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Influence of Gangs Around the World

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Abstract

The American study of gangs can no longer start and end with local circumstances but now must also be based in a global perspective. Studying gangs is important because of unprecedented world urbanisation, the retreat of the state under the pressure of neoliberal policies, the strengthening of cultural resistance identities, including fundamentalistreligion, nationalism, and hip-hop culture, the valorization of some urban spaces and marginalisation of others, and the institution alization of gangs in some cities across the word

Keywords: globalization; identity; hip hop; armed young men; death squads.

Introduction

Why study gangs? The simple answer is that gangs are a big international phenomena with millions of members and a voice of people excluded by processes of globalisation. Understanding these social actors is vital to fashioning public policies and establishing social move ments that may both decrease violence and diminish the deep-seated disparities that all too often are perpetuated by contemporary economic, social, and military policies. The American study of gangs can no longer start and end with local con ditions but must also be based in a global perspective. How else do we come to grips with Jamaican posses in Kansas (Gunst, 1995), San Diego's Calle Trente and their past relationship to Mexico's Arellano brothers cartel (Rotella, 1998), the Russian "mafiya" in Chicago (Finckenauer& Waring, 1998), female Muslim gangs in Oslo (Lien, 2002), LA's MS-13 and 18th Street as the largest gangs in Honduras and El Salvador (Decesare, 2003), Nigerian drug smugglers coming through Ronald Reagan International Air port (Grennan, Britz, Rush, & Barker, 2000), Crips in the Netherlands (va Unprecedentedinternational urbanisation has provided ideal circumstances for the expansion of gangs, notably in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. 2. Unlike the rise of the state in the previous industrial age, in the global era the state has receded in the face of rapid financial flows and neo liberal monetary policy, while focusing punitive actions targeting mar ginalized populations. Gangs and other organisations of armed young men fill the vacuum produced by the withdrawal of the social assistance measures of the state. 3.

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The building of cultural identities by men and women is a major technique of resistance against marginalisation. Whereas fundamentalist religion and nation alism have been accepted by many gang members, hip-hop culture and its "gangsta rap" version also give strong opposition identities and affect millions. 4. Globalization's valorization of certain regions and marginalisation of others has caused the blooming of an underground economy for survival and as profit able, globally linked companies operated by gangs, cartels, and similar groupings. 5. The prosperity of the global economy hasled to the redivision ofspace in cities all throughout the world. "Economic development," "making the city safe," and "eth nic cleansing" are among the justifications provided for the wiping out of "the other" from metropolitan places sought by strong ethnic or religious majorities. These geographical alterations have altered the nature and activity of gangs. 6. Some gangsinstitutionalize and become permanent social actorsincommuni ties, towns, and nationsrather than dying away after a generation. These gangs sometimes replace or compete disillusioned political parties and play major, though often destructive, social, economic, and political roles in cities across the globe.

THE EXPLOSION OF URBANIZATION

A UN-Habitat (2003) assessment shows that about one billion people live in slumsin the globe today. In emerging nations,slum dwellers make up 43% ofthe overall population compared with 6% in industrialised ones. Eighty per cent of the population in Latin America is now urban. In sub-Saharan Africa, roughly three quarters of individuals who reside in cities are slum dwellers. India has 25 cities of one million or more while China, as of this writing, has 166 (French, 2004). (French, 2004). The contemporary urban population is bigger than the whole population of the planet in 1960 (Davis, 2004). (Davis, 2004). Urbanization has advanced globally under pro cessesthat were so clearly identified by Robert Park, Frederic Thrasher, and the Chicago School as optimal circumstances for the emergence of gangs. Malcolm 154 Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice / May 2005 Klein's(1995) thesis that "the typical kinds ofstreet gang nonetheless remain a

