LEGITIMACY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT: THE COUNTERINSURGENCY AGAINST GANG CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES

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By

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City gangs within the United States have evolved in the past several decades to become sophisticated organizations with clear objectives beyond random crimes and territorial protection. Upon returning from a couple of tours in Iraq, I discovered the manner in which gangs recruit and gain support from local communities is comparable to the activities of insurgent groups in Iraq and Afghanistan. If this observation is true, then combating gang crime is an exercise similar to counterinsurgency. Therefore, it involves a combination of conventional law enforcement and community engagement approximating non-lethal counterinsurgency methods. These outreach initiatives can supplement law enforcement by fostering a sense of inclusion and legitimacy of governance, law, and order in the eyes of the target populations, thereby targeting the gangs’ pool of recruitment and support. This paper evaluates the effect of community investment and social inclusion for reducing domestic gang crime by illustrating the similarities between street gang activity in the US and insurgent activity in troubled states. I examine whether and how community policing influences gang crime and find that some of the initiatives by federal, state, local, and tribal governments to invest in community engagement have a significant influence on the number of incidents classified as gang crimes. The results indicate that this subject matter warrants further research. 
I’d like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Andrew Wise, who was instrumental to the completion of this thesis, for his guidance, instruction, and patience. I’d also like to thank Eric Gardner and Mike Barker, who provided a significant amount of assistance and technical expertise as I consolidated my data and developed my empirical model.

Many thanks,
James Phillip Fox, Jr.
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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis is to evaluate the effect of community investment and social inclusion for reducing domestic gang crime by illustrating the similarities between street gang activity in the US and insurgent activity in troubled states. Specifically, my hypothesis is that initiatives by federal, state, local, and tribal governments to invest in communities in the manner of civil engineering projects, education and employment initiatives, and so forth, help law enforcement organizations as they contend with organized gang crime. They do so by fostering a sense of inclusion and legitimacy of governance and law and order in the eyes of the target populations. These efforts can supplement kinetic law enforcement techniques, like large scale raids and undercover operations by targeting the gangs’ pool of recruitment and support.

My contention is that city gangs within the United States have evolved in the past several decades to become sophisticated organizations with clear objectives beyond random crimes and territorial protection. Like a number of insurgent movements, street gangs often fill the gap between the needs of a particular part of the population and the services provided by the community or government due to a sense of isolation stemming from political, social or economic divisions. Simultaneously, street gangs foster two serious problems: gangs usually account for the majority of violence and drug distribution in a given community, and street gangs are growing, evolving, and networking throughout the country and thus bringing increasing rates of violence (Long 2010, 1). They specifically target populations they can exploit for support and recruitment. Recruitment, after all, is the lifeline of criminal gangs (Reis 2006, 11). In this manner, they are similar to insurgent forces U.S. service members encountered in Iraq and Afghanistan.
In those two theaters, the insurgencies sought to invalidate the role of the government to provide security and economic well-being in the minds of local nationals. Overtime, the U.S. military embraced a more comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency with the civilians functioning as the center of gravity for operational success. While lethal targeting operations and raids were effective in defeating immediate threats, they failed to address the fundamental issues that made joining the insurgency so appealing to the local population. I believe that law enforcement departments and agencies at each level of government in the U.S. face the same challenge in communities with significant gang activity.

Several veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have made suggestions about the possibility of using counter-insurgency methods against gang crime in their post-graduate theses and other scholarly work. Their work is largely qualitative and theoretical. The contribution of this thesis is that it uses data to assess these initiatives quantitatively. Essentially, it says that, on the surface, these are good ideas, but goes on to evaluate the data to assess their effectiveness and derive policy recommendations based on that evaluation.

I investigate the relationship between metrics that represent what I will call “non-kinetic community initiatives” and gang crime reduction. In other words, I evaluate whether community investment and inclusion effectively supplement law enforcement against gang activity and comment on the policy implications of the results. Creative anti-gang initiatives are nothing new, and there are significant amounts of crime and demographic data. However, studies of initiatives based on lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan are constrained given how recent any application of tactics, techniques, and procedures based on these lessons would be. It is unlikely that any of the data is consolidated in any comprehensive form. Furthermore, given that law
enforcement exists at the federal, state, local, and tribal level and that gang activity in each community has its own dynamic characteristics, it is a challenge to standardize the metrics of my model.

In Section II, I will discuss the background of this issue, pertinent literature, and relevant social theory. I develop a theoretical framework to explain the application of non-kinetic community initiatives in Section III. Section IV is a discussion of the data and descriptive statistics used to study this issue. Section V provides the empirical equations estimated to study the relationship between community investment and gang crime reduction. This section also discusses the results from estimating those equations. Finally, the last section summarizes and concludes with policy implications and recommendations.
BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will provide a background to the gang problem in the United States, explore ideas of employing counter-insurgency methods to contend with gang recruitment and support in local communities, and discuss the literature involving the implementation and evaluation of community policing.

1. Background: Gangs Present an Expanding and Evolving Threat to U.S. Communities

Gangs pose an increasing threat to U.S. communities across the country as they continue to expand and evolve. According to the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC), gangs continue to commit criminal activity, recruit new members in urban, suburban, and rural regions across the United States, and develop criminal associations that expand their influence over criminal enterprises, particularly street-level drug sales. Between 2009 and 2011, the most notable trends have been the overall increase in gang membership, and the expansion of criminal street gangs’ control of street-level drug sales, and collaboration among rival gangs and other criminal organizations (NGIC 2011, 7).

