The Changing Nature of Crime in America

by Gary LaFree, Robert J. Bursik, Sr., James Short,
and Ralph B. Taylor

Observers of the behavioral sciences have long noted the dominance of cross-sectional over longitudinal research designs, and have catalogued some of the negative consequences of this focus (e.g., Lieberson 1985). Perhaps the most important strength of this volume is that from the outset, the editors strongly insisted that all contributors had to take a longitudinal perspective in their individual chapters. Approaching crime trends from a longitudinal point of view immediately disabuses us of the idea that criminal behavior and reactions to criminal behavior are fixed, constant, and unchanging. Criminologist Gwynn Nettler (1984, 2) tells the story of two people passing on a street in New York City, one with a pint of whiskey and one with $100 in gold coins. In March 1933, the person with the alcohol would have been committing a criminal act because of Prohibition, while the person with the gold coin was law abiding. But only a year later, the same two people passing on the street would occupy exactly the opposite positions with regard to the law: The repeal of Prohibition legalized carrying whiskey in most places, but gold hoarding was a Federal crime from 1934 to 1974. This volume describes many similar kinds of changes in crime and reactions to crime over the past half century. In particular, the contributors have thoughtfully explored the many ways in which crime and its effects have evolved along with broader structural and cultural changes in America during this time period. But the volume is not limited to discussing how crime has changed in the past. Wherever feasible, the authors have also tried to project likely crime developments and trends into the 21st century.

Gary LaFree is a Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, College Park. Robert J. Bursik, Sr., is a Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. James Short is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Washington State University. Ralph B. Taylor is a Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University.

INTRODUCTION

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Attempts to take stock of the American criminal justice system by pulling together the collective wisdom of a group of experts go back nearly a century in American history. Two prominent examples include the Chicago Crime Commission, established in 1919, and the Cleveland Survey of Criminal Justice, established in 1921. These early efforts to study crime in specific cities became models for later national efforts, especially the influential National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (the Wickersham Commission), established by President Herbert Hoover in 1929, and the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967. In the first part of this introductory chapter, we briefly consider the work of these prior commissions, how their conclusions were related to the social contexts in which they were developed, and how these earlier connections compare with our own efforts to take stock of crime in the United States at the beginning of a new millennium.

The review of the work of prior crime commissions highlights a major theme of the volume: There is clear evidence of both change and continuity in crime and crime control policy over the past half century. During the last few years of the 20th century, the United States experienced several high-profile and widely publicized acts of juvenile violence, the longstanding separation between juvenile and adult criminal justice processing was steadily eroding, and national concern about youth violence was evident. In the second part of this introductory chapter, we use the issue of youth violence as a prime example of both continuity and change with regard to crime and criminal justice policy. We provide a historical overview of youth groups, collective behavior, and crime to illustrate major ways in which crime and our reactions to crime have evolved during the 20th century.

The dawn of a new century—not to mention a new millennium—naturally brings to mind not only concerns with the past but also a keen interest in the future. Of course, prediction remains the most tenuous of social science functions. Nevertheless, in the third part of this introductory chapter, we examine some of the crime-related issues that are likely to become more prominent in the years ahead. In particular, we consider likely trends in violent crimes, gun violence, and urban crime rates; the impacts of increasing numbers of ex-convicts being reintegrated into society and growing immigration; and the possibility of crime increases linked to rightwing extremism.

Finally, we conclude this introductory chapter by considering more specifically the content of the individual papers included in the volume and how the chapters fit together. The preeminent concern in this volume has been to describe changes in crime. Hence, several chapters examine how crime trends have

developed within the context of ongoing structural and cultural changes in the United States. In addition, we have included chapters that emphasize the growth in the size and complexity of the criminal justice system and the increasing importance of the scientific study of criminology.

Wickersham Commission, President's Commission, and Beyond

Only the most naive social observers believe that the current understanding of criminal behavior represents a definitive culmination of some evolutionary process that has led the field to a state of intellectual enlightenment. Certainly, all criminologists attempt to design their work so that it avoids the theoretical and analytic shortcomings of past studies. Nevertheless, it is important to appreciate the degree to which research is conducted within political, social, and historical contexts that not only shape the questions deemed to be most critical to our understanding of criminal behavior but also favor particular interpretations of the findings over others. For example, the biological sciences provided a consequential basis of criminological understanding early in the 20th century. However, the relevance of such factors had been largely discounted by the time of the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, and one is hard put to find any reference to such factors in the Commission's report *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (1967). But less than 30 years later, the interaction between biological potentiality and the social environment was again considered to be a critical criminological question. Thus, while it may be tempting to reflect on certain past orientations in the field with bemused condescension, such retrospective arrogance is likely to be a source of amusement in itself to future generations. With this in mind, the editors thought it would be useful to frame the current volume within the context of two earlier federally funded projects that also were mandated to provide representative summaries of contemporary criminological knowledge: the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (the Wickersham Commission, whose reports appeared in 1931) and the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice.

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Social and political background of the 1931 and 1967 reports

Both the Wickersham and President's Commissions were impaneled during times of significant domestic turmoil and widespread public opinion that the country was becoming increasingly violent. Because the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) program had just been initiated in 1930, it is difficult to determine the nature of national crime trends at the time of the Wickersham report. However, it is clear that Prohibition did not have the desirable effects envisioned by President Hoover when he referred to it as a "noble experiment." Rather, many large urban centers had become dangerous battlegrounds as rival factions of organized crime fought for the control of bootlegged liquor distribution, often staking their claims to a territory by gang-related "drive-by shootings" that were similar to those that caused great concern at the end of the 20th century. In addition, it had become increasingly apparent that these gangs had formed alliances with law enforcement personnel in some cities, leading to public outcries concerning police corruption. In fact, three of the reports issued by the Wickersham Commission (nos. 1, 11, and 14) are devoted at least in part to this problem.

The ethnic composition of the major organized crime groups in the early part of the 20th century added significantly to the virulence of the anti-immigrant sentiments that had been growing in the United States since the latter part of the 19th century. Highly influential public figures argued that the violent nature of many American cities was due largely to the activities of non-native groups that were culturally or inherently criminal. These sentiments were an important consideration in the passage of the Immigration Act of 1921, which capped the number of people who could migrate into the United States from a particular country at 3 percent of that group's resident population as of the 1910 census. These restrictions were tightened further in the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the National Origins Act or the Johnson-Reed Act), which decreased the quota to 2 percent. Since the members of the Wickersham Commission were appointed shortly thereafter (1929), it is not surprising that one of the Commission's volumes (Abbott 1931) explored the immigration and crime issue.

Joseph Gusfield's (1963) classic analysis of the dynamics that culminated in the enactment of Prohibition suggests that the concerns that were expressed about the criminogenic nature of foreign populations reflected a broader set

of issues than simply crime per se. The transition of the United States from a primarily agrarian to a primarily industrial society was accompanied by rapid increases in the population of urban centers. A large part of this growth was due to the influx of immigrants with cultural heritages (including the social uses of alcohol) that differed substantially from those that historically had dominated American life. The increasing prevalence of such lifestyles was considered by many to be a moral challenge to the inherent righteousness of the "traditional" American value system. Gusfield argues that the Volstead Act was, in part, an effort to formally acknowledge the primacy of these traditional values in the centerpiece of the American political system: the Constitution.

The Roaring Twenties also was a period in which many white, native adults feared that "innocent" white youths were being seduced by the evils associated with both immigrant and African-American lifestyles. The two major villains in this regard were the music and movie industries, which, it was felt, were undermining traditional morals by glamorizing the sensuous thrills associated with jazz, dancing, drug and alcohol use, and premarital sex. Thus, at the time that the Wickersham reports were produced, many thought that the "American way of life" was in danger. Finally, although the devastating effects of the stock market crash of 1929 would not be fully appreciated until after the publication of the Wickersham reports, it was apparent that the post-World War I era of prosperity had come to an end, and that the country was facing a major economic crisis. The potential effects of this crisis on criminal behavior is a theme found in several of the Wickersham volumes.

Ostensibly, the 1967 President's Commission was appointed specifically in response to the dramatic increase in crime that occurred in the 1960s. It might appear that its report was produced in substantially different historical circumstances than were found in 1931. The United States was experiencing an unprecedented degree of economic prosperity, and the Nationality Act of 1965 had eliminated the immigration quotas that were in effect at the time of the Wickersham Commission. In addition, although the 1967 report clearly recognized that many longstanding social problems were generated by the structure of American society itself, it was written at the height of the war on poverty. Thus, it was optimistic in the sense that it emphasized the design and implementation of programs to rectify the underlying conditions generating criminal behavior.

Nevertheless, like the 1931 reports, the 1967 volume was produced at a time when many American citizens were not optimistic about the future of their country. For example, although several important pieces of civil rights legislation had been passed to address inequities in the rights of racial and ethnic

minorities, the violent urban riots of 1964 and 1965 raised doubts about the magnitude of the progress that actually had been achieved in this regard. The Kerner Commission (1968), appointed by President Johnson to determine the cause of the recent riots, concluded that the country was in the process of being divided into separate and unequal, white and black societies. Such findings led some civil rights activists to argue that meaningful change could not be achieved by working within the existing political system. Other important questions also were being raised about the legitimacy of the U.S. Government at this time, most notably because of the war in Southeast Asia. Civil rights and antiwar demonstrations were common, and it was not unusual for them to escalate into violent confrontations between protesters and police.

The 1960s also were characterized by a great deal of nonpolitical turmoil. As was the case at the time of the Wickersham Commission, many adults were troubled by an apparent decline in public morality, especially among the young. As youths became increasingly involved in the political struggles noted previously, they also were exploring alternative lifestyles that often involved drug experimentation, the adoption of non-Western religious beliefs, communal living arrangements grounded in communist or socialist philosophies, interracial partnerships, extensive sexual activity outside of marriage, and so forth. Thus, the 1960s encompassed a period of important social and political changes that struck directly at the heart of middle America's cherished values.