fundamentally American product" (p. 3) goes in the incorrect study path. The great majority of gangs and gang members come from Latin America, Africa, and Asia—recent fruits of urbanisation. Gangs did not begin in the United States. Dickens and others characterised London gangs well before their American relatives appeared (Pearson, 1983). (Pearson, 1983). Even female gang members— scuttlers—may have frequented Manchester in the 19th century (Davies, 1998). (Davies, 1998). Gangs have emerged all overthe globe when ever and whenever industrialisation and associated processes force people into cities. Throughout example, industrialising Third World nations like South Africa had gangs, or skollies, for much of the 20th century (Pinnock, 1984). (Pinnock, 1984). "Number gangs" have been recognised in South African jails for over a century (Shurink, 1986). (Shurink, 1986). In the aftermath of post–World War II urbanisation, gangs like the rarryboysin Sierra Leone (Abdullah, 2002) were founded by the offspring of urban migrants. In New Zealand, Maori gangs have constructed a nationwide net work since the mid-20th century (Hazelhurst, in press) (Hazelhurst, in press). And one familiarfigure, Yasser Arafat, mastered guerilla tactics as a street gang leader in Cairo in the 1940s (Aburish, 1998). (Aburish, 1998). Other variants of the gang have been around much longer. In China, Triads emerged in the 18th century and transformed into criminal activity in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and other important Chinese cities(e.g., Booth, 1999). (e.g., Booth, 1999). The mafia, originally a rural 19th-century Sicilian rebel force, took root in U.S. cities and turned small gangs, like Chicago's Taylor Street crew, into formidable illegal organisations (Hobsbawm, 1969; Nelli, 1969). (Hobsbawm, 1969; Nelli, 1969). Much of the contemporary foreign literature on gangs, unlike the "at-risk youth" literature in the United States, does not utilise the word "gangs." The Globe Bank, for example, tracks millions of "street children" throughout the world and that phrase covers different semiorganized forms (World Bank Institute, 2000). (World Bank Institute, 2000). The "child soldiers" literature, lately complemented by the term of "children in organised armed violence," is another source of reporting on gangs(Dowdney, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2004). (Dowdney, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2004). By examining the global organised crime literature and the human rightsstudies(e.g., Amnesty Inter national, 2004;

UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, 2000), othersnapshots of teenage gangs may be gathered. The Social ScienceResearch Council is now forming an international working group on "youth in organised armed violence." But what is a gang? Group process definitions, from Thrasher (1927) through Short and Strodtbeck (1965) to Moore (1978), depict unsupervised teenagers building organisation via confrontation with other groups and authority. They intentionally reject criminalization as a required element of the concept of gangs as asserted by Klein (1971) and Miller (1982). (1982). Hagedorn / GLOBAL EFFECT OF GANGS 155 In today's cities, especially in less developed nations, such unsuper vised groups of youngsters are frequently "supervised" by a variety of criminal gangs and recruited by nationalist and religious militias. Prisons both receive and form gangs that extend back to their communities, like in South Africa (Shurink, 1986), California (Moore, 1978), and Rio de Janiero (Dowdney, 2003). (Dowdney, 2003). The modern period has seen the growth of gangs and other organisations who are beyond the jurisdiction of legitimate governmental authorities. Thrasher's (1927) depiction of the numerous courses a "casual crowd" may follow was predictive (p. 70). (p. 70). The basic problem is that gangs nowadays are organisations of the socially excluded, most of whom come and go astheir wild, youthful peer group matures. But a large percentage institutionalise on the streets, either via self produced methods or with the support of previously institutionalised armed organisations. 1 The similarities of these structured gangs to other groupings of armed young men demands that the worldwide study of gangs widen its emphasis (see Hagedorn, in press-a) (see Hagedorn, in press-a). Although I am a theoreticalsoulmate of Short and Moore, it's apparent that one fundamental factor for the existence of institutionalized gangs is membership in the underground economy. There are no extensive, comparative studies of gangs around the globe (although see Hagedorn, in press-b; Hazlehurst & Hazlehurst, 1998; Klein, Kerner, Maxsen, & Weitekamp, 2001; Kontos, Brotherton, & Barrios, 2003). (but see Hagedorn, in press-b; Hazlehurst & Hazlehurst, 1998; Klein, Kerner, Maxsen, & Weitekamp, 2001; Kontos, Brotherton, & Barrios, 2003). However, it is reasonable to estimate that, depending on the definition, there are at least tens of millions of gang members in the globe today.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE RETREAT OF THE STATE

