

Subcultural Diversity and the Fear of Crime and Gangs

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Fear and gangs were two of the most important factors driving crime policy in the 1990s. Policy makers and the media blamed gangs for much of the violence occurring across the nation and for public fear. This article examines fear of crime and gangs in Orange County, California, as measured by a randomized survey of 1,223 respondents conducted in 1995 by The Orange County Register newspaper. The authors find that the factors predicting fear of crime and fear of gangs are different. In addition, they find that concern about subcultural diversity is a strong predictor of both types of fear.

The public's fear of crime and gangs became one of the strongest motivating forces behind legislators' calls for harsher policies toward criminals during the 1990s (see *Juvenile Crime: Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, 1994). Gang members became the stereotypical criminals of the decade, being blamed for random violent crimes against innocent citizens. For example, in 1994, then Deputy Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) James C. Frier said at a hearing before the U.S. Congress, "In nearly every metropolitan area of this country, street gangs are responsible for a substantial portion of the increase in the crimes of violence" (*The gang problem in America*, 1994, p. 14). Prompted in part by academic and practitioner warnings of increasing gang problems, President Clinton declared a "war on gangs" in 1997 (Clinton, 1997), and the national Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) held two National Youth Gang Conferences (in 1996 and 1999). As Best (1999, p. 2) recently noted, "concern about random, senseless violence has become a central theme of contemporary culture."

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Although the media and policy makers often focus on the public's general fear of crime, recent research indicates that fear of crime is complex and that people fear different crimes differently (Ferraro, 1995; Rountree, 1998; Rountree & Land, 1996; Warr, 1994). For example, people might fear drive-by shootings or home-invasion robberies more than burglary because the personal harm is potentially greater for violent crimes than for other crimes.

Another focus of recent fear-of-crime research is on efforts to explain why those persons with the greatest risk of criminal victimization (e.g., young males) are not the most fearful (see Warr, 1994). Focusing on the community dynamics that predict fear of crime, one theoretical approach contributing to our understanding of why people who may not have the highest objective risk of victimization are afraid is subcultural diversity (Merry, 1981). This theory, grounded in the social disorganization tradition, posits that concern about racial and ethnic diversity and misunderstandings about cultural differences are the critical factors explaining greater fear of crime in those who are not necessarily at higher risk for being victimized (Covington & Taylor, 1991; Merry, 1981). Examining this theory seems an important undertaking, given the media and political focus on racial and ethnic minorities as the perpetrators of crime (e.g., Willie Horton) and as members of gangs (see Baer & Chambliss, 1997; Best, 1999; Irwin, Austin, & Baird, 1998; Madriz, 1997; Sacco, 1998).

Previous research has not addressed the differences between fear of crime generally and specific sources of fear of crime, such as gangs. Moreover, there have been few studies that examine the effects of concern about subcultural diversity on fear of crime (but see Chiricos, Hogan, & Gertz, 1997; Covington & Taylor, 1991). This article builds on the fear-of-crime literature in three ways. First, we examine the general fear of crime and the specific fear of gangs separately to allow differences to emerge in the predictive factors for each kind of fear. Second, we look at the differential impact of concern about diversity on fear of crime versus fear of gangs after controlling for demographic factors. Third, we study the indirect effects of demographics through concern about subcultural diversity on fear of crime and fear of gangs to allow relationships to emerge that are not evident in a noncausal model analysis.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

In recent years, gangs have been targeted for much of the fear and violence that exist in urban communities. The media often anchor crime stories by noting whether they are gang related and blame gangs for harming communities (Lane, 1998). Politicians routinely cite citizen fear when introducing and

advocating new or harsher crime policies and often argue that much of the behavior the public fears is a direct result of criminal gangs. As the California Council on Criminal Justice (1995, p. 7) noted, "No matter where one lives, the fear of violent juvenile crime has become overwhelming." In this vein, President Clinton made "fighting gangs" a top priority of his second administration and unveiled proposals to fight juvenile violence and gang crime (Peterson, 1997). In his 1997 State of the Union Address, President Clinton called for a "war on gangs" and indicated that to build stronger communities we "should start with safe streets" (Clinton, 1997). Moreover, Senator Diane Feinstein coauthored and introduced a Senate bill termed The Federal Gang Violence Act of 1997 after being prompted by the murder of 3-year-old Stephanie Kuhen on an East Los Angeles street, a case that sparked nationwide press coverage and widespread concern about gangs. She noted that this effort recognized "the growing problem of gang violence as one of the most important issues facing our nation's towns and cities" (Feinstein, 1997, p. 1).

California and Southern California, in particular, have been concerned about rising numbers of gang members. Popular wisdom holds (and gang research shows) Los Angeles as one of the major gang capitals in the United States (Klein, 1995; Maxson, 1999). Police there have been struggling with gang crime for years. Recent revelations about the corruption and brutality committed by members of the Los Angeles Police Department Rampart Division CRASH Unit indicate that some police have been willing to resort to illegal activities in their efforts to "eradicate" gang activity and put gang members in prison (Lait & Glover, 2000). During the 1980s and 1990s, California passed many laws designed to help police and communities combat crime by street gangs. For example, the legislature passed bills designed to battle drugs, drive-by shootings, and witness intimidation during the 1980s (see Jackson, 1993). One of the toughest laws was