For many, the crime increases during the 1960s symbolized a country spinning out of control. In his acceptance speech to the Republican National Convention in 1964, presidential candidate Barry Goldwater clearly recognized this sentiment: "[T]here is violence in our streets, corruption in our highest offices, aimlessness among our youth, anxiety among our elders. There is a virtual despair among the many who look beyond material success for the inner meaning of their lives" (reprinted in Goldwater 1964). Therefore, it is not surprising that crime was only one of many social issues on which the 1967 report focused.

The evidence used by the 1931 and 1967 reports

The introductory section of the Wickersham *Report on the Causes of Crime* (1931a) presents a pessimistic view of the criminological enterprise: "[I]t would serve no useful purpose to put forth theses . . . with the certainty that it represents but one phase of the thought of the time and will not long hold the ground" (p. vii). Although Henry Anderson, a Commission member, disagreed strongly with the position, the sentiment is understandable given Morris Ploscowe's devastating review of the research literature (no. 13, vol. 1). Although Ploscowe identified several research programs that he believed were promising, he concluded that nearly all empirical work of that period was characterized by faulty

study designs, inappropriate statistical models, bad data, poorly formulated research hypotheses, and/or unwarranted conclusions.

It is hard to disagree with many of the points made by Ploscowe, especially concerning data quality. UCR was still in the development stage, and national self-reported studies of offending and victimization were a dream of the future. As a result, investigators typically were forced to collect quantitative or qualitative data from small, nonrepresentative samples of respondents, or to compile official records from agencies located, at best, in a handful of municipalities. Because of these problems, although the material published by the Wickersham Commission is provocative, the reported findings must be viewed with considerable caution.

A great deal of progress had been made by 1967. Most criminological researchers were sensitive to the methodological problems that had been highlighted by Ploscowe and, as a result, research designs had steadily improved. In addition, the discipline had become increasingly sophisticated statistically, aided by the growing availability of high-speed computers. These developments enabled criminologists to test much more complex models of criminal behavior than had been possible at the time of the Wickersham Commission.

However, the most important difference between the two periods was the nature of the data being utilized in criminological research. By 1967, the UCR program had been fully instituted, evaluated, and restructured, and its statistics were widely utilized. However, significant criticisms of UCR had also been raised, especially with regard to its potentially biased characterization of racial and class differences in criminal behavior. In addition, criminological theories were beginning to emphasize dynamics that operated at the social-psychological rather than group level, and it was impossible to conduct studies of individual propensities with UCR data because they were available only in aggregate forms (i.e., city, county, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, and State rates). For these reasons, criminologists began to develop alternative forms of data collection, using surveys to collect information about criminal behavior directly from people. Although the earliest of these self-reported instruments had numerous problems (see the review by Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis 1981), this form of data collection eventually emerged as a highly reliable, alternative source of crime statistics. This development was especially fortuitous for the purposes of theory testing, since law enforcement records rarely included information about the variables that were central to most individual-level theories. In addition, for the first time, such instruments facilitated the analysis of the processes associated with criminal victimization.

Criminological methodology has continued to increase in its analytic power since 1967. A wide range of statistical techniques are utilized routinely in contemporary work and researchers use personal computers to quickly estimate complex models that were inconceivable with even the fastest machines of the 1960s. In our opinion, however, the biggest difference between the 1967 and the current criminological enterprise is in the nature of the available data. In particular, longitudinal study designs have become increasingly prevalent, thereby enabling researchers to investigate the dynamics of criminal behavior to a degree never before possible. Especially important here is the availability since 1973 of the National Crime Victim Survey. In addition, many datasets have now been archived and can be downloaded from the Internet in a matter of minutes, in effect making the entire criminological community vicarious members of the original project team. This new level of data availability has enabled criminologists to empirically question or extend already published findings to a degree never before feasible.

The theoretical explanation of crime

Given the introductory remarks found in Report no. 13 of the Wickersham Commission, it is understandable that the Commission was hesitant to posit any specific theory of criminal behavior. Nevertheless, an entire volume of the series is devoted to a model that Ploscowe considered to be highly promising because of its integrated emphasis on the social institutions of the family, the school, the community, and the economy: the social disorganization model of Shaw and McKay (1931). Subsequent parts of this introduction and several of the chapters that follow continue to draw heavily from this theoretical tradition.

The 1967 President's Commission considered a variety of explanations for criminal behavior, such as the ineffectiveness of community institutions, the reduction in the market for unskilled labor (and the ensuing discontent), racial and economic inequality, and the existence of a rebellious and oppositional youth culture. However, there was no attempt to integrate these factors into a comprehensive theory of crime and delinquency, although there are numerous references to the social disorganization model as well as Merton's (1938) differential opportunity theory and the extension of that theory by Cloward and Ohlin (1960). As such, although it provided a great deal of information about the correlates of crime and delinquency, the 1967 report made few innovative theoretical contributions to the field.

Although there have been several recent attempts to develop a "general" theory of crime (see, for example, Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Tittle 1995), contemporary criminology is characterized by a variety of competing conceptual frameworks. Although none of these dominate the field, most provide provocative,

complementary insights into the phenomenon of crime and the structures and dynamics that give rise to such behavior. One of the goals of the editors of this volume has been for each of the chapters included to provide not only the best empirical information about the patterns and distributions of the criminological phenomena in question but also a sense of the major conceptual models that have been used to make the phenomena meaningful.

In the next section, we consider in greater detail the evolution of one issue of paramount concern to members of both the Wickersham and President's Commissions as well as to policymakers and researchers at the beginning of the 21st century: youth violence.

Youth Groups, Collective Behavior, and Crime

Frederic Thrasher's classic book *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago* (1927) was the first attempt to survey the extent of youth gang activity in a major city, and perhaps the first such attempt in any jurisdiction. It was hailed as "an advancement in the general-survey and case-study method" and as "superior to earlier studies of the gang in that its conclusions grow out of concrete material" (Young 1931, 525–526). Although we know little about precisely how Thrasher collected his material, it was a monumental effort involving census and court records, personal observation, and personal documents collected from young male gang members and from persons who had observed gangs in many contexts, and it took 7 years to complete.

Although Thrasher's book became a classic, an even more important source of knowledge about the collective nature of youthful delinquency during this early period is the work of Clifford R. Shaw and his several collaborators. Shaw did not write much about youth gangs, but his statistical studies consistently documented the fact that most boys who were brought before the juvenile court committed their delinquent acts in the company of others. Lengthy case studies documented patterns of friendship, the association of younger with older offenders, and the influence of organized crime and other forms of adult criminality in "delinquency areas" (Shaw et al. 1929; Shaw 1930; Shaw and McKay 1931; Shaw and Moore 1931; Shaw 1936). The ecological studies located the problem in space and in the course of urban development over time. They documented the structural parameters (economic and institutional) within which urban lives were lived—parameters that shaped the ability of communities to function, to aid in the socialization of children, and to exercise control over misbehavior. The life histories convinced Shaw and his colleagues that these conditions and processes helped to account not only for the distribution of delinquency but for

why children become delinquents and why some communities lack the ability to prevent delinquency.

Much has changed in the nearly three-quarters of a century since these publications first appeared, including the language used to describe delinquents (by themselves as well as others), which seems arcane by today's standards—for example, references to street youths as "urchins." Foreshadowing "labeling theory," Shaw's (1930, 103) Jack-Roller described how he felt on finding himself in a "bare, hard, and drab" reformatory cell:

> Before, I had been just a mischievous lad, a poor city waif, a petty thief, a habitual runaway; but now, as I sat in my cell of stone and iron, dressed in a gray uniform, with my head shaved, small skull cap, like all the other hardened criminals around me, some strange feeling came over me. Never before had I realized that I was a criminal.

Some things remain constant, however. Gangs then, as now, sought to impress others with their strength and daring:

> [R]esidents in the vicinity south of the stock yards were startled one morning by a number of placards bearing the inscription "The Murderers, 10,000 Strong, 48th and Ada." In this way attention was attracted to a gang of thirty Polish boys, who hang out in a district known as the Bush. (Thrasher 1927, 62–63)

The Murderers apparently were involved in a good deal of criminal activity: They "broke into box cars" and stole merchandise, "cut out wire cables to sell as junk . . . broke open telephone boxes," "took autos for joy-riding," "purloined several quarts of whiskey from a brewery," attacked blacks, and fought other gangs. Their primary pastimes, however, "were loafing, smoking, chewing, crap-shooting, card-playing, pool, and bowling." Thrasher goes on to indicate that the boys "had great fun camping, flipping freights, and pestering the railroad detectives." Their reputation "throughout the whole district" was as "a very tough outfit," and local storekeepers "were indignant at their rudeness and thievery, and the neighbors regard them as an awful nuisance" (Thrasher 1927, 62–63). Although clearly dated, the case remains of interest because of the evident similarity between the Murderers and the "hanging" patterns of gangs today, intermixed with minor and more serious criminal behavior.

In 1963, midway between the original publication date of Thrasher's classic work and the turn of the century, the book was reissued in an abridged edition.[1] The editor of the abridgement noted that many social changes had vastly altered the gang landscape and that gang research, which previously had been largely descriptive, had changed in response to theoretical proposals and new empirical

work (Short 1963). The essay focused on assessment, especially of seminal theories advanced by Cohen (1955; see also Cohen and Short 1958), Cloward and Ohlin (1960), and Miller (1958). These competing explanations for the origin of the delinquent subculture (Cohen), variations in delinquent subcultures (Cloward and Ohlin; Cohen and Short), and the role of lower class culture in producing gang delinquency (Miller) stimulated a large body of empirical research and much subsequent theorizing.