The study of gangs started in an age of optimism about the role of the state in treating issues of poverty and diverting children from criminality (Thrasher, 1927; Wirth, 1928/1956). The social disarray that accompanied immigration, the argument propounded, could be remedied by social programmes, settlement homes, and the juvenile court "in loco parentis" (Addams, 1920/1960). The key to preventing delinquency, Shaw and McKay (1942) concluded, was the structure of communities to regulate delinquent conduct. Gang studies in the 1960s pushed for new social initiatives that highlighted opportunity as part of a broader war on poverty (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Yablonsky, 1966). (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Yablonsky, 1966). Much modern gang literature continues to demand increasing state involvement (e.g., Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995), although others follow Shaw and McKay (1942) and emphasise community empowerment, in part by leveraging state resources (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Sampson & Groves, 1989). (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Sampson &Groves, 1989). 156 Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice / May 2005 Social disorganisation theory is theoretically grounded in the Enlighten ment notion of the progressive nature of history and belief that the secular state would continue to grow as religion and tradition were weakened by modern society (Elias, 1939/1994; Nisbet, 1980; see especially Touraine, 2000). The only way to counteract the loss of the links of old-world culture, Kornhauser (1978) said, is to establish community institutions, a strategy that continuesto lead social theory today (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Wilson & Sampson, 1995). (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Wilson & Sampson, 1995). The role of the state has shifted, however, and the gang literature has all but disregarded the loss of the state and the growth of global citiesthat are at the cutting edge of urban political econ omy (see Castells, 1997; Sassen, 2002). (see Castells, 1997; Sassen, 2002). The massive upheaval of the U.S. economy has resulted in economic restructuring that promotes information and services over heavy industry, contingent over unionised labour, and consuming over production (see, e.g., Bell, 1960; Castells, 1998). (see, e.g., Bell, 1960; Castells, 1998). These trends have been supported by state policies that emphasise security and the requirements of the new affluent and shred the safety net for the poor and a weaker working class (Bourdieu, 1998; Touraine, 2001). (Bourdieu, 1998; Touraine, 2001). In the face of diminished prospects for unskilled jobs, many gang members have stayed in their gangs as adults and gangs have become a key ghetto employer (Hagedorn, 2001). (Hagedorn, 2001). These measures have been expedited by the war on terror (Calhoun, Price, & Timmer, 2002). (Calhoun, Price, & Timmer, 2002). In Europe and other wealthy nations, the Reagan Thatcher agenda has been more contentious and debated (Hagedorn, 1999; Pitts, 2000; Wacquant, 1999). (Hagedorn,