Many gangs have become sophisticated criminal networks that distribute wholesale quantities of drugs and develop and maintain close working relationships with members and associates of transnational criminal/drug trafficking organizations. Gangs are becoming more violent while simultaneously engaging in less typical and lower-risk crime, such as prostitution and white-collar crime. Gangs are more adaptable, organized, and opportunistic, exploiting new and advanced technology as a means to recruit, communicate discretely, target their rivals, and perpetuate their criminal activity (NGIC 2011, 7-8).
According to the NGIC, there are approximately 1.4 million active street, prison, and outlaw motorcycle gang members comprising more than 33,000 gangs in the United States. Neighborhood-based gangs, hybrid gang members, and national-level gangs, like the Sureños and MS-13, are rapidly expanding in many jurisdictions. Gangs are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90 percent in several others.

This expansion is the result of aggressive recruitment of juveniles and immigrants, alliances and conflict between gangs, the release of incarcerated gang members from prison, advancements in technology and communication, and Mexican Drug Trafficking Organization (MDTO) involvement in drug distribution (NGIC 2011, 7-8). In fact, Central American and MDTOs outsource U.S. gangs to perpetrate illicit cross-border activity. Together, they are establishing wide-reaching drug networks; assisting in the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and illegal immigrants along the Southwest Border; and serving as enforcers for MDTO interests on the U.S. side of the border.

Contributing to the problem, prisons have become advanced education and indoctrination facilities as many members continue to engage in gang activity while incarcerated. Family members play pivotal roles in assisting or facilitating gang activities and recruitment during a gang members’ incarceration. Gang members also acquire high-powered, military-style weapons and equipment, posing a significant threat because of the potential to engage in lethal encounters with law enforcement officers and civilians. Typically, these firearms are acquired through illegal purchases: straw purchases via surrogates or middle-men and thefts from individuals, vehicles, residences and commercial establishments. Gang members also target military and law
enforcement officials, facilities, and vehicles to obtain weapons, ammunition, body armor, police gear, badges, uniforms, and official identification (NGIC 2011, 8).

2. **The Link between Counterinsurgency and Anti-gang Law Enforcement**

   All of these activities illustrate that the interests of a number of gangs have gone beyond controlling or protecting their neighborhood territory. Gangs compete with municipal governments and rival gangs to maintain power and control of illicit (and lucrative) criminal enterprises. In their efforts to do so, they assume characteristics of primitive states, allowing them to dominate communities at the expense of legitimate law and order. This section expands on this phenomenon, links gangs analytically to insurgencies, discusses the dynamic of social movement theory in perpetuating gang activity, and describes the roles that some gangs assume as shadow governments over their communities.

   **Insurgency and Counterinsurgency and Their Law Enforcement Counterparts.** An emerging idea from U.S. service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan the past several years is that there are some distinct similarities between the insurgent forces operating in those theaters and criminal gangs operating in the U.S. Joint Doctrine\(^a\) defines an *insurgency* as an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent

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\(^a\) Joint Doctrine consists of fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces of two or more military services in coordinated action toward a common objective. It is promulgated by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in co-ordination with the combatant commands, services, and joint staff. This doctrine is codified in Joint Doctrine Publications.
control. Counterinsurgency consists of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency (JP 1-02, 127). While U.S.-based gangs may not seek to establish a new government, they use some of the means of insurgency, like exploiting the perception of illegitimacy in the eyes of local communities to draw recruitment and support.

Historically, law makers and local governments have used tough anti-gang legislation and police crackdowns as the preferred method of decreasing gang violence. Despite spending millions of dollars and building new prisons to house gang members, crime related to gangs have not decreased (Williams 2007, 1). In fact, the NGIC data shows that gang crime is on the rise. According to at least three studies from the Naval Post-graduate School, law enforcement agencies should employ counterinsurgency techniques used by the military, which drastically reduced violence in Iraq, to defeat gangs in major U.S. cities. (Freeman and Rothstein 2011; Long 2010; Williams 2007). These techniques include the development of community relationships, establishment of city programs to better the community, and protection of the population from intimidation and violence (Williams 2007, 1).

**Counterinsurgency and the Role of Institutional Learning.** Promoting learning is a key responsibility of community leaders and policy makers at all levels in Counterinsurgency application. Army Field Manual 3-24 states that “lessons-learned systems” allow for collecting and rapidly disseminating information from the field. But these systems only work when leaders promote their use and create a climate that encourages bottom-up learning. Junior leaders in the field often informally disseminate lessons based on their experiences. However, incorporating this information into institutional lessons learned, and then into doctrine, requires senior law
enforcement officials to encourage subordinates to use institutional lessons-learned processes.

Ironically, the nature of counterinsurgency presents challenges to traditional lessons-learned systems; many nonmilitary aspects of counterinsurgency do not lend themselves to rapid tactical learning. Performing the many nonmilitary (or in this case, the non-kinetic law enforcing) tasks in counterinsurgency requires knowledge of many diverse, complex subjects including governance, economic development, public administration, and the rule of law. Leaders in law enforcement with a deep-rooted knowledge of these subjects can help subordinates understand challenging, unfamiliar environments and adapt more rapidly to changing situations (Field Manual 3-24, x). Counterinsurgency campaigns are often long and difficult. Law enforcement against gangs is likely to be similarly protracted. Progress can be hard to measure, and gangs may appear to have many advantages. However, by focusing on efforts to secure the safety and support of the local populace, and through a concerted effort to truly function as learning organizations, police can make similar progress against gangs that military forces made against insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Social Inclusion Theory: Foundations of Gangs and Insurgents.** As gangs evolve and grow, they follow a cycle of repression, gang formation, collective identity, competition for resources, and networking that are often associated with high levels of violence. Long and Williams use social movement theory to explain gang violence by connecting the effects of varying levels of repression to the varying levels and sources of gang violence present in American society (Long 2010, 3).