By the last decade of the 20th century, however, events that could hardly have been anticipated by Thrasher had overtaken both theory and research. Whereas mid-century theories had outstripped empirical work and available data concerning gangs, modest theoretical advances and the large body of empirical research generated thereafter were overwhelmed by rapid, and recent, changes. Youth gangs proliferated rapidly in the United States during the 1980s and spread to many other countries (Klein 1995; Curry, Ball, and Decker 1996; Moore and Terrett 1999). Firearms—more sophisticated and more lethal than the "zip guns" of an earlier era—also became more readily available to young people (in the United States, especially; see Blumstein 1995). Weakened conventional economic, political, and family institutions lost legitimacy, contributing to rising crime rates (LaFree 1998a), and the technological revolution in electronic communication and entertainment media created heretofore unknown problems of social control.

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Change and continuity in juvenile delinquency

Against this background it is possible, nevertheless, to note both changes and continuities in knowledge concerning the collective forms taken by the delinquent and criminal behavior engaged in by the young.

- Widespread *prevalence* of youth gangs in the United States. Law enforcement agencies in all U.S. cities with populations greater than 250,000 report the presence of gangs in their jurisdictions, as do three-quarters of agencies in cities with populations greater than 100,000. This figure for suburban counties is nearly 60 percent, for small cities about 33 percent, and for rural counties about

25 percent. The latter figures for small cities and rural counties are especially recent. The average size of gangs, however, varies directly with the size of the jurisdiction reporting (nearly 75 members per gang in large cities, 30-plus in cities with populations greater than 100,000, slightly more than 20 in cities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000, and only about a dozen in still smaller jurisdictions) (National Youth Gang Center 1998).

■ Change and continuity in the *ecology* of youth gangs. Although gangs have spread to areas of the United States where they did not exist previously, within jurisdictions, gangs continue to be found primarily in inner-city areas of lower socioeconomic status, as they were early in the 20th century. A major difference, however, is in the ethnic and racial composition of these areas and, correspondingly, of gangs. Unlike in Thrasher's day, U.S. gangs are now composed predominantly of minority populations, especially African-American and Hispanic, but with increasing numbers of new Asian immigrant children and children of immigrant parents (Sanders 1994; Chin 1996). Gangs and other forms of collective youth crime are also found in other countries with conditions similar to those associated with street gangs in the United States (Klein [1995] cites several Russian cities, Berlin, Port Moresby, Brussels, and Mexico City). Cities in which public housing projects are located outside central cities (e.g., Stockholm and its suburbs, Zurich, Frankfurt and surrounding cities, Stuttgart, and Melbourne) report a "commuting to turf" pattern of loosely structured, ethnically mixed group-ings of young people who converge on central city areas via public trans-portation to engage in carousing, "smash and grab" hits on stores, rolling drunks, and robberies.

■ Change and continuity in the *form* of collective youth crime and its *etiology*. Prior to the rapid diffusion of youth gangs in the United States—beginning in about 1965, but escalating after 1985 (Klein 1995)—large aggregations of gang "nations" emerged in several large cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles. The influence of these large gangs extends both to the *culture* of gangs in other areas and, through migration of gang members, to gang mem-bership (that is, gang culture has diffused and many gang members change their communities of residence). Most local gangs are primarily "home grown," however. Many gangs—probably most, though we lack systematic data—begin as nondelinquent friendship groups, "hanging" groups, or groups formed around particular nondelinquent activities (sports, singing, dancing, etc.) (see, e.g., Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1985; Hagedorn 1988; Sullivan 1989; MacLeod 1987; Schwartz 1987; Short 1997). The primary distinguishing characteristic of all of these gangs is that they are self-determining with respect to membership criteria and group structure and behavior, and—most importantly—they are *unsupervised* by adults.

Such unsupervised youth groups become violent, and otherwise delinquent, as a result of one or more of the following processes:

■ Escalation of the natural rough-and-tumble punching and wrestling that occurs among most male groups, and the association of status with fighting prowess.

■ Competition with rival groups, often leading to conflict over status-enhancing or economically motivated behavior.

■ Definitions of groups as gangs by others, and behavior toward them that pushes a violent identity on the group.

■ Group processes that create or reinforce group cohesion based on violent or other delinquent behavior (these also often involve individual and group status).

Street gangs exhibit a great deal of diversity in behavior, organization, continuity across generations, and their relationships with other gangs and with their communities. Necessarily, they change as members age and move into adulthood. Several investigators, however, report that the age range of many gangs has expanded as fewer young adult gang members, particularly among gangs comprising minority youths, find attractive, legitimate jobs. This change has also been accompanied by an increase in violence, as many gang members have turned to selling drugs and other illegal activities to support themselves (and often their families) (see Fagan 1996; Fagan and Wilkinson 1998; Hagedorn 1998).

These changes blur distinctions between street gangs and a variety of types of youth collectivities, although it is still useful to distinguish among them. "Wilding" groups, "skinheads," and perhaps the mass shootings that have occurred on school properties, for example, though differing among themselves, have in common the fact that they are motivated by hate of "outsiders" based on racial, ethnic, or other exclusionary criteria (see Cummings 1993). So, also, do crowds that gather to do violence to community outsiders, usually members of minority groups (Pinderhughes 1993). Violence and other delinquent activities often occur also in "staging" areas in which young people gather with friends and others to escape adult supervision (Schwartz 1987; Anderson 1998).

Drug and other "working" gangs are organized primarily around their revenue-producing activities, such as drug selling, stealing, and fencing stolen goods—all activities requiring greater organizational skills and structure than is characteristic of street gangs (Williams 1989; Padilla 1993). Also unlike street gangs, "bikers," "punkers," and sports fanatics or "hooligans" are organized around specialized interests (Bufford 1991).[2]

With the exception of the latter types of groups (most of whose members appear to be disadvantaged socially, rather than economically), virtually all of these groups are primarily made up of marginalized youths—by minority ethnic and/or economic status—with poor prospects for integration in or social mobility within dominant majority societies. The excessive behavior of bikers and sports hooligans also appears to be motivated in some measure by resentment of ethnic minorities (Bufford 1991).

Youth culture

All of these groups are heavily influenced by the development and rapid growth of *youth culture* during the latter half of the 20th century. Peddled by media advertising and augmented by macroeconomic and social forces that cater to youthful fads, appetites, and dollars, youth culture is more powerful and more widely diffused than ever before. The same macroeconomic and social forces fail to provide meaningful roles for young people, resulting in a powerful combination of forces that underlie both youth culture and gang culture, including their excesses of consumption and violence.

More than 20 years ago, James Coleman noted a variety of developments that together produced youth culture throughout the United States during the 1960s, perhaps for the first time: large numbers of children born during the "baby boom" following World War II and the increasing affluence of many young people (a function of the general level of affluence in the country), thus creating a youth market with great economic power; extension of the period of education prior to entering the labor market; increased numbers of women in the workforce, which further separated mothers from youths in the home and neighborhood; the increased extent to which adults work "in large organizations where youth are not present"; and expansion of the mass media, which catered increasingly to the youth market (see Coleman et al. 1974, 114–119). These changes have accelerated throughout the 20th century and are even more pronounced today, and their influence is more global than ever.

Field researchers document the seductions of media-advertised products among all classes of young people. Among the less affluent, the effects are especially pernicious. Thefts and assaults often are associated with the acquisition of these products. Anderson (1999) describes the "zero-sum quality" that pervades the "code of the street" in the search for respect among young African-American men in the ghetto—respect that often is associated with items of clothing such as shoes and jackets (see also Anderson 1990). Sullivan identifies "mutually valorizing cultural symbols" (clothing, drugs and alcohol, and other recreational artifacts and activities) that cut across racial and ethnic boundaries and that

often contribute to theft, invidious comparison, and confrontation (Sullivan 1989, 248–249).

Observers of youth groups everywhere note that status differences within and between them tend to be highly refined. They are also extremely variable. Criteria for status within a group, or between one group and another, may be based on relative economic affluence, skills in valued activities, public appearance, school performance, or, perhaps most importantly, lifestyle differences. These bases of stratification typically also become criteria of inclusiveness and exclusiveness which, in turn, create opportunities for both friendship and rejection.

Adolescence is a period of especially intense identity formation and intense relationships and shared feelings of friendship, acceptance, and respect. Conversely, feelings of rejection and disrespect also are especially intense among adolescents, and often the basis for group and subcultural formation.

Next to families, schools are perhaps the most important contexts for adolescent friendship, achievement, and recognition. Because of this, school contexts (including the journey to and from schools) are the settings for much adolescent behavior, including delinquent and criminal behavior. On occasion, they have also been the setting for the most extreme forms of violence (e.g., mass killings by students or others alienated from their fellows or from mainstream institutions in general). Although the specific causes of such extreme alienation are complex, it seems clear that schools have been especially targeted precisely because of their importance in the lives of adolescents, as symbols of rejection by both peers and an adult world that seems far removed from adolescent concerns. The ready availability of guns at times transforms normal adolescent turmoil and conflict into deadly confrontation.

More than ever before in history, young people, targeted for commercial exploitation and isolated from mainstream adult roles and institutions, confront economic conditions beyond their control. Economic decline, severe unemployment, and the unavailability of "good jobs" are associated not only with street gangs but with their transformation into "economic gangs" (including drug gangs), and with ethnic, racial, and class-related identities and antagonisms that lead to other types of collective violence (Hagedorn 1998). These same forces alter both intergang relationships and relationships between gangs and their communities. Relationships between adults and young people, shaped by generational backgrounds and community cultures, "translate" these and other macrolevel forces at the local community level.