1999; Pitts, 2000; Wacquant, 1999). In the Third World, International Mone tary Fund stricturesto reduce socialspending, pay on foreign debt, allow for eign capital penetration, and continue a strong military have resulted in the erosion of the social welfare policies of already weak states (Bauman, 1998; Castells, 1998) while increasing what Wacquant (2004) calls "neo liberal penalty." Latin American and African academics have long been suspicious about the progressive character of development (e.g., de Soto, 1990; Frank, 1970). (e.g., de Soto, 1990; Frank, 1970). The retreat of the state in the Third World has generated afresh what would at first glance be deemed circumstances of "social disorganisation," with weaker and delegitimized social institutions unable to control a fast urbanising population. As a consequence, numerous forms of "armed young men" (Hagedorn, in press-a; Kaldor, 1999) including gangs, para-militaries, death squads, and drug cartels that parallel, replace, or supplement governmental power have developed. The state in many nations can no longer be claimed to hold a monopoly on violence, Weber's (1968) basic description of the contemporary state. For exam ple, in Rio de Janeiro, drug groups govern and monitor the favelas and police come only with large armed force and then immediately disappear (Dowdney, Hagedorn / GLOBAL EFFECT OF GANGS 157 2003). In Haiti, the state lost all power to manage the public and different forms of organisations of armed youth, culminating to the deposing of Aristide and an ambiguous status for the new state (Farmer, 1994; Kovats-Bernat, 2000). (Farmer, 1994; Kovats-Bernat, 2000). Recent news reports from Haiti warn of pro- and anti-Aristide adolescent gangs who now refuse to lay down their guns and have turned full-time to criminality (Children in Organised Armed Violence [COAV], 2004). (Children in Organised Armed Violence [COAV], 2004). The development of death squads in this sense is another indicator that the state no longer can impose its control without turning to extra-legal violence. Like gated communities with their private security guards for the rich, armed organisations or vigilantes, like the Bakassi Boys in Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2002), are filling a vacuum inside impoverished neighbourhoods, where the state is unable to maintain order. In many circumstances, the state, to retain "plausible deniability," subcontracts responsibilities of violence to informal death squads (Campbell & Brenner, 2000). (Campbell & Brenner, 2000). In Colombia, militias, cartels, revolutionaries, and the military all pull juvenile warriorsfrom the enormous pool of youth gangs in urban areas (COAV, 2003). (COAV, 2003). Castells (2000) sums up this point: In a world of exclusion, especially in the midst of a crisis of governmental legitimacy, the line between protest, patterns of instant pleasure, adventure, and criminality becomes progressively blurred. (p. 210) This does not imply that gangs are the same thing as death squads orterrorists. It does imply, however, that societal disorder and juvenile delinquency are too limited for the study of gangs. The structuralist focus of most U.S. gang studies is likewise challenged by the importance of identification.

THE POWER OF IDENTITY

Globalization and the retreat of the state have meant more than a loss of social control. The failure of modern institutions and the lack of trust in the certainty of a betterfuture have increased resistance identities—identities created in opposition to the dominant culture and the uncertainties of an unstable modernity (Castells, 1997). (Castells, 1997). Touraine (1995) arguesthat the modern age may be understood best as the struggle between the unconstrained force of the market and the resistance of national, ethnic, and religious identities. Within disadvantaged areas, resistance identities are held by a diverse assort ment of individuals including gangs and other organisations of armed teenagers. National ist, religious, and ethnic cultures have become strong by rejecting the homogenizing forces of westernisation. Islamic fundamentalism today is simply one illustration of the potency of cultural opposition identities. Often neglected isthe pushback of women who share ethnic or religious identities but also oppose the male control of traditional society. As 158 Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice / May 2005 Moore (in press) argues, there is minimal research on female gangs throughout the globe, but such gangs may be expanding. Although most female gangs still seem to be teenage groupings, adult versions may vary considerably from adult male gangs, and both are severely understudied (Chesney-Lind & Hagedorn, 1999). (Chesney-Lind & Hagedorn, 1999). In the United States, the contradictory voices of women may be found in gangsta rap music, where sexism and brutality dominate, yet female rappers loudly protest, while protecting Black guys against racist assaults on their music (hooks, 1994; Rose, 1994). (hooks, 1994; Rose, 1994). The impact of rap music is not typically examined in gang studies, despite its enormous effect violates the assumption that culture is everywhere in decline, and especially more so in subcultures (Kornhauser, 1978; Park, 1940; but also Finestone, 1957, 1967). (Kornhauser, 1978; Park, 1940; but see Finestone, 1957, 1967). The current period is defined by the power of culture, driven by the worldwide domination of the U.S. media, the resurrection and reinvention oftraditional cultures, and the prevalence of young street cultures, even in Islamic nations. In Nigeria,