According to this cycle of repression and gang violence, the continual repression of certain segments of society using less visible and illegitimate forms of coercion and channeling
has created highly isolated segments of society. Over time, these isolated communities view outsiders and representatives of government as indifferent to the welfare of their community and as sources of repression. In an attempt at self-governance, street gangs develop in these isolated communities as a way for individuals to provide effective security, support, and other “primitive state functions,” which eventually develops into a strong collective identity centered on gang membership (Long 2010, 3).

**Shadow State.** As the collective identity of street gangs supersedes the state, street gangs must compete with other gangs for control of the limited resources available to the isolated community. Just as with the nation-state system, competition for resources at the street gang level results in increasingly more organized forms of violence. Through the course of violence, street gangs further mirror nation-states and develop loose bureaucracies that allow for alliances and complex gang networks. Once street gangs combine to form complex social networks, they become virtually unstoppable. The inability of police action to stop street gangs then invites further repression from the state, which continues the gang cycle indefinitely (Long 2010, 4).

We see gangs encourage members, associates, and relatives to obtain law enforcement, judiciary, or legal employment not to integrate and serve in their community, but as an attempt to infiltrate and utilize the instruments of municipal power in order to gather information on rival gangs and law enforcement operations. Gang infiltration of the military continues also poses a significant criminal threat, as members of at least 53 gangs have been identified on both domestic and international military installations. Gang members who learn advanced weaponry and combat techniques in the military will be able to employ these skills on the street when they return to their communities (NGIC 2011, 8). Infiltrating law enforcement organizations and the
nascent military units is also common among members of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda in Iraq, and so forth. This activity serves similar purposes for the insurgent groups as it does for gangs. It also allows them to subvert or sabotage the developing security forces.

Long’s application of social movement theory illustrates how gangs develop primitive state functions. This characteristic is essential to the analytical link between gangs and insurgencies. Skaperdas goes further by arguing that organized crime emerges out of the power vacuum that is created by the absence of state enforcement. This absence can derive from a variety of sources: geographic, social, and ethnic distance; prohibition; or simply collapse of state institutions. Gangs tend to be hierarchically organized and can be thought of as providing primitive state functions with economic costs that are typically much higher than those associated with modern governance (Skaperdas 2001, 189).

According to Freeman and Rothstein, a conversation between the Mayor of Salinas, the Provost of the Naval Postgraduate School, and U.S. Representative Sam Farr showed that there are many similarities between insurgent behavior and gang behavior. So, if gangs operate similar to insurgents, the question becomes whether counterinsurgency strategies can be used to confront them (Freeman and Rothstein 2011, 13).

General Petraeus’ counterinsurgency guidance for U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan provides a picture of the similarities between counterinsurgency and anti-gang law enforcement (Freeman and Rothstein 2011, 13). Several of his twenty-four "rules" seem to pertain to fostering a perception of legitimacy in communities that are vulnerable to gang recruitment, including secure and serve the population; live among the people; help confront the culture of impunity; hold what we secure; foster lasting solutions; consult and build relationships, but not just with
those who seek us out; walk; act as one team; be first with the truth; fight the information war aggressively; manage expectations; and live our values (Petraeus 2010, 3). Ultimately, these guidelines intend to reach the same end state as community policing does: a safe and secure population (Freeman and Rothstein 2011, 13).

3. **Community Policing: Implementation and Evaluation**

Among the law enforcement initiatives that address gang activity, I identify community policing as a policy that is analogous to counter-insurgency methods. In its nascent development, community policing was defined as a partnership between the police and the community that identifies and solves community problems (Gaffigan 1994, vii). It is now seen as a concerted effort on the part of law enforcement to promote organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques and proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Fisher-Stewart 2007, 4). By seeking to develop collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations, they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in the police (Community Oriented Policing Services 2011, 3).

Community policing has become the national mantra of American police. The language, symbolism, and programs of community policing have sprung up in urban, suburban, and even rural police departments throughout the country. Through at least one generation of police officers, community and problem-oriented policing have been advanced by their advocates as powerful organizing themes for an emergent style of public safety. According to Greene, the impact of these themes on the effectiveness of American policing is uncertain because the range
and complexity of programs associated with community and problem-oriented policing have precluded systematic scientific investigation. Greene goes on to argue that community and problem-oriented policing are themselves “moving targets”—changing and modifying themselves in what is an often turbulent environment for law enforcement (Greene 2000, 301).