To the extent that law enforcement personnel, media portrayals, and public opinion all treat gang membership as a "master status" (Miethe and McCorkle

1997), gangs and gang membership contribute to the deterioration of relationships between economic, racial, and ethnic groupings in the larger society. Reification and demonization of gangs by media, law enforcement, and the public, and occasionally by scholars, often contribute to gang problems rather than to their solutions. It is important to remember that most street gang members, at least in the embryonic stages of their involvement in delinquent and criminal behavior, are still children.

A consideration of youth groups and crime shows at once the changing nature of crime in the United States, but, at the same time, shows the cyclical nature of social problems. Throughout the past century, the United States has experienced periodic waves of concern about youth violence and crime. It is important to realize that issues such as the current concern with youth violence are rarely original, but it would be misleading to jump to the conclusion that currently hot crime issues at one point in time have exactly the same characteristics as those from earlier time periods.

In the next section, we move our introductory comments into the realm of the future. Based on our review of crime and crime policy in the United States at the beginning of a new century, we offer some projections and predictions.

Predictions About Crime and the Criminal Justice System in the Years Ahead

Views about future roles of crime in American society are noteworthy for their diversity. One futurologist predicts a society with little crime by the year 2025:

> The most-dreaded types of offenses—crimes such as murder, rape, assault, robbery, burglary, and vehicle theft—will be brought under control in the years ahead by a combination of technology and proactive community policing. Creation of the cashless society, for example, will eliminate most of the rewards for robbers and muggers, while computer-controlled smart houses and cars will thwart burglars and auto thieves. Implanted bodily function monitors and chemical drips (such as "sober-up" drugs and synthesized hormones) will keep most of the sexually and physically violent offenders under control. (Stephens 1995, 29)

By contrast, another futurologist sees a much more crime-ridden society in 2025: "fortified, middle-class enclaves in destroyed cities, the latter swarming with drug-crazed, poverty-stricken populations, that finally turn on those who are economically better off" (Butler 1993, 167).

Numerous scenarios about the future vie for our attention. More important than the personal question—Which do we find more engaging?—is the scientific question: What solid predictions can we make about the future? In this section, we comment briefly on the limitations of our tools for making such projections, then consider likely developments in several important areas: violent crime, lethality of violence, spatial patterning of crime, increased numbers of released offenders, and connections between immigration and rightwing extremist violence. For each point of concern, we attempt to ground the discussion in what is currently or has been recently happening. We first comment briefly on some of the challenges of forecasting and the limits of our forecasting methods.

The challenge and the methods

An old joke tells of an extraordinary weather forecasting program designed to predict the weather for the entire world for a week. The finest forecasting minds had contributed to it, and the program took into account every possible factor influencing precipitation, wind, and temperature. When the data-gathering stations were online, scientists turned to the fastest supercomputing facilities on the planet. The program ran flawlessly and generated precise descriptions—which, it turned out, were accurate—describing the expected weather at numerous points around the globe during the next 7 days. There was only one small hitch: The program took 8 days to run.

Trying to predict changes and continuities in crime in the United States over the next few years, let alone the next few decades, presents a problem even more difficult in scope than that faced by the weather forecasters described earlier. It is more difficult because crime forecasting is a social science rather than a natural science; and for social sciences, the "laws" of cause and effect are more mutable and thus fundamentally different (Winch 1958).[3] Connections between the moon and tides are ironclad, whereas those between demographic age bulges in the population and juvenile delinquency are not.

In addition, two limitations of social science forecasting make accurate prediction especially challenging. All predictions have a margin of error that, by definition, increases the further away we are from the last datum gathered. In short, if a model based on objective indicators is well developed, it is most likely to provide most useful results in the near term. This is a difficulty that cannot be overcome; it is built into the nature of forecasting.

Perhaps more surmountable are limitations arising from sudden changes. In social science, trends that seem to follow a certain pattern overtime—for example, remaining flat or exhibiting stable ups and downs—nevertheless

Despite the growing availability of such sophisticated tools, making precise predictions about the future of crime and justice is likely to remain a maddening exercise.

sometimes shift unexpectedly. Consider U.S. imprisonment rates. They were relatively flat for much of this century but then began to increase abruptly in the 1970s (Blumstein and Moitra 1979; Lyons and Scheingold in this volume).

Such rapid changes can be handled by a variety of forecasting models, providing the researcher anticipates such dynamics (Swanson and White 1997). But again, as with the problem of increasing error over time, there is a built-in difficulty: How are we to know that the process or the output will change dramatically unless it has already done so?

Increasingly, sophisticated forecasting methods partially mitigate these challenges. Researchers and policymakers have had access for some time to forecasting methods such as time series analysis (Box and Jenkins 1970). With such methods, researchers can gauge impacts of policy interventions such as community corrections programs (Jones 1990) or estimate system caseloads for a component of the system (Flango and Elsner 1983). More recent tools include neural networks based on artificial intelligence (Carpenter and Grossberg 1991). These appear to have considerable potential for improving forecasts (Adya and Collopy 1998). Such techniques have been used, for example, to predict shifting crime rates in neighborhoods (Olligschlaeger 1997). These procedures are useful for forecasting because highly specific groups with complex attributes can be identified, and predictions can be made specifically for each group.

Researchers and policymakers attempting to predict what happens with a system often turn to simulations (Taylor 1994, 343–352), computer programs representing real-world processes. For example, the Minnesota criminal justice system used simulations to predict the impacts of sentencing guidelines on jail and prison populations (Brent and Anderson 1990). Researchers use simulations when addressing complex social processes that change dynamically over time, depend on a variety of conditions, and contain a certain amount of random variation (Brent and Anderson 1990, 191). Of course, the validity of a simulation ultimately depends on the validity of the theory, the model, the assumptions about the correct independent variables, and the program defining the simulation (Taylor 1994, 349).

Despite the growing availability of such sophisticated tools, making precise predictions about the future of crime and justice is likely to remain a maddening

exercise. Changes in amounts and types of crime will continue to depend on societal, technological, cultural, and international changes; the responses of the criminal justice system; and trends in public attitudes and sentiments. Such connections are extremely complex (see Lyons and Scheingold in this volume). In addition, the increasing imprecision of forecasts couched further in the future is inescapable.

We consider here some of the biggest changes in crime and the operation of the criminal justice system at the end of the 20th century and suggest how they may prove relevant to future trends in several specific areas. In each case, we highlight not just one variable but rather a cluster of conditions that may influence one another as well as crime and justice outcomes. We also describe the ways in which crime is likely to change and the factors likely to influence these changes.

Violent crime trends

Perhaps one of the questions most on people's minds in the early part of the 21st century is the likely direction of violent crime rates in the years ahead. Researchers devoted considerable attention to the dramatic violent crime increase of the late 1980s and the equally startling decline starting in the early 1990s. Numerous authors have considered possible causes of this crime boom and bust cycle, and proposed a number of explanations. These include more guns in the hands of youths (Blumstein and Rosenfeld 1998); educational, judicial, and economic institutional shifts (LaFree 1998b); more handguns among the citizenry and thus a better protected citizenry (Polsby and Kates 1998); and policing strategies that both are driven by data and pay attention to minor crimes (Bratton 1998). Marked disagreements about the causes of these recent ups and downs in violent crime rates are surpassed in contentiousness by differences of opinion as to where those rates are now headed.

One approach to offering predictions distinguishes between long-term trends and shorter term fluctuations around those trends. One recent analysis by Donohue (1998) suggests that the past 50 years have witnessed two long-term homicide trends: increasing rapidly until 1977 and then declining more slowly since. In the future, he suggests, the trend could be a continued slow decline in homicide rates, continuing either from the pre-1990s drop rate or the post-1990s drop rate, or, alternatively, a long-term upward trend beginning in the near future. He thinks the short-term fluctuation downward seen through the mid-1990s is unlikely to continue.

Despite the strengths of the forecasting methods mentioned previously, it is likely to continue to prove extremely difficult to generate accurate, long-term

forecasts of violent crime trends. Not only does the temporal reach of the predictions create challenges, but disagreement about the contributing factors, and about the relative strengths of these various contributions, is far too great.[4]

Such disagreements surfaced recently in intense debate about youth violence trends. In response to increasing juvenile homicide rates starting in the mid-1980s, researchers and policy analysts alike predicted that the country was on the verge of a wave of serious teen violence (DiIulio 1995; see also Harris, Welsh, and Butler in this volume). "There are actually two crime trends in America—one for the young, one for the mature—which are moving in opposite directions" (Fox 1996, 1). According to this view, increases in teen violence will be driven by increasing numbers of teens in the near future, high poverty rates among the families of many of these teens, and declining effectiveness of adult supervision of preteens and teens.

But others countered that such predictions were overstated and not empirically grounded (Zimring 1996). After examining juvenile arrest rates from 1980 onward, Zimring (1998) concluded that there was no single trend for all the violent crimes; rather, the movement was crime specific, and changes in arrest rates were trendless over the long term, moving in short up-and-down cycles. And because juvenile arrest rates fluctuated markedly from one year to the next, the demographic shifts in the proportion of the teen population, and its absolute size, probably played only minor roles in shifting teen violence rates. This last point is directly related to a broader discussion in criminological theory about the contribution of age distributions to changing crime or arrest rates (Lauritsen 1998; Tonry, Ohlin, and Farrington 1991; Harris, Welsh, and Butler in this volume). Probably the only safe predictions that can be made about future violent arrest and crime rates, juvenile or otherwise, are that they are unlikely to return to the low levels witnessed in the 1950s and early 1960s, and that the declines witnessed in the early 1990s, most dramatically in several large cities, are unlikely to continue.

Lethality of violence

In 1995, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey, "approximately 1.2 million violent crimes were committed with a firearm" (Wintemute 1998, 1). Many argue that the increased availability of guns has resulted in rising homicide and injury rates (Vernick and Teret 1993). In contrast, others suggest that increasing handgun availability among law-abiding citizens has kept victimization rates from going even higher (Kates and Kleck 1997) and has perhaps even driven down homicide rates (Polsby and Kates 1998).