gangs of Muslim teenagers enforce Sharia for the state, while wearing gold chains, using and selling drugs, and listening to rap music (Casey, 2002). (Casey, 2002). Throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia, native kinds ofrapmusic have caught the imagination of youngsters. Although media corporations promote gangsta rap to run up profits, and the lure of sex and violence celebrates values of the dog-eat-dog "cowboy capitalism" of globalisation, the broader cultural power of hip-hop helps forge a more complex resistance identity for youth modelled after African American rebellion to White authority (see Short, 1996). (see Short, 1996). Among the find ers of hip-hop were former gang members, such AfrikaBambaata in the South Bronx, who intentionally viewed hip-hop as a tool to lure adolescents away from gangs (Kitwana, 1994, 2002). (Kitwana, 1994, 2002). The fact that rap today encompasses competing concepts of violence and anti-violence, materialism and anti-consumerism, religion and opposition to religion, and sexism and feminism only attests to its overall efficacy in defining the site of the fight. To claim that gangs may be understood through the lens of hip-hop culture is distinct from arguing that gangs are subcultures (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955; Miller, 1958). (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955; Miller, 1958). Miller and Cohen (1955) both regarded subculture as an ethnically neutral and transient viewpoint of working or lower class kids and adults. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) found the genesis of gang subculture in the distinctive features of opportunity systems within varieties of neigh borhoods and downplayed its racial components. Hip-hop culture, particularly its gangsta rap variation, is avowedly African American, having African and Jamaican origins. Originating in community, life-affirming principles (Rose, 1994), like many cultural products today, it is nevertheless brazenly abused by media conglomerates "merchandizing the rhymes of violence" (Ro, 1996). (Ro, 1996). Gangsta rap is likewise nihilistic, worshipping destruction and violence in a Hagedorn / GLOBAL EFFECT OF GANGS 159 manner more severe than Cohen's reaction formation, a paean to Black sur vival and a violent response to the no-way-out existence of the ghetto. However, the gangster identity exists within a bigger, international hip-hop culture and reflects a viewpoint of millions of the socially marginalised. This disputed resistance identity is no longer a fleeting subculture of alienated youth but a persistent oppositional and racist culture growing in the aftermath of the retreat of the state and the concurrent development of cultural identities. The strength of gangsta rap inside hip-hop culture attests to the relevance of the global criminal economy to socially marginalised adolescents.

THE UNDERGROUNDECONOMY

The illegal economy has been estimated by the UN as generating more than $400 billion yearly, which would make it the biggest market in the world, including oil. Peter Reuter's (1996) more modest projections (his low-ball figure of $150 billion in yearly pharma sales) are nonetheless breath taking. The U.S. gang literature has often described drug dealing as unorganized, and low-paying, but the sale of drugs in the United States is tied to an international network of drug suppliers, cartels, and mafias that exercise enormous influence in communities and nations on a global scale (Castells, 1998). (Castells, 1998). The literature on gangs and the underground economy in the United States is considerable (Moore, 1991; Taylor, 1989; Venkatesh & Leavitt, 2000). (Moore, 1991; Taylor, 1989; Venkatesh & Leavitt, 2000). But they are local studies and their concentration, like in my own past work, is on the insular world of drug selling in a particular city. These studies illustrate the relevance of the drug market to both young gang members and to the com munity (see also Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 2000). (see especially Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 2000). They also depict drug-dealing gangs as the principal street-level employer of youngsters in the poorest neighbourhoods of cities, deserted by industrial occupations (Hagedorn, 2001). (Hagedorn, 2001). The underground economy, however, has transformed throughout the decades. Portes, Castells, and Benton (1989) demonstrate how globalisation has trans converted illicit marketplaces into an important element of the international system. The under ground economy has survival functions in metropolitan areas when the official economy collapses, offering products and services in unregulated methods that are in demand by more wealthy clients. On the U.S. border, a crusading prosecutor who was subsequently slain said, "It is sorry to say, but while the drug lords remain here the economy is thriving. This money stimulates the economy, injects fresh money" (Rotella, 1998, p. 254). (Rotella, 1998, p. 254). In many locations, successful criminal markets in narcotics are simply one industry among several that include gun sales and trafficking in women and children. When the official economy falters, the informal steps in. 160 Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice / May 2005 An significant element of the global period is the coexistence/convergence of diverse forms of non-state actors, especially gangs of armed young men (see also Goldstone, 2002). (see also Goldstone, 2002). Political groups sometimes depend on the under ground economy and many state security agencies have been compromised by mas sive revenues obtained from selling narcotics and firearms. Asleft-wing political move ments decline, demoralisation sets in and militants, many who have little skills outside of violent struggle, are