This paper will contribute to the body of literature by conducting a quantitative assessment of the relationship between metrics capturing community policing and gang crime reduction. My goal is for this analysis to solidify the link between effective counterinsurgency techniques and law enforcement. My regression model will evaluate whether community investment and inclusion can effectively supplement law enforcement against gang activity. As the literature I have highlighted shows, creative anti-gang initiatives are nothing new, and there are significant amounts of crime and demographic data. However, studies of initiatives based on lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan are constrained given how recent many applications of tactics, techniques, and procedures based on these lessons would be. It is also unlikely that any of the data are consolidated in any comprehensive form over time and across the country.
**Theoretical Framework**

In order to examine whether and how non-lethal counterinsurgency methods influence gang crime, I develop the theoretical model described below. This model will create a framework for the discussion that follows by illustrating the factors that should, in theory, influence a community’s perception of legitimacy of local law enforcement, and the ability of gangs to draw recruitment and support based on that perception. I developed the empirical model that follows with this framework in mind. The purpose of the empirical model is to test the implications of the theoretical model.

\[
\text{Gang Crime} = f (\text{Gang Unit, Community Policing, } D, \mu) \quad (1)
\]

The logic of this model is that there are social conditions existing in communities that make them more or less fertile territory for gang recruitment and support. Young people perceive that the gang infrastructure can provide them with a sense of protection and social mobility that they cannot attain through legal means. In an insurgency, we would call this a shadow government. The theory suggests that communities will turn away from gangs (and the crime and violence associated with them) if they become stakeholders in the manner in which law enforcement serves them. The legitimacy will be based on a feedback loop, in which law enforcement engages the communities by institutionalizing community policing and engaging various advocacy groups. They assess the perceptions of these groups through surveys, and tailor their policies based on the feedback. If communities see changes in law enforcement based on this feedback, they will feel a degree of ownership in protecting their neighborhoods as partners with the police and become less vulnerable to gang recruitment.
Data and Descriptive Statistics

The data used in my empirical model come from a large dataset of law enforcement management techniques and criminal incidents between 1997 and 2003. I consolidated these data to the city and state level to create the panel dataset I used for analysis. The resulting panel consists of 272 observations sufficiently complete for econometric analysis across the three years. (See Table 1 on the following page for descriptive statistics.) The data are from six surveys from two main sources: The Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) Series and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

The Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics Series, from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, presents information on three types of general purpose law enforcement agencies: state police, local police, and sheriff's departments. Data from the primary state police agency in each of the states are also presented. Variables include size of the populations served by the typical police or sheriff's department, levels of employment and spending, various functions of the department, average salary levels for uniformed officers, and other matters relating to management and personnel.

Most importantly, these surveys have recorded policies, practices, and procedures regarding community policing (CP) from local, state, and federal agencies for 1997, 2000, and 2003. The common variables include training for new recruits and in-service officers, conducting a CP Academy, having a CP Plan, conducting surveys to evaluate community perception, and engaging a variety of advocacy groups. The data present the number of personnel dedicated to CP and School Safety units. The data also include a variable denoting either an Agency having a gang unit or officers dedicated to gang units. The strength of these variables is that they not only
provide a variety of ways to evaluate community engagement, they also convey statistics for personnel management, other law enforcement techniques, and an assortment of data for controls as I look at the effect of CP on gang activity. The LEMAS from 1997, 2000, and 2003 use CITY and STATE as location designators.

The LEMAS do not, record gang crime. For that, I am using the National Incident-Based Reporting System from those respective years. The NIBRS series is a component part of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), a nationwide view of crime administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, based on the submission of crime information by participating law enforcement agencies. NIBRS is an expanded and enhanced UCR Program, designed to capture incident-level data and data focused on various aspects of a crime incident. The NIBRS was aimed at offering law enforcement and the academic community more comprehensive data than ever before available for management, training, planning, research, and other uses. NIBRS collects data on each single incident and arrest within 22 offense categories made up of 46 specific crimes called Group A offenses. In addition, there are 11 Group B offense categories for which only arrest data are reported. NIBRS data on different aspects of crime incidents such as offenses, victims, offenders, arrestees, etc., can be examined as different units of analysis.

The survey categorizes crimes as "personal" or "property." Personal crimes include rape and sexual attack, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, and purse-snatching/pocket-picking. Property crimes include burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and vandalism. The data include type of crime, month, time, and location of the crime, relationship between victim and offender, characteristics of the offender, type of property lost, whether the crime was reported to police and reasons for reporting or not reporting, and offender use of weapons, drugs, and alcohol.
Basic demographic information such as age, race, gender, and income is also collected, to enable analysis of crime by various subpopulations.

These surveys are particularly useful because they do capture gang crime by categorizing fifteen types of offenses as gang of juvenile gang which I will use as dependent variables in my regression models. The weakness of these variables is that they only serve as proxies for how gang recruitment reflects the legitimacy of CP efforts by law enforcement. These surveys will also serve as the source for demographic data for the gang members.