What we do know about gun availability is that we have more guns and more illegal guns than ever before and that these guns are spread among fewer households. Nationally, over the past 20 years we have seen:

- A decreasing prevalence of households with one or more guns, from about 50 percent down to about 40 percent (Cook and Ludwig 1995).

- An increasing total number of available guns—223 million, including 40 million handguns produced in the United States since 1973 (Zawitz 1995).

- Large numbers of stolen guns (for example, 341,000 from 1987 to 1992), with many of these presumably used for illegal purposes (Zawitz 1995).

By definition, criminals have access to stolen guns. The number of stolen gun reports received by the FBI accelerated from about 50,000 per year in the early 1970s to about 300,000 per year in the early 1990s (Zawitz 1995). Many arrestees, about a third in one study, report that it would be easy for them to obtain a gun in less than a week (Decker and Pennell 1995). Numbers of available guns generally may continue to climb as international gun manufacturers, finding markets in other countries closed—Scotland recently banned all guns, for example—export more weapons to the United States (Walsh 1999).

It is extremely difficult to predict how the availability of guns will affect future crime rates. One recent study of homicide trends in New York City suggests that gun homicide rates and nongun homicide rates follow different pathways (Fagan, Zimring, and Kim 1998). Fagan, Zimring, and Kim link the homicide decline in New York City to a shift in gun homicides; although nongun homicides decreased steadily from 1985 through 1996, gun homicides increased, peaking in 1991. Similarly divergent patterns were found for gun and nongun assaults (p. 1289).

Also bearing on gun violence are policy initiatives focused on reducing the impact of guns. Historically, the impact of gun bans, or extra sentences meted out for gun crimes, is equivocal. Some appear to have worked, others have not (Loftin, Heumann, and McDowall 1983). Most recently, it appears that the passage of the 1994 assault weapons ban spurred increased production of the banned weapons prior to the deadline but contributed to a significant subsequent decline in the gun murder rate (Roth and Koper 1999). Future gun violence rates, therefore, may depend in part on whether laws are passed restricting gun purchases or requiring additional gun safety features such as trigger locks. Whether such initiatives will be passed is difficult to gauge given the extreme political volatility surrounding such issues.

Some might argue that large cities can rebuild, thus lessening rather than increasing city-suburban victimization and offending differences. But given the trends of urbanizing and segregating poor households that have actually accelerated since 1970, combined with the shift of political power to suburban locations and the increasing internationalization of trade, such a broad-based revitalization of cities seems unlikely.

How will crime be patterned spatially?

In addition to questions of level and lethality of crime, there are questions of crime distribution. One of the most durable patterns in the ecology of crime has been strong offense, and now victimization differentials, between urban, suburban, and rural locations (Boggs 1966, 1971; Harries 1980; Sampson and Castellano 1982; Weisheit and Donnermeyer in this volume).

Within cities, better-off neighborhoods will increasingly segregate themselves from surrounding worse-off neighborhoods through private policing, restricting access, or both, thus increasing between-neighborhood crime and victimization differentials. In suburban locations, gated communities used to be limited to extremely high-income locales, such as Ten Hills in California. But the number of gated communities appears to be increasing nationwide, especially as developers find that comparable houses and lots can command higher prices for gated communities. Some nonacademic writers speculate that all suburbs of the future will be gated "burbclaves" (Stephenson 1993). Some research suggests that restricted access communities may indeed be safer (Atlas and LeBlanc 1994). It seems likely, therefore, that community-level crime differences within suburbs will also increase in the future.

Moving to a broader level of analysis, increased crime differences between central cities and suburbs also seem likely as city-suburban differences in employment opportunities and educational resources increase. These differences may be further exacerbated if funds for services in cities decline with waning tax bases and weakening political clout of cities at the State and Federal levels. In some locales, efforts will be made to move lower income, city-dwelling jobseekers to suburban jobs using public transit, but these efforts are likely to be meager in comparison to the need. Far more typical may be efforts to block transit between lower income urban communities and higher income suburban locations. A recent case in Buffalo may be emblematic. After exiting a bus, a teenager was accidentally killed while cross-

ing a highway on the way to her job in a suburban mall. The attorney representing her interests found that the bus route, one that serves predominantly low-income communities in the city, had been denied access to the suburban mall, resulting, the attorneys claim, in the death of the teen (National Public Radio 1999b).

Some might argue that large cities can rebuild, thus lessening rather than increasing city-suburban victimization and offending differences. But given the trends of urbanizing and segregating poor households that have actually accelerated since 1970 (Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Wilson 1987, 1991, 1996), combined with the shift of political power to suburban locations and the increasing internationalization of trade, such a broad-based revitalization of cities seems unlikely.

A broad-based turnaround for large cities would require an unprecedented level of cooperation between large businesses and urban school systems and governments (Wilson 1996). Although some cities closely linked to the world economy may prosper (Sassen 1991), as trade internationalization interacts with information technology in how it influences and reshapes city-suburban-regional differentiation (Castells 1991), it seems unlikely that these trends will result in large numbers of revitalized and low-crime central cities.

On the other side of the argument, two broad sets of changes suggest less urban-suburban-rural offending and victimization differences. A third set of changes does not appear to imply either stronger or weaker differentials.

First, in recent decades, suburban crime has risen faster than that in cities (Alba, Logan, and Bellair 1994, 395; Logan and Messner 1987). This is understandable given the lower starting point, making large percentage increases more easily attainable.

A second factor suggesting weakening differences across types of regions, at least in terms of offending rates, is vanishing differences in prevalence rates for usage of some drugs. According to recent reanalyses of Monitoring the Future national data describing high school seniors (Cronk and Sarvela 1997; see also Weisheit and Donnermeyer in this volume), rural and urban prevalence rates for marijuana and cocaine were more similar in the mid-1990s than they were 20 years earlier. "These findings contrast with the popularly held notion that rural youth are more protected against the use and abuse of drugs by their distance from the factors supporting drug use in urban environments" (Cronk and Sarvela 1997, 764). As Weisheit and Donnermeyer observe in this volume, parallel prevalence rates in urban and rural areas, coupled with higher binge drinking prevalence rates in rural areas, may drive up rural offending rates in the future.

As most readers know, adult populations who are either incarcerated or under correctional supervision increased sizably during the last three decades of the 20th century. From 1980 to 1997 alone, the total estimated correctional population increased from 1.8 million to 5.7 million. Of those 5.7 million, 3.6 million were on probation, 0.5 million were in jail, almost 1.2 million were in prison, and about 0.7 million were on parole.

A final issue relevant to urban, suburban, and rural offending and crime victimization differentials is population redistributions across these three types of locales. But the nature of the population redistribution between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan communities in the past 30 years has been complex. Vivid images of the suburbanization of farmland and drug-selling city gangs setting up auxiliaries in small towns to serve the burgeoning teen populations there are far too simple.

For most of this century until the late 1960s, non-metropolitan communities were losing population to metropolitan communities. Starting in the late 1960s and through much of the 1970s, that changed, with net inmigration occurring in nonmetropolitan communities. But in the 1980s, rural areas again began losing population. Finally, starting in the late 1980s and continuing through at least the mid-1990s, rural communities began gaining population once more. The two periods of rural population gains, the 1970s and the 1990s, were fundamentally different. The first period of rural gain was fueled both by increasing inmigration and declining outmigration in nonmetropolitan communities. The latest turnaround in the 1990s was fueled largely by declining nonmetropolitan outmigration as more households there stayed put (Fulton, Fuguitt, and Gibson 1997). These population shifts have taken place against continuities in the general population's size-of-place preferences (Brown et al. 1997). The net migration gains or losses for nonmetropolitan locations are complex in terms of age, status, income, and race. Generally, lower income, less educated, nonwhite households appear to contribute less to the net gains and losses in population than do higher income, more educated, white households. At this time, all that is clear with regard to metro and nonmetro population shifts is that there are no clear-cut, longstanding population redistribution trends that have obvious implications for crime differentials by region.

What are the general implications of all of the aforementioned factors for spatial patterns in crime? If net gains in nonmetropolitan population continue and have the same composition as seen in the 1990s migration stream, it will mean increasing numbers of attractive targets for property crime. If household protection does not similarly increase (Slovic 1978), property victimization rates

may rise in rural locations. Similarities between urban and rural teen cocaine and marijuana prevalence rates also may portend more similar offending rates between rural and urban locations.

But will these increases result in weaker differences in urban, suburban, and rural offending and victimization rates? Probably not, if we also presume that central city offending and victimization rates will continue upward as long as economic conditions and services there continue to deteriorate. So the differences by region may persist, but at a higher level. Lack of political will, increasing predominance of lower income populations in cities, continuing weakness in urban services, tax bases, and employment opportunities, and a majority of daily commutes with both suburban origins and destinations since 1990 suggest increasing long-term violence rates in cities. Such forces seem unlikely to be overcome by any as-yet unforeseeable trends, save one: an extremely severe and prolonged gasoline crisis that dramatically decreases the affordability of a suburban residence and/or job location.

Increasing numbers of released offenders

As most readers know, adult populations who are either incarcerated or under correctional supervision increased sizably during the last three decades of the 20th century. From 1980 to 1997 alone, the total estimated correctional population increased from 1.8 million to 5.7 million. Of those 5.7 million, 3.6 million were on probation, 0.5 million were in jail, almost 1.2 million were in prison, and about 0.7 million were on parole (Maguire and Pastore 1998, table 6.1).