presented with a problematic moral option of unemployment or working with drug gangs. Thus, the difficulty of the new govern ment in South Africa to absorb all "Spear ofthe Nation" guerrillasinto the police or military has driven some former rebels into the realm of crime. Protestant militias in Belfast, confronted with the "greening" of Northern Ireland and what seems more and more surely as a future reunion with the south, have turned their weapons on one another in a struggle for drug territory. Mexico is the poster child for the fusion of military and police forces with the local drug gangs. In Central America, writer Silla Boccanero regretfully noted, "Until recently, a rebellious kid from Central America would walk into the mountains and join the guerrillas. Today, he leaves the countryside for the city and joins one of the street gangs engaged in ordinary crime without political objectives" (COAV, 2002). (COAV, 2002). The informal underground economy is now a structural feature of the international system, secured by the unequal growth of globalisation. Violence is not a required requirement for unlawful activities, but when control by peaceful methods fails, gangs and other groupings of armed adolescents increase in importance.

URBAN REDIVISION OF SPACE

Peter Marcuse (1997) arguesthat the tremendous increase of wealth in the international economy has generated global cities that are segregated into the "citadel" and the "ghetto." Space in globalising citiesisredividedasthe rich and highly paid "knowledge workers" hew outspacesfor themselves near the banks and core business areas (see Sassen, 2002). (see Sassen, 2002). This "yuppie" land grab is accompanied by heightened focus on safety, crime, and ethnic antagonisms. The spatial concentration of ethnic minorities—often persons of African descent—in the poorest districts of ancient cities has meant that territories prized by the rich must be "cleansed" of the criminal, the violent, and the "other." Thus, Chicago has relocated 100,000 African Americans by destroying the high-rise housing projectsthat were constructed to house them lessthan half a century ago (Hagedorn & Rauch, 2004). (Hagedorn & Rauch, 2004). São Paulo is contrasted to Los Angeles inCaldeira's(2000) brilliantstudy of the two cities constructing walls ofsegregation to keep the dark poor away from the White elite (see also Massey, 1996), the tremendous rise of wealth in the global economy. Hagedorn / GLOBAL EFFECT OF GANGS 161 This international tendency has meant the politicisation of policies on crime and violence, even if in most cities of the industrialised world, violence fell in the 1990s. In the United States, this law and order tendency has tar geted alienated and unemployed African American adolescents, leading in an unprece dented growth of jail construction. America's jails, at least 50% Black in a nation where African Americans make up around 12% of the population, might be considered as simply another mechanism for control of the "social dynamite" of the ghetto. Wacquant (2000) contends that the jail and the ghetto are simply two nodes on a continuum ofsocial control going back to slavery. Although pris ons are frequently constructed distant from metropolitan areas, they have become almost contiguous to ghettoes and barrios, as gang leaders continue to operate their organizationsfrom their cells. Most gangsin both Rio de Janeiro and Chicago are run from the jail (Dowdney, 2003; Hagedorn, in press-a) (Dowdney, 2003; Hagedorn, in press-a). Some gangs had their start in jail, like La Eme, and eventually control the streets (Hayden, 2004). (Hayden, 2004).