There are limitations to the dataset. For example, some of the surveys included whether the agencies made decisions based on community engagement, but I was not able to capture that in the panel data. I think these data are important because they expressed a cycle of legitimacy in which the police continually engage the community, assess the response, and adjust the CP practices accordingly. Perhaps most importantly, as I merged and appended all of the datasets, I lost observations from major cities throughout the country. I have data showcasing gang crime in Saginaw, Michigan and Des Moines, Iowa, but there is no data for Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago. I believe this shortcoming comes from the differences in the manner in which police departments across the U.S. record what they perceive to be gang crime in the UCR codebook.
| variable   | 1997 N | Mean | SD  | Min | Max | 1997 N | Mean | SD  | Min | Max | 2000 N | Mean | SD  | Min | Max | 2003 N | Mean | SD  | Min | Max |
|------------|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| INCIDENT   | 272    | 20.65| 48.65| 1   | 522 | 63  | 15.49| 24.73| 1   | 138 | 9.1  | 24.19 | 62.34| 1   | 522 | 118 | 20.69 | 46.32| 1   | 356 | 52.29 | 149.73| 1   |
| POPULATION | 272    | 264204| 149694.1| 0   | 2.09E+07| 63  | 64659 | 68159 | 0   | 3.40E+05| 91  | 468126 | 2286034 | 0   | 2.09E+07| 118 | 213478 | 521800 | 1.27 | 1.04E+05| 1.04E+06 | 1   |
| dum00      | 272    | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.89 | 0.34 | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.05 | 0.29 | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0   | 1   |
| YOUNG      | 272    | 0.84 | 0.36 | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.89 | 0.34 | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.05 | 0.29 | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0   | 1   |
| WHITE      | 272    | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.6  | 0.4  | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.45 | 0.4  | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.4  | 0.4  | 0   | 1   |
| Sworn Full Time EMP | 272 | 182.92 | 307.06 | 0 | 3119 | 63 | 81.75 | 121.82 | 0 | 536 | 91 | 240.51 | 408.05 | 2 | 3119 | 118 | 192.52 | 272.52 | 4 | 1919 |
| GANGUNIT   | 272    | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.34 | 0.44 | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.36 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.36 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   |
| New CP Trainees | 272 | 0.68 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.81 | 0.4  | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.67 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.63 | 0.49 | 0   | 1   |
| In-Service CP Trainees | 272 | 0.56 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.44 | 0.5  | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.47 | 0.5  | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.68 | 0.47 | 0   | 1   |
| CPF ACADEMY | 272    | 0.5  | 0.5  | 0   | 1   | 63  | 0.41 | 0.5  | 0   | 1   | 91  | 0.46 | 0.5  | 0   | 1   | 118 | 0.58 | 0.49 | 0   | 1   |
| Num Community Policing Officers | 272 | 9.73 | 15.45 | 0 | 75 | 63 | 9.73 | 15.45 | 0 | 75 | 91 | 28.36 | 68.67 | 0 | 499 | 118 | 30.36 | 68.67 | 0 | 499 |
| Community Policing Plan | 272 | 0.25 | 0.44 | 0 | 1 | 63 | 0.15 | 0.34 | 0 | 1 | 91 | 0.81 | 0.39 | 0 | 1 | 118 | 0.53 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Partnership with School Group | 272 | 0.65 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 | 63 | 0.75 | 0.42 | 0 | 1 | 91 | 0.80 | 0.39 | 0 | 1 | 118 | 0.53 | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Partnership with Youth Service Organizations | 272 | 0.31 | 0.47 | 0 | 1 | 63 | 0.16 | 0.37 | 0 | 1 | 91 | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 | 118 | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
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<th>Pooled</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
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<th>1998</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<tr>
<td>INCIDENT</td>
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<td>48.65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>15.49</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>522</td>
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<td>52.29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2.09E+07</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64659</td>
<td>68159</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.40E+05</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>2286034</td>
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<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.04E+05</td>
<td>1.04E+06</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for various variables across different years.
Empirical Model and Variables

\[ \text{INCIDENTS} = B_0 + B_1 \text{POPULATION} + B_2 \text{DUM00} + B_3 \text{DUM03} + B_4 \text{WHITE} + B_5 \text{YOUNG} + B_6 \text{SWORN FULL TIME EMP} + B_7 \text{GANGUNIT} + B_8 \text{NEW CP TRAINEES} + B_9 \text{IN-SERVICE CP TRAINEES} + B_{10} \text{CP ACADEMY} + B_{11} \text{COMMUNITY POLICING PLAN} + B_{12} \text{NUMBER OF COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICERS} + B_{13} \text{SCHOOLGRP} + B_{14} \text{YOUTHSERV} + \mu \quad (2) \]

Throughout this study, I estimate my empirical model in varying ways resulting in a total of five separate estimated equations that differ in some of the independent variables. First, I estimated the equation using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) for 1997, 2000, and 2003 separately. I also did a pooled regression. Finally, I regressed the equation accounting for fixed effects for year and CITY/STATE. Reviewing the fixed effects, pooled, and OLS regressions for 1997, 2000, and 2003 side by side mitigates the possibility of misinterpreting the results that can occur when analyzing cross-sectional data for which certain relevant characteristics are unobserved. These equations differed for the following reasons: GANGUNIT data are not available for 1997, the variables reflecting other forms of community engagement is not available for 2000. I included the number of community policing officers and a community policing plan as substitutes for these variables in the 2000 equation and also including them in the 1997 estimate to draw a comparison. The remaining estimation consists of regressions with year and CITY/STATE fixed effects, in order to account for unobserved characteristics of local law enforcement agencies, city demographics, and any other driving forces that influence gang recruitment or the nature of the relationship between the police and their respective communities.

The consequences of unobserved characteristics for the year-specific regressions depend upon their nature. If the unobserved characteristics are correlated with the explanatory variables I
observe, then there is a possible bias in the estimated coefficients for the year-specific regressions. Specifically, failing to control for unobserved demographic and criminal characteristics that affect gang recruitment and are correlated with any explanatory variables in the regression specification can lead to omitted variable bias in the estimated parameters. This can result in the standard issues associated with omitted variable bias: biased and inconsistent coefficient estimates. Since the specific nature of the bias depends on unknown facts regarding the relationship of the unobserved characteristics to the dependent variable and the observed characteristics, it is impossible to know how the estimated coefficients are affected.