Even though sentences for many violent crimes have lengthened considerably in response to the implementation of sentencing guidelines, truth-in-sentencing acts, and shifting public opinion, it seems undeniable that communities from which these offenders were removed will be flooded in the future with returning, released offenders. Formal and informal institutions, as well as fundamental household structures in inner-city, especially African-American, communities, already have been markedly affected by these high removal rates (Sampson 1987). From 1985 to 1995, the increase in the percent of adult African-Americans under correctional supervision almost doubled from 5.2 percent to 9.3 percent (Maguire and Pastore 1998, table 6.2). If we focus solely on those in prison or jail, during the same time period imprisonment rates for African-American males increased from 3.5 to 6.9 percent (Maguire and Pastore 1998, table 6.22).

Given what we know about formal and informal social control processes, and collective efficacy, the removal of these adults, and their subsequent return, are likely to create long-term disturbances in the communities where the removal and return rates are high (Rose and Clear 1998). Accumulation of social capital,

socialization of youths, household stability, informal social control on the street, and political leverage may all be severely compromised. One study from the early 1980s, looking at offender return rates in a number of Baltimore neighborhoods, found independent impacts of returning offender prevalence rates on perceived local informal social control, residents' confidence about their neighborhoods' futures, perceived physical and social disorder in the community, actual and perceived crime levels, and residents' fear of crime (Gottfredson and Taylor 1988). The much higher—as compared with the early 1980s—returning offender rates likely to be experienced by low-income, predominantly African-American urban communities portend serious social disruption in these locales. Moreover, problems may be further magnified by the end of the traditional welfare system in March 1999, especially if reintegration services, such as employment counseling and placement, transportation, and substance abuse counseling, are not substantially increased. Clearly, there is an extraordinary need for assistance to help both individuals and communities cope with what are likely to be substantial dislocations.

Immigration and rightwing extremism

We have witnessed incidents of violence spurred by racial hatred and extremist rightwing, antigovernment views, or both, in recent years. The Oklahoma City bombing of the Federal building in 1995 and the July 4th weekend killing spree of Benjamin Nathaniel Smith in 1999 are just two examples. These incidents and the hate groups sponsoring, or at least encouraging, their perpetrators demonstrate concern among a number of politically conservative white males about the increasingly multicultural and multicolored composition of American society. According to Matt Hale, the leader of the church with which Smith was affiliated, "Society is like a teeter totter. To the extent that people of color gain position in society, whites lose" (National Public Radio 1999a). The literature on immigration can help us understand these events by placing them in the context of recent ethnic and racial changes (see Martinez and Lee in this volume).

Immigration scholars agree that the complexion and volume of legal immigrants in this country have changed markedly in the past 40 years. They are in less agreement about the causes and impacts of those shifts.

Immigration during this century has been divided by Massey (1995) into three periods: 1900–30 ("classic era"); 1930–70 ("long hiatus"); and 1970 to the present ("new regime"). During the first period, about 80 percent of immigrants came from Europe. Immigration rates were extremely low during the following 40 years. But when immigration picked up again, starting in the late 1960s, it was no longer predominantly European. Since 1970, Europeans have made up

less than one-fifth of the immigrant stream, while those from the Americas, primarily Mexico, made up close to half (44 percent), and Asians made up more than one-third (35 percent). Volume is up as well; about 700,000 to 900,000 immigrants are currently entering annually on a legal basis, with perhaps up to 400,000 illegal aliens entering each year (Camarota 1998). The percentage of the foreign-born population has increased from 5 percent to about 8 percent in 1990, and is projected to rise to about 12 to 13 percent of the population by 2050 (Leiterman and Ryan 1999).

Not only are complexion and level different; so too are settlement patterns (Massey, Gross, and Shibuya 1994). Given the formation of many ethnic communities into effectively self-supporting enclaves (Portes and Manning 1986) that act as magnets for later waves of immigration, immigration is concentrated spatially. Six States (California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas) currently account for about three-quarters of the immigrant population (Camarota 1998).

Immigration policy shifts that have taken place in the past 15 years include two major pieces of legislation. The 1986 Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA) authorized sanctions against employers hiring illegal or undocumented aliens, "thereby acknowledg[ing] that U.S. demand for unauthorized migrants was an important cause of illegal migration" (Leiterman and Ryan 1999, 9). But many illegal workers enter the United States legally; estimates are that 40 to 70 percent of illegal migrant workers enter legally but then overstay their visas. IRCA also allowed amnesty for some classes of undocumented workers already in the country. Perhaps the most controversial provision of the second major piece of legislation during the period, the 1986 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, is that it reduces due process available to legal and undocumented immigrants by removing judicial review in several types of cases. It also prohibits applicants from seeking legal entry for a time if they have been in the country illegally prior to their application. Although the full range of documented impacts of both of these reforms are contested, scholars do agree that each piece has had unintended consequences.

Some nonacademic scholars suggest that, as a result of current and future immigration trends, whites in America will soon lose their dominant social position (Brimelow 1995; Lamm and Imhoff 1985). As a result of these concerns, "[A]n immigrant backlash appears to be gathering force" (Massey 1995, 631). Extremist hate crimes probably represent part of that backlash. Citizen militia activity is more likely in States with more immigration (O'Brien and Haider-Markel 1998). And it appears that native unskilled laborers may indeed experience lower wages in labor sectors with higher immigrant concentrations. Studies

on this question are not entirely consistent and have used differing and sometimes contested methods, but several scholars have concluded that immigrants create additional social burdens for local authorities and adversely affect wages of native workers in unskilled occupations (Butcher and Card 1991; Camarota 1998; Center for Immigration Studies 1998; LaLonde and Topel 1991).

What to do about immigration rates is similarly debated. Some argue that restrictive quotas and harsher treatment of illegal immigrants and their employers are needed to manage the problem and have proven effective in the past (Camarota 1998). Others argue that past policies have had only unintended or adverse consequences, and that the main determinants of the volume and complexion of U.S. immigrants are political, economic, and technological developments in other countries that conspire to make the American destination attractive (Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992).

If, as some scholars argue, policy shifts play minor roles in shaping immigration, and international differences play major roles in driving immigrants to America's borders and shores, then the United States probably is looking at a future of continuous immigration, with arrivals from the Americas predominating—although Chinese newcomers may eventually outnumber the arrivals from nearby countries (Massey 1995). Complicating things is the fact that assimilation may be slowed by the reduced availability of manufacturing jobs requiring only minimal English proficiency.

Recent, current, and anticipated future immigration patterns may help explain increases in organized, extremist, rightwing violence at the end of the 20th century (O'Brien and Haider-Markel 1998). Some researchers suggest a convergence between "patriot" and militia groups concerned with the right to bear arms and the perceived overreach of the Federal Government, neo-Nazi and Klan-type groups preaching white supremacy and race hatred, and some extremely conservative "Christian" religious groups (Dees 1996, 18–21). It appears that white supremacist leaders may have repackaged some of their pro-white messages to appeal more generally to those concerned about government power and moral decay in society. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, as part of its Uniform Crime Reports, currently tracks hate crime incidents and reported almost 8,000 in 1995.

If we assume that the United States is in an ongoing state of immigration, and that the immigration trends seen since 1970 are continuing, rightwing extremist violence and hate crime incidents seem likely to continue and perhaps even to increase. Current and future immigration patterns will continue to deepen concerns among some segments of the white male population that their country is being taken away from them.

The evidence available seems to suggest that, to the extent that adverse economic impacts are created by large immigrant concentrations, those impacts are concentrated particularly among less educated, native-born persons (Center for Immigration Studies 1998). It is exactly among this population segment that membership in hate groups appears to be spreading. The Southern Poverty Law Center (1999) suggests that more than 400 hate groups were operating in the United States as of 1997, and that the number of groups increased 20 percent from 1996.

Certainly many factors beyond current U.S. immigration patterns are responsible for decreasing real wages among blue-collar workers in this country in the past 20 years: internationalization of trade, increasing computerization of the workforce, exporting of blue-collar jobs, and more. But there is some evidence that immigration may be worsening the employment plight of native-born persons seeking low-skilled jobs. And such immigration seems likely to continue. These features represent major sources of concern to rightwing extremist and militant groups; it seems likely that such groups will continue to find an audience that condones violence.

In the final section of our introduction, we consider more specifically the individual chapters that make up this volume.

The Changing Nature of Crime in America

Because much of our thinking about crime and crime policy is based on cross-sectional "snapshots," we often seem to be trapped in what historian Eric Hobsbawm (1994, 3) has called "the permanent present." Let us indulge ourselves for a moment and take a broader, more historical view of the past half century or so. If we take such a view, what facts about crime and the criminal justice system are most obvious? First, perhaps the most inescapable crime fact of the past 50 years is the explosive growth in street crime that began in the 1960s and extended into the 1970s. This crime boom did not lose steam until the 1990s, when crime rates fell more steeply than at any other point in the postwar period. Second, and related to the first point in complex ways, the size, complexity, and expense of criminal justice bureaucracies at all levels of government have increased dramatically since World War II. And finally, the past half century has also witnessed explosive growth in the field of criminology. The chapters included in this book address all three of these important trends.

The crime boom of the 1960s and 1970s

Of the three changes in crime and criminal justice mentioned previously, the crime boom that began in the 1960s is arguably the most important because it preceded and no doubt encouraged the other two developments. The crime boom is noteworthy in historical terms. Researchers generally agree that at least among Western nations, violent crime rates have been declining for much of the past five centuries (Johnson and Monkkonen 1996; Gurr 1981). There were especially large declines in violent crime rates in most nations in the 17th and 18th centuries. In line with these long-term trends, the United States began the post-World War II era with very low crime rates. But this situation began to change rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 12 years from 1959 to 1971 alone, reported street crime rates more than quadrupled (LaFree 1998a, 20). Thus, beginning about four decades ago, the United States broke decisively with a centuries-long tradition of declining crime rates in Western nations.

