

restore and rehabilitate property. As the real estate values increase, the poor are driven farther from the core of public services designed in large part to accommodate them. The lack of resources to compete for the improved properties drives a solid economic wedge into poverty-ridden families, causing additional despair and frustration for the young people in these families. It is no wonder that these same youths resort to the sale and distribution of illegal drugs as a response.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the prevalence of guns in the hands of children, the apparent randomness of gang violence and drive-by shootings, the disproportionate racial minority role in homicides, and media depictions of callous youths' gratuitous violence inflamed public fear. Politicians exploited those fears, decried a coming generation of so-called "superpredators" suffering from moral poverty, and demonized young people to muster support for policies under which youths can be transferred to criminal court and incarcerated. Some analysts predicted a demographic time bomb of youth crime in the near future to which minority juveniles will contribute disproportionately (Bennett, DiIulio, and Walters, 1996; Fox, 1996; Zimring, 1998: 208). However, this contention was been refuted by subsequent research (Elikam, 1999; Males, 1999).

As we noted in previous editions of this book, the punitive model for dealing with gangs enjoys widespread support, and such support continues unabated with increasing expenditures for the criminal justice system (especially prisons) and, after 9/11, even more expenditures for security—in this case, Homeland Security. As of 2007 (latest figures available as of October 2011), expenditures for the criminal justice system are about \$228 billion per year, up from about \$11 billion per year in the early 1970s.² Expenditures for Homeland Security for fiscal year 2011 are \$56.3 billion.³ Despite these expenditures, the problems causing gangs continue, with no end in sight. It is also clearly evident that within this model, there is not only little rehabilitation occurring but also no significant positive change. The conditions within which gangs emerge have changed little since Thrasher (1927) wrote about them in the 1920s. If anything, they have worsened.

About 20 years ago, Walter Miller noted that there was an absence of any sort of national policy addressing the gang problem. At that time, Miller stated that this country "has failed to develop a comprehensive gang control strategy. The problem is viewed in local and parochial terms instead of from a national perspective. Programs are implemented in the absence of demonstrably valid theoretical rationales" (Miller, 1990: 274). While this remains a source of concern, at about the same time Spigel and Grossman (1997) noted that there was little systematic independent evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the programs, the federal government had initiated and completed a number of evaluations to measure program effectiveness and had established a National Youth Gang Center under the direction of noted gang researcher Irving Spigel. Attempts to draft a national policy were being made, but nothing much came of it. Vigil's quote at the start of Chapter 9 summarized nicely what we have at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

of juvenile justice "reforms" in San Francisco during the 1990s illustrates this problem. Males and Macallair note, "Despite the city's investment in juvenile justice reform from 1996–1999, there is no evidence of system change. Instead, it appears that new services and programs were simply marginalized. Marginalization occurs when new programs are designed as simple adjuncts to current operations, rather than intended to replace core system elements. San Francisco juvenile justice reforms during the period of this study did not reduce detention rates or disproportionate minority confinement. Instead, a wider pool of lower-risk youths was simply absorbed into the system in order to keep the juvenile hall population filled and the rolls of new programs filled." In other words, the end result was merely "net widening" (Macallair and Males, 2004).

GANGS ARE NOT JUST CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROBLEMS

Gangs are not strictly law-enforcement problems or, for that matter, criminal justice problems. Rather, they represent a problem that needs to be addressed at both the community and the societal level. As Cummings and Monti (1993: 310) note, economic issues are paramount because "the prevalence of gangs in nearly every American city is related to the same recessionary and industrial changes transforming urban and public policy." More recently, James Diego Vigil has advocated what he calls a "balance approach," which utilizes "prevention, intervention, and law enforcement as needed" (Vigil, 2010: ix). Notice that when referring to law enforcement, he said "as needed." As we will eventually note in this chapter and the concluding chapter, none of the solutions offered during the past several decades have even attempted to address these larger issues.

There is little question that unemployment and underemployment are the residuals after industry has abandoned a community. Many of our cities have suffered from the loss of industry, which has impacted minorities more than any other group. As the industries depart, middle-class workers move from the cities, leaving behind those who cannot afford to follow the job market, for at least a portion of these businesses relocate in outlying areas, along with the tax base. As poverty begins to encompass whole neighborhoods, urban blight and decay occur, providing a fertile breeding ground for the underclass youths to form gangs in answer to their despair, both economic and personal. As we saw in Chapter 8, the current recession has aggravated an already precarious situation. In fact, in most inner cities, it amounts to a depression rather than a recession, as unemployment is around 50 percent in some areas (Caldwell, 2010).

Further complicating the economic scenario is the adoption by many metropolitan areas of a gentrification policy. In these cases, the poor are further displaced as the middle class and wealthy return to the inner city and begin to