Fixed effects estimators can correct for such biases under certain circumstances. If the unobserved characteristics do not vary over time within the CITY/STATE, or if they vary in all CITY/STATE’s in the same way over time, while the observed variables do vary over time and/or between cities, a fixed effects estimator can remove the bias resulting from the unobserved characteristics. The fixed effects estimator removes the effect of unobserved market characteristics that do not change over time or that change the same way for every city by correlating changes in the observed characteristics with changes in outcomes.

**Dependent Variable**

**INCIDENTS** serves as a proxy for gang activity and is the dependent variables in my model. The variable is limited because the intent of the model is to convey an effect on gang recruitment as a reflection of legitimacy, and they may not completely represent the mindset of communities. Also, the data are based on whether the victim of a crime identifies the perpetrator is a gang member.
Independent Variables

I divided the independent variables into three different groups: Demographic and Year control variables, Gang Unit/Conventional Law Enforcement Variables, Community Policing Variables, and Variables Reflecting other Forms of Community Engagement.

Demographic and Year Control Variables

The variables below are those that control for year in the fixed effects model and those that control for demographic characteristics of the offenders and the population of the cities.

1. **POPULATION** is the population based on that year’s census data. I expect the coefficient to be positive, meaning that the higher the population for a given city, the higher the number of INCIDENTS. For the purpose of the empirical model, I scaled the unit for population to be per 1000 people instead of per 1 person.

2. **DUM00** and **DUM03**: This is an indicator variable that equals one if the observation in question occurs in the year 2009. It is a control for unobserved changes year-to-year in the fixed effects regressions. I expect the estimated coefficient to be positive because the number of observations for each year increased from 1997 to 2003. I believe the manner in which agencies measured gang crime improved with each survey in the series. Also, if the literature is correct, and there has been a proliferation of gang activity throughout the country, then the number of INCIDENTS should go up for a variety of unobservable variables.

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\(^b\) There were problems in which the NIBRS recorded population, particularly for 1997. For a number of the observations I used http://www.city-data.com to acquire the correct population. I vetted each datum I manually entered into the dataset by comparing the respective population city-data and NIBRS had for 200 and 2003.
3. **YOUNG**: This variable controls for the age of the offender. YOUNG measures as a 1 if the offender is younger than 27 and 0 if the person is older. I expect the coefficient to be positive, meaning that a person being young will result in an increase in the number of INCIDENTS.

4. **WHITE**: This variable controls for the ethnicity of the person who commits the offense. Essentially, it captures whether a person is white (measured as a 1) or non-white (measured as 0). The weakness in this variable is that it fails to capture a nuanced measurement of the offender. Gangs are often organized around ethnic identities from various diaspora throughout the country, so the reader will not get a specific picture of the number of Hispanic, Asian, African American, etc. offenders. I expect the coefficient to be negative, meaning that a person being white will result in a decrease in the number of INCIDENTS.

I created the YOUNG and WHITE variables as dummies for individual arrests and combined them to show the proportion of that population for each CITY/State and year combination. Another shortcoming of the dataset regarding the demographic variables is that they are limited and somewhat imprecise.

**Gang Unit/ Conventional Law Enforcement Controls**

The variables below are those that capture conventional law enforcement methods for enforcing, including the number of full-time employees who are sworn in as officers and the presence of a gang unit.
5. **SWORN FULL TIME EMP** is the number of actual full-time paid sworn personnel with general arrest powers. I expect the coefficient for this variable to be negative, meaning that the more sworn-in, full time employees available to an agency will result in an decrease in the number of INCIDENTS because it reflects a greater capacity to combat gang crime.

6. **GANGUNIT** captures how an agency addresses gangs. Similar to the number of sworn full-time employees, I expect the coefficient to be negative, meaning that a GANGUNIT will result in an decrease in the number of INCIDENTS as police departments specifically allocate resources and manpower to mitigate gang crime.

**Community Policing Variables**

The variables below are those that capture efforts by law enforcement to conduct community policing in a variety of methods. One of the weaknesses of the model is the possibility of multi-collinearity among several of these variables. However, police departments are not identical in terms of resources, personnel, and budgets. For this reason, I felt that a variety of variable reflecting community policing initiatives could provide a balanced picture of the degree to which agencies across the U.S. implement these policies.

7. **NEW CP TRAINEES** is the proportion of new officer who have received at least eight hours of community policing training. If an agency has a small portion of its incoming personnel receiving the training, then the variable is measured as a 1, if not; it is measured as a 0. I used this threshold because different agencies have differing numbers of personnel, resources, and budgetary resources. I expect the coefficient to be negative, meaning that if a
department is training its new personnel in community policing, the number of INCIDENTS will decrease.

8. **IN-SERVICE CP TRAINEES** is the proportion of in-service personnel received at least eight hours of community policing training. If an agency has a small portion of its in-service personnel receiving the training, then the variable is measured as a 1, if not, it is measured as a 0. I used this threshold for the same reason as the previous variable. I expect the coefficient to be negative, meaning that if a department is training its in-service personnel in community policing, the number of INCIDENTS will decrease.

9. **CP ACADEMY** captures whether an agency conducted a citizen police academy. If an agency has done so, the variable is measured as a 1, if not; it is measured as a 0. I expect the coefficient to be negative, meaning that if a department is training its in-service personnel in community policing, the number of INCIDENTS will decrease.