In sharp contrast to the explosion of crime in the 1960s and 1970s, as this volume was being prepared, the United States was experiencing the sharpest crime "bust" in more than half a century (LaFree 1998b). The 1990s witnessed the greatest recorded percentage drop of the postwar period for the violent street crimes of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and the property crimes of burglary and motor vehicle theft.

Although the South has dominated homicide statistics, robbery rates in the Northeast have exceeded other regions during most of the postwar period, while the West has dominated in burglary rates.

We devote more than half of this book to considering various aspects of these crime trends. Five of the chapters in volume one deal directly with changing crime patterns over the past 50 years as seen through the lens of several important structural and cultural contexts. Thus, Graham Ousey reviews urban crime trends and research efforts to understand these trends. Philip Harris, Wayne Welsh, and Frank Butler examine how juvenile justice systems have evolved along with, and sometimes in contrast to, changing crime rates. Ramiro Martinez, Jr., and Matthew Lee examine the evolving links between immigration and crime in the past half century. Karen Heimer looks at how women's crime rates have changed along with the social and economic status of women. And Ralph Weisheit and Joseph Donnermeyer examine how crime trends have changed in rural America over the past four decades.

Urban areas have long been linked to crime in the popular imagination. Graham Ousey considers the insights and conclusions provided by a half century of research on crime in cities, metropolitan areas, and regions of the country. He documents the South's well-known high homicide rates but also shows that Southern rates have converged somewhat with other regions in recent years. Moreover, although the South has dominated homicide statistics, robbery rates in the Northeast have exceeded other regions during most of the postwar period, while the West has dominated in burglary rates. Early research on regional variation in crime focused especially on Southern and non-Southern differences in homicide, looking especially to culture of violence and economic deprivation arguments. Ousey concludes that, although culture of violence arguments have sometimes been supported, support for economic deprivation arguments has been more consistent.

Ousey shows that regardless of city size, crime rates increased substantially during the postwar period. While homicide and robbery rates were consistently highest in the largest cities (population over 500,000), burglary rates have generally been highest in cities with 250,000 to 500,000 persons. Studies examining variation in crime across cities and metropolitan areas have emphasized social stratification and social control explanations. Ousey finds a good deal of support for social stratification arguments based either on absolute measures of economic deprivation such as poverty or on more relative measures such as income inequality. Likewise, Ousey concludes that measures of informal social control such as family structure and residential stability are consistently linked to crime. Recent research reviewed by Ousey also shows that neighborhoods with more effective sources of informal social control, such as stronger social ties and more effective peer supervision, have lower crime rates.

Although crime may be closely linked to urban areas in the public imagination, Ralph Weisheit and Joseph Donnermeyer argue convincingly that the crime problems faced by the 65 million residents of the United States who live in rural areas should not be ignored by policymakers. They point out that the study of rural crime has the potential of making important contributions to crime policy, as well as to criminological theory and research methods. Weisheit and Donnermeyer argue that economic, demographic, and technological factors interact with geography and culture to shape crime in rural America in ways that are often distinctive from urban and suburban patterns. Perhaps most basically, the physical distance and isolation of rural areas affects crime and responses to crime in complex ways: Assaults become murders because of the distance of medical facilities; battered women have greater difficulty reaching shelters; community-oriented policing strategies are more complicated to implement. Weisheit and Donnermeyer argue that compared with urban culture, rural culture is distinguished by its greater

reliance on informal social control, mistrust of government, and reluctance to seek assistance from outside the community.

Economic conditions also distinguish rural from urban areas, although the diversity of rural economies makes generalization difficult. Although many rural areas adjacent to larger metropolitan areas have experienced rapid growth in economic activity in recent years, many remote rural areas are facing increasing poverty, unemployment, and underemployment. Technology continues to have important and diverse impacts on rural communities: in some cases, reducing the impact of geographical isolation (e.g., cellular telephones, computers); in others, greatly changing economic productivity (e.g., pesticides, herbicides, and concentrated fertilizers); and in still others, raising opportunities for new crime types (e.g., theft of increasingly expensive farm chemicals and agricultural machinery).

Patterns of crime are also distinct in rural areas. Rural areas are more racially homogenous than urban areas. In general, rural crime is less common than urban crime, although there are important exceptions. Weisheit and Donnermeyer show that during the past 20 years, cities with populations of more than 250,000 have had violent crime rates that are 5 to 8 times higher than rural counties and property crime rates that are 3 to 4 times higher than rural counties. Similarly, rural areas have generally had lower rates of violent crime victimization than either cities or suburbs. However, the ratio of rural to urban crime was lower in the late 1990s than at any point in the previous 20 years and the authors show that differences between rural and urban areas are smaller yet for illicit drug use, domestic violence, and crimes involving alcohol abuse.

Of course, discussions about U.S. crime trends that focus on total rates for urban or rural areas provide little information about the tremendous variation in crime observed across individual-level characteristics. Two characteristics that have been consistently correlated with street crime rates both in the United States and elsewhere are offenders' age and gender. In addition, connections between immigration and crime have generated a good deal of public concern throughout much of the 20th century. To better understand crime trends in postwar America, we also consider how crime has changed across age and gender groups, as well as how crime has been related to immigration patterns.

For the past century at least, the most critical age-related issue with regard to criminal offenders has undoubtedly been the one that legally separates juveniles from adults. Philip Harris, Wayne Welsh, and Frank Butler examine changes in how the public and the juvenile justice system have defined and treated juveniles charged with crime and delinquency during the 20th century. They identify four historical periods that are especially important. They argue that the

Refuge Period (1824–98) marks the beginning of the scientific study of delinquency and ends with the establishment of the first American juvenile court in Chicago in 1899.

According to Harris, Welsh, and Butler, the Juvenile Court Period (1899–1960) represents the triumph of positivist criminology, with its emphasis on observable, measurable events, over classical beliefs in the free will and personal responsibility of the individual. The early part of this period includes the pioneering work of Chicago School sociologists like Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay and ends with influential classics such as Cohen's *Delinquent Boys* and Cloward and Ohlin's *Delinquency and Opportunity*. The hallmark of this period is the belief that science can direct policymakers to understand, control, and prevent juvenile delinquency.

Harris, Welsh, and Butler argue that the Juvenile Rights Period (1961–80) represents the high water mark for the view that criminogenic environments rather than defective individuals account for most delinquency. Labeling perspectives, supporting a policy emphasis on prevention, diversion, and deinstitutionalization rather than punishment, are emblematic of the period. Contrary to the previous period, in which active efforts at rehabilitation were judged to be the best way to approach juvenile delinquency, during the Juvenile Rights Period, there was considerable support for the idea not only that the juvenile justice system did not reduce juvenile delinquency but that the stigmatization and decline in self-esteem brought on by official processing could actually increase the chances of further delinquency.

The authors argue that starting in 1981, juvenile justice in America has entered a fourth period that they characterize as the Crime Control Period. They argue that this period has marked a major return to classical principles that hold juveniles more strictly accountable for the choices they make and emphasizes deterrence and incapacitation over prevention and rehabilitation.

Harris, Welsh, and Butler point out that throughout its history, the juvenile justice system has been based on two often contradictory goals: to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of youths and to protect society from the delinquency

> *One of the most persistent findings in criminology research in the United States and elsewhere is that men commit more crime than women. Given the landmark changes in the economic, political, and social status of women since World War II, many researchers have predicted a gradual convergence between crime rates for women and men.*

of youths and proto-criminals. The authors note that, regardless of the specific focus of the juvenile justice system over the past century, the system has consistently processed marginalized youths—mostly immigrants' offspring in the early part of the 20th century and increasingly children of color toward the end of the 20th century.

One of the most persistent findings in criminology research in the United States and elsewhere is that men commit more crime than women. Given the landmark changes in the economic, political, and social status of women since World War II, many researchers have predicted a gradual convergence between crime rates for women and men. Thus far, researchers have not agreed either on the amount of actual convergence in women's and men's crime rates or about an explanation for any convergence observed. Karen Heimer argues that there has indeed been a sizable increase in street crime rates of women compared with men during the last four decades of the 20th century, and that the best explanation for this increase is the economic marginalization of women. Heimer shows that women's share of arrests for seven different property crimes (larceny, forgery, embezzlement, burglary, motor vehicle theft, stolen property, and arson) and three violent crimes (robbery, aggravated assault, and other assault) all showed substantial increases from 1960 to the present. The only crime for which women showed a declining rate vis-a-vis men during this period was murder. Many of the increases in female-to-male crime were substantial. Heimer concludes that these increases occurred because of a decline in male crime rates coupled with increases, or smaller declines, in female crime rates.

After reviewing major theoretical explanations for the female-to-male crime ratio, Heimer argues that there is greatest support for an economic marginalization argument. This argument proposes that the increased financial hardship faced by women relative to men in recent decades is a root cause of the narrowing of the gender gap in crime. Heimer shows that the argument is generally consistent with trends in key economic measures during the past four decades. In particular, the proportion of total households that are female-headed, the percentage of poor persons residing in female-headed households, and the rates of female unemployment all trend upward along with the female crime ratio. Heimer also offers suggestions for extending and refining the economic marginalization argument.

As discussed earlier in this introduction, there have been two major waves of immigration to the United States during the past century. The first began at the turn of the 20th century, slowed in the 1920s, and consisted mainly of Europeans. The second began in the mid-1960s, peaked in the early 1990s, and consisted mainly of Afro-Caribbeans, Asians, and Latin Americans. The chapter

by Ramiro Martinez, Jr., and Matthew Lee demonstrates that in both cases, the American public has reacted to immigration waves by assuming that immigrants have disproportionately contributed to rising crime rates. These attitudes have been especially important during the recent immigration wave because some of the years in which immigration has been greatest have coincided with the crime boom of the 1960s and 1970s.