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GANGS

Violence in cities throughout the world varies widely, from relatively low rates of homicide in Europe, China,Japan, Oceania, and the Middle East to extremely high rates in cities of numerous countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Within the United States, as in South America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa, some cities have extraordinarily high rates, and others low. Gangs are to be found in cities all overthe world, in regions with both low and high rates of violence. However, in many locations, gangs are institutionalised and have been formed for decades. To say that a gang has institutionalised is to say that it persists despite changes in leadership (e.g., killed, incarcerated, or "matured out"), has organisation complex enough to sustain multiple roles of its members(including rolesfor women and children), can adapt to changing environments without dissolving (e.g., as a result of police repression), fulfils some needs of its community (economic, security, services), and organises a distinct outlook of its members (rituals, symbols, and rules) (rituals, symbols, and rules) (rituals, symbols, and rules). That certain places are home to organised gangs and others not obviously forcesthe relevance of local circumstances. My research suggeststhat in every city in the world that has had persisting high rates of violence, there are institutionalized groups of armed youth—for example, Chicago, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, Medillin, Caracas, Kingston, Cape Flats, Lagos, Mogadishu, and Belfast—although causality is likely to be recursive. The divided cities literature (Hagedorn & Perry, 2002; Marcuse, 1997) suggests that gangs or other groups of armed youth institutionalise in contested cities with high lev els of racial, ethnic, or religious (rather than solely class) oppression, where demoralisation and the

defeat of political struggle have occurred, and in 162 Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice / May 2005 defensible spaces that provide natural protection opportunities for illegal economic activity. Institutionalized gangs are more than a criminal menace. Many are strongly intertwined with politics,realestate,religion, and community organisations and cannot be quickly eradicated by suppression orrepressionofthe drug business. Drug trades may offer potential for large-scale corruption and the pur suit of lethal armaments. Gangs consequently are social actors, in Touraine's and Park's conception. As social actors within poor communities with weak mechanisms of formal social control, gangs, militias, factions, and cartels have the capacity not only to wage war but also to rein it in (see Brotherton & Barrios, 2003; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Hayden, 2004, for different elaborations of thisthesis) (see Brotherton & Barrios, 2003; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Hayden, 2004, for different elaborations of thisthesis) (see Brotherton & Barrios, 2003; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Hayden, 2004, for different elaborations of thisthesis). Differences among cities(e.g., whyChicago and Los Angeles are home to institutionalised gangs but New York City is not) have not been sat isfactorily explained. Understanding the mechanisms driving the institution alization of gangs and the persistence of violence are among the most push ing motivations for investigating gangs.

CONCLUSION: GANGS AS SOCIAL ACTORS

The U.S. Justice Department war on terror has reallocated funding for re search (Savelsberg, Cleveland, & King, 2004), with the consequence that fewer social scientists will be pursuing gang research and viewpoints are likely to be divided. Federally financed research are likely to emphasise gang linkages to terror ism, but non-federally funded studies may continue to "puncture stereo types" and stress local situations. A more realistic and fruitful future for gang research rests in none of these areas. Instead, we should integrate our sociological and anthropological perspectives with urban political econ omy and the understanding of gangs and other organisations of the socially ex cluded in the globalising metropolis. Gangs cannot be understood independently of their global context, nor reduced to epiphenomena of globalisation or cogs in a worldwide terrorist plot. To a considerably higher degree than in the past, we need to explore the racialized identities of male and female gang members and the significance of culture. Gangs are being recreated across thislargely urban world by a com bination of economic and political marginalisation and cultural resistance. We neglect organisations of the socially

marginalised at considerable danger. Although the collapse of socialism and demoralisation of left-wing forces have been replaced by new social movements that show promise for social change (Castells, 1997; Touraine, 1995), in some places institutionalised gangs and other groups of armed youth have moved into the vacuum created by the demise of the left. These groups are sceptical about politics and looking des Hagedorn / GLOBAL EFFECT OF GANGS 163 perately for a better living now, not tomorrow. For them, the promises of modernity have proved to be false. Gangs are one price we pay for the failure of the modern project. Institutionalized gangs are unlikely either to gradually fade out or be eliminated by force. It could be advantageous for social scientiststo regard them as part ners at the table who need to be involved in the polity, asBursik and Grasmick (1993) controversially argued a decade ago. In Touraine's understanding, institutionalized gangs, too, are subjects. Dealing with gangs as social actors demands a strategy of both rejection of violence and tolerance of informal, nonviolent economic activities. It takes more dialogue and less suppression. How we deal with the realities of gangs and others among the socially excluded is one of those markersthatwillshape the character, and the future, of civilisation.

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