10. **NUMBER OF COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICERS** is the number of sworn personnel specifically designated to engage in community policing activities. I expect the coefficient to be negative, meaning that the more community policing officers available to an agency will result in a decrease in the number of INCIDENTS by reflecting a greater capacity to engage the community and mitigate recruitment.

11. **COMMUNITY POLICING PLAN** is whether an agency maintained or created a community policing plan. While some of the codebooks measure this variable by the degree to which the Community Policing Plan is a formal, written plan, I measure the variable as a 1 if an agency has a plan at all and a 0 if there is no plan at all. I used this binary measurement because of varying resources available to agencies. Still, I felt there are weaknesses I expect
the coefficient to be negative, meaning that if a department has a formal plan, the number of INCIDENTS will decrease.

**Variables Reflecting other Forms of Community Engagement**

The variables below reflect activities by police departments and other law enforcement agencies to engage local communities beyond a community policing program.

12. **PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOL GROUP** is whether an agency has problem-solving partnership or written agreement with school groups and provides another forms of community engagement that constitute efforts similar to non-lethal counterinsurgency means to achieve legitimacy. I expect the coefficient to be negative.

13. **PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS** is whether an agency has problem-solving partnership or written agreement with youth service organizations and provides another forms of community engagement that constitute efforts similar to non-lethal I expect the coefficient to be negative.
Results

I executed equation (2) from the previous section and produced the results in the table below. I report the fixed effects and year-specific regressions simultaneously below for clarity, there are varying degrees of variation in many variables in the 1997, 2000, and 2003 OLS regressions, which validates some of the fixed effects results.

Table 2 shows that the overall significance of all of the equations are statistically significant. The F statistics for the fixed effects, pooled, and 2000 regressions are are statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level, and the 1997 and 2003 regressions are significant at the 95 percent confidence level. The R-squared values in the models are reasonably high for fixed effects, panel, cross-sectional data.

The estimated coefficients for the main measures of the interaction among community policing, conventional gang crime law enforcement, and gang activity were measured by the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Summary of Regression Result</th>
<th>Dependent Variable: INCIDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION (per 1000)</td>
<td>-2.56E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUM00</td>
<td>13.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUM03</td>
<td>6.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>-9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOUNG</td>
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<td>SWORN FULL TIME EMP</td>
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<tr>
<td>GANGUNIT</td>
<td>-11.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW CP TRAINES</td>
<td>-33.39*</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-SERVICE CP TRAINES</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP ACADEMY</td>
<td>23.43**</td>
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<td>COMMUNITY POLICING PLAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOL GROUP</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td>-30.93*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>F-statistic</td>
<td>2.67***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>0.1640†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the 90% level of confidence; ** 95% level of confidence; *** 99% level of confidence.
† Within R-Squared for the Fixed Effects Regressions.
number of incidents classified as gang crimes. These coefficients differ by varying degrees in the direction of their relationships to the dependent variable and their statistical significance across all the regressions. It is worth noting that the lack of data (my panel data only covers three years) may diminish the significance of the fixed effects and pooled regressions. It is also possible that missing variables vary across the years and/or CITY/States, and thus render the fixed effect unable to account for them fully. Also, several of the variables may not vary much year-to-year. This could also reduce the significance of the results because changes over time provide the basis for the fixed effects estimations.

**Demographic and Year Control Variables**

Unexpectedly, the coefficients for **POPULATION** in all of the regressions were negative. It was statistically significant at the 95 percent and 90 percent confidence levels for the 2000 and 2003 regressions respectively. None of the coefficients for the **DUM00** and **DUM03** variables were statistically significant. The **DUM00** and **DUM03** coefficients are both positive for the fixed effects regression and negative for the pooled regression. While the coefficients are not significant, the point estimate still represents the model's best guess of their usual location.

The coefficients for **WHITE** produced mixed results. As expected, they were negative for the fixed effects, pooled, and 2003 regressions. However, they were positive for 1997 and 2000. None of the coefficients were statistically significant. As expected, the coefficients for **YOUNG** were all positive, except for the 2003 regression. The coefficient for the 1997 regression was statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level. It is important to note
that the lack of significance of the demographic variables probably is due to their lack of precision, given that they are dummies that were combined to create a proportion.

**Gang Unit/ Conventional Law Enforcement Controls**

Also unexpectedly, the coefficients for **SWORN FULL TIME EMP** were positive across all of the regressions. Furthermore, the coefficients were statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level for the 2000 regression and at the 95 percent level for 1997 and 2003. I think this unexpected result is due to endogenous factors influencing the dataset. The sheer number of observations increased dramatically from 1997 to 2000 to 2003. This could simply be a change in the data collection. Therefore, it would not signify that the number of **SWORN FULL TIME EMP** does not lead to an increase in gang crime. Meanwhile, the coefficients for **GANGUNIT** were negative, as expected. However, the only statistically significant result was from the 2000 OLS regression at the 90 percent confidence level.

**Community Policing Variables**

The results for the Community Policing Variables vary in sign and significance. **NEW CP TRAINEES** is negative and statistically significant at the 90 percent level of confidence for my fixed effects and 2000 OLS regressions. It is also negative for the pooled and 2003 regressions, but not statistically significant. Unexpectedly, the coefficient is positive for 1997, but not statistically significant. Also unexpected is that the coefficients for **IN-SERVICE CP TRAINEES** is positive across the board, and statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level for the fixed effects, pooled and 2000 OLS regressions. The same can be said for **CP**
ACADEMY. Significant and positive coefficients indicate that if a department trains its in-service employees or conducts a CP Academy, the number of INCIDENTS will increase. One consideration is that as an agency takes away police officers to be trained to conduct community policing, it comes at the expense of their ability to do conventional law enforcement operations. This factor may be relevant in the short-term period covered by this study. Perhaps further research could show that over a long period of time, a CP Academy or in-service CP training is a good investment.

I included the NUMBER OF COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICERS and COMMUNITY POLICING PLAN in the 1997 and 2000 regressions. The only statistically significant result was the coefficient for the number of community policing officers in the 2000 model which was -0.15, the expected sign, and significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

Variables Reflecting other Forms of Community Engagement

According to the results, the other forms of community engagement seem to be a viable alternatives to community policing. Most importantly, the coefficients for PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS were negative and statistically significant at the 90 percent level for the fixed effects and pooled regressions and negative and statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level for 2003. I believe this indicates another avenue available to the police to engage communities and mitigate gang recruitment. While the coefficients for PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOL GROUP were positive in the fixed effects, pooled, and 2003 regressions, they were not statistically significant. For the 1997 regression, the coefficient was negative and statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level. The
results allow me to conclude that these initiatives provide other forms of community engagement that can supplement conventional law enforcement endeavors in the same manner that non-lethal counterinsurgency efforts to achieve legitimacy.
Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

I set out to study whether methods that approximate non-lethal counterinsurgency operations could supplement conventional law enforcement in their efforts to defeat gangs. Prior to conducting the study, I felt the literature supported the theoretical framework I developed in a qualitative sense. I believe the results of my empirical model show a reduction in gang crime (INCIDENTS) based on law enforcement implementing some of the initiatives that foster community engagement. However, it is clear that the results are inconsistent among the community policing variables and those that reflect other forms of community engagement. Nevertheless, I feel the results warrant a discussion of the policy implications and venture a few recommendations. Policy recommendations are going to be based on how successful these efforts are at reducing gang crime

**Recommendation 1: Continue to Develop Community Engagement on the Part of Local Law Enforcement**

The policy implications are serious because gang crime accounts for a substantial amount of the violence and drug distribution in the U.S. Generations of certain demographics continue to expend a significant amount of resources to defeat the gangs with limited results. This study evaluated whether the police should redirect a number of those resources to efforts that are different than conventional law enforcement. Another implication is whether it would be cost effective to increase the scale of engagement to the level I just described. In Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. service members were building infrastructure from scratch. It is unlikely any project in East Los Angeles or Chicago would cost as much a project in Kabul. Still, city and
state governments operate on limited budgets. If I were to recommend they use more resources to defeat gangs, a serious cost benefit analysis would be in order.

I believe my estimates provide sufficient evidence of a relationship between several of my dependent variables and gang crime to recommend that local law enforcement continue to develop community policing policies. I still contend that these initiatives help law enforcement as they contend with organized gang crime by fostering a sense of inclusion and legitimacy of governance, law, and order in the eyes of the target populations. These efforts can supplement kinetic law enforcement techniques, like large scale raids and undercover operations by targeting the gangs’ pool of recruitment and support.

I believe there is value added in an effective relationship between the police and the community even if some of the results are inconsistent. Information from community policing will provide law enforcement with intelligence and a sense of how people perceive their performance. However, if city or state leadership were to consider raising local engagement on the scale of projects the U.S. military conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan, the cost in terms of resources and manpower could be high. This scale would go beyond talking to advocacy groups and conducting community police academies to developing civil engineering projects and fostering employment. At this point, anti-gang initiatives would be more than a law enforcement effort.

**Recommendation 2: Further Research**

Time was certainly a significant factor in determining the scale and scope of my study. Ideally, I would have preferred to do a comprehensive study of community policing and gang
crime among all of the cities for at least ten to twenty years. There were more years available in the LEMAS and NIBRS studies, but consolidating the data would require more time than was available. Therefore, expanding the study in terms of location and years would certainly add to the substance of the review and result in more tangible policy implications. I believe analysts working for law enforcement agencies would do well to explore this subject matter more deeply. In particular, some of the low levels of statistical significance in my model are likely due to collinearity, issues, limited degrees of freedom, or a lack of variation in the variables, particularly for the fixed effects estimation. The best solution for these issues is more data. Thus, further research coping additional years and localities could dramatically improve results.

**Recommendation 3: Develop Comprehensive Data Collection Pertaining to Gang Activity in the U.S.**

I was very surprised at the limited comprehensive and standardized data available for gang crime across the country. Compiling my dataset was daunting, to say the least. The surveys that account for gang crime in the U.S. document these incidents tangentially. In some cases, the incident was considered a gang crime if the victim perceived it to be so. In others, it was recorded as gang activity only if the agency chose to document as such after recording a criminal offense. My method of recording gang activity was to review fifteen different types of offenses (primarily aggravated assault or murder) provided by the NIBRS which were also categorized as gang or juvenile gang incidents. The problem is that this categorization was not uniform across all agencies, and I believe that different interpretations in gang crime significantly limited the number of observations in my final dataset. A comprehensive, national gang crime dataset would
provide much more adequate demographic controls and include collecting the data uniformly and in a way that is easier to match and analyze.
Bibliography