Martinez and Lee review three major theoretical explanations for a linkage between immigration and crime: opportunity structure, cultural approaches, and social disorganization. In fact, the authors note that all three of these theoretical explanations would lead us to expect that compared with native-born Americans, immigrants would be more frequently involved in crime. For example, immigrants face acculturation and assimilation problems that most natives do not, and immigrants more often settle in neighborhoods whose structural characteristics (e.g., poverty, ethnic heterogeneity) may be favorable for crime. But Martinez and Lee show that despite these expectations, the research literature, both from the wave of immigration at the beginning of the century and at its end, generally show that immigrants are typically underrepresented in crime statistics. The authors point out that societies might in fact profit from efforts to learn why immigrant groups generally have lower crime rates than the structural characteristics of the communities they live in might predict.

The growth in size, scope, and complexity of criminal justice bureaucracies

One of the enduring ways in which the crime boom of the 1960s and 1970s affected American society was by greatly increasing the size, scope, and complexity of the bureaucracies in America dedicated to controlling crime. The change is perhaps the most unprecedented at the national level. Because the United States began as a loose federation of local governments, criminal justice issues were historically viewed as State and local issues. But starting in the 1960s, law and order increasingly have become national political issues (LaFree 1998a, 2). Every presidential election campaign since the early 1960s has prominently featured crime and law-and-order issues. Both Congress and the President now routinely discuss crime policy and bring forward new crime-related spending initiatives and laws. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was one recent example. The Federal Government now supports huge national bureaucracies aimed at crime control. But expansion of the size and scope of the criminal justice system also has been dramatic at the State and local levels. Total per capita spending on the police by Federal, State, and local governments increased more than sevenfold in constant dollars since 1950. Increases in per capita correctional costs were even greater—more

than a 15-fold increase in constant dollars since 1950 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996, 1; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1985, 26–28). The impact of these changes as we enter the new century is likely to be considerable.

Three chapters of this volume consider the changing size and scope of the crime control bureaucracy in the United States from three perspectives. First, William Lyons and Stuart Scheingold discuss the changing politics of crime and punishment and the impact of these political processes on corrections in the postwar period. Second, Helene Raskin White and D.M. Gorman examine the link between drug abuse and crime—an area in which expansion of law enforcement activities during the past 40 years has been especially consequential. And finally, Maureen Brown explores the incredible growth in the complexity of criminal justice systems by examining how information technology has penetrated criminal justice processing since World War II.

Lyons and Scheingold begin their chapter with the provocative premise that crime control policy is politically constructed. A key implication of this premise is that policy is driven more by politics than criminological research or even demonstrable policy effects. In particular, they take aim at the political processes that have resulted in the unprecedented growth in the scope and severity of punishment in the United States, especially since the 1970s. They argue that empirical support for direct causal links between crime rates and criminal justice policies such as zero-tolerance policing, increasing sentence lengths, and the return of capital punishment is at best inconclusive. They are especially critical of justifications for the unprecedented growth in prison populations in the United States. They argue that even if claims about the impact of harsher punishment on crime are partially true, any benefits must be weighed against the costs of punitive policies. The authors claim that the punitive policies that have held sway in the United States for at least the past 30 years have been especially destructive—exacerbating racial cleavages and shattering the social organization of the communities from which the majority of prison inmates are drawn. They argue that criminal justice policy based mostly on punishment is ultimately destructive because it diverts attention, energy, and resources away from strategic responses grounded in prevention.

In no area of law enforcement are changes in the scope and size of the criminal justice system over the past several decades more obvious than in law enforcement aimed at drug abuse. Moreover, the increasing importance of Federal law enforcement in crime control is especially clear with regard to drug policy. The implicit, and often untested, assumption behind the policy push to get tougher on drug use during the last several decades of the 20th century has been the presumed link between drug abuse and other types of crime. In a comprehensive review, White and Gorman examine the research connecting drugs to crime

over the past half century. They expose inconsistencies and defects in past attempts to specify connections between drug use and crime. Using national and city-level datasets, they show that connections between drugs and crime vary by city and that no uniform association exists between any specific type of drug use and any specific type of crime.

After reviewing trends in drug use and crime, White and Gorman present evidence of three main ways in which drugs and crime may be connected: Drug use causes crime, crime leads to drug use, or some type of common cause exists between the two behaviors. Their review indicates that none of these three models fits all types of drug use and crime. Rather, the drug-using/crime-committing population is heterogeneous; multiple paths may lead to either drug use or crime. Following their review, the authors consider policy options and promising new research directions.

In a paper that is considerably more positive about the role of the criminal justice system in crime control, Maureen Brown reviews the rapidly expanding impact of information technology (IT) on criminal justice bureaucracies during the past half century.

Although IT has undoubtedly had revolutionary effects on many aspects of American life, both its current and its potential impacts on criminal justice are arguably even more far reaching. Brown provides an intriguing history of some of the major milestones passed by criminal justice bureaucracies as they have adopted to evolving IT capacities. Different segments of the criminal justice system have moved ahead at different rates, with courts generally leading the way and corrections lagging farther behind.

Brown also traces changes in computer-related crime, considering some of the problems it has posed for law enforcement officials and policymakers. As recently as the 1970s, there were virtually no specific laws against computer crime at any level of government. Instead, the few computer crimes that were prosecuted were processed under existing statutes such as embezzlement or theft. By contrast, by the end of the 20th century, 49 of 50 States plus the Federal Government had enacted at least some legislation specific to computer crime, with more specific regulation likely to follow. Moreover, as computers become ever more closely linked to economic, political, and social systems throughout the world, there is growing recognition that the regulation of computer crime is a global issue.

Brown also considers the evolving implications of criminal justice adoption of IT for individual civil liberties, especially the right to privacy. America's concerns about individual privacy have deep historical roots and are grounded in

guarantees set forth in the American Constitution. As the IT revolution gathers steam, it raises increasingly thorny problems relating to the balance between individual rights and law enforcement effectiveness. IT provides criminal justice bureaucracies with an unprecedented ability to investigate, persecute, and control the citizenry. At the same time, IT provides potential lawbreakers with new tools to avoid detection and prosecution. Brown provides a brief glimpse at how some of these issues have evolved along with the growing criminal justice dependence on IT.

Brown concludes that despite the tremendous advances from IT applications in criminal justice processing, major challenges remain. In terms of adapting to IT, the various components of the criminal justice system have to develop more effective methods of information sharing, they must face the ongoing problem of supporting the IT changes already implemented, and they must continue to mediate the boundary between individual privacy and the growing demand for public access. In terms of law enforcement, the explosion of IT has forced criminal justice agencies to face the challenges posed by investigating and prosecuting crime types that not only are expanding exponentially but also are increasingly rendering meaningless the traditional concept of local, regional, and even national jurisdiction.

The explosive growth of criminology

A final area of extraordinary change related to crime in the United States has been in the explosive growth of criminology as a field of study and a science over the past several decades. Membership in the American Society of Criminology—now the largest criminology association in the world—increased from just 7 when it was founded in 1941 (Morris 1975) to nearly 3,000 in 1998 (Zahn 1999, 1). At the close of the 20th century, there were 18 freestanding Ph.D. programs in criminology, as well as dozens of programs operating as separate schools or as specialty areas within sociology and other departments. More graduates and undergraduates now pursue courses and degrees in criminology than in most other social science disciplines, and criminology has become one of the fastest growing college majors in the United States. This growth in criminology has been accompanied by a corresponding explosion in criminology-related research.

In the lead article of this book, Charles Tittle makes a herculean effort to review the most important theoretical developments in 20th-century criminology. Tittle begins by dividing the field into four categories: theories of individual differences in offending, theories of variation in offending through the life cycle, theories of diversity of crime rates among social entities, and theories of differences among social situations in criminal outcomes. Tittle divides the section on individual differences in offending into six major themes: (1) personal

defects, (2) learning, (3) strain or deprivation, (4) identity, (5) rational choice, and (6) control/integration. Throughout the chapter, Tittle shows how theories have evolved over time and points out connections, integrative trends, and cross fertilizations among theoretical strands. Tittle concludes that criminological theorists have made great strides, particularly in the past two decades, and as a result are now able to outline broadly the causes of crime. However, he concludes that much work remains to be done, particularly in terms of moving beyond large-scale, aggregate generalizations to more precise explanations and predictions. Tittle sees as promising a growing belief among criminologists in the importance of theory and theory development, greater integration in theory building, and research directly informed by theoretical concerns.

In this volume, we find ourselves somewhat precariously balanced between the "Scylla" of accurately capturing the past and the "Charybdis" of reliably predicting the future. Both present great challenges. Playwright Harold Pinter captured the precariousness of describing the past when he referred to it as "what you remember, imagine you remember, convince yourself you remember, or pretend to remember" (in Bowden 1998, 56). But author and philosopher Mark Twain is no more optimistic about our ability to predict the future: "[P]rophesy is a good line of business, but it is full of risks" (in Granger 1980, 211). We have prepared this volume in the early part of the 21st century both to provide a record of where crime in America has been over the past half century and to offer a few glimpses into where it is going. After reviewing earlier attempts to characterize the nature of crime in America, we approach this undertaking with great humility.

Notes

1. The abridgement appeared just after Thrasher's death (Dodson 1962).

2. For an excellent discussion of these types of collectivities, see Klein (1995, ch. 2).

3. There is a realm of subjective forecasting in which those involved in an organization, profession, or problem make short-term forecasts about what will happen in the next week, month, quarter, or year, for example. Such subjective forecasts may prove useful when those making the forecast are closely involved with the issue under consideration and the forecast is for a discrete unit, such as a corporation. For the types of issues under consideration here, however, forecasts based on available data are preferable.

4. Some historians of violence (e.g., Lane 1997) suggest that the long-term decline in violence accompanying industrialization since the mid-1800s may have reversed after the mid-1900s in response to increasing deindustrialization.

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