholesale and retail positions was a significant predictor of gang presence, as was the size of the 15- to 24-year-old population. In the multivariate model other indicators of urban conditions, including race, ethnicity, inequality, population size, and density, did not have a statistically significant impact on urban gangs.

In investigating the influence of recent population and economic shifts in cities throughout the United States, as well as separately in regional subpopulations of cities where the nature of economic and population changes has diverged, I have focused on the criminogenic impact of population and economic transitions known to disorganize communities by reducing social cohesion and creating a mismatch between labor and jobs (cf. Kasarda 1985). The extent to which the level and the nature of urban crime have been influenced by the transitions of recent postindustrial economic development had not been investigated previously, either for cities of 25,000 or more nationally or comparatively in regions with differing patterns of urban transition. Similarly, researchers had neglected multivariate studies of the determinants of youth gangs' presence in large samples of cities.

Several other pieces of current research support and elaborate on the findings reported in this paper. They suggest that crime

and youth gangs are likely consequences of the patterns of sociodemographic change recently experienced by U.S. urban centers. Work by Sampson (1987) and Sampson and Groves (1989) has investigated the influence of varying patterns of economic opportunity on the social organization and criminal involvement of specific groups and populations. With data for 150 of the largest U.S. cities, Sampson (1987: 375) demonstrated that economic deprivation and the dearth of employed black men increased the percentage of female-headed black households, and then developed a simultaneous model showing the impact of family disruption on both juvenile and adult adjusted arrest rates among blacks for robbery and homicide. The finding that family disruption influenced the juvenile offending rate even more than the adult offending rate led Sampson to suggest that "the effects of family structure are related to macrolevel patterns of social control and guardianship, especially regarding youths and their peers" (1987: 37).

In their study of 11,000 residents in 300 British localities, Sampson and Groves (1989) addressed social disorganization, a related theme, linking it to its roots in Shaw and McKay's theory and to its consequences in terms of criminal victimization and offending. They found that measures of social organization linked community structural characteristics, including socioeconomic factors, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and family disruption, to criminal victimization and offending rates based respectively on victim and self-reports. Overall the Sampson and Groves (1989) study suggests that elements which weaken a community's social cohesion thereby breed delinquency and crime.

The study described here adds to this body of research by demonstrating in U.S. cities of 25,000 or more the impact of the nation's recent postindustrial demographic and economic changes on both direct-contact predatory crime rates and reports of urban youth gangs. The influence of urban decline on urban crime rates and on gang presence survives controls for other criminogenic structural characteristics of cities, and highlights the importance of social change on the quality of life in urban centers.

The long-term consequences of crime, youth gangs, and other social dislocations resulting from the impact of these changes merit careful scrutiny. Much evidence suggests that the problems of cities have only begun. Zatz's (1985) work, for example, demonstrates the long-term criminal justice consequences for youths with gang identity and criminal involvement. In light of recent figures showing that one black male in four and one Hispanic male in 10 in the United States is under criminal justice supervision, the influence of gang involvement in channeling youths into inmate

social systems cannot be ignored. It may be that without improvement in the economic prospects of urban youths, the transience of gang involvement noted by Thrasher (1927) and others will become a thing of the past. Combined with Hispanic migration to urban centers, *los cholos* and dim economic prospects may give gang involvement a permanent allure (cf. Moore 1985; Zatz 1985).

Urban decline, with its associated economic stress and social disorganization, may weaken the social cohesion and social control processes of cities, resulting in the social dislocations discussed by Wilson (1987), Hagedorn and Macon (1988), and others. As a result, higher crime rates and more youth gangs may be among the unintended consequences of the nation's postindustrial growth and development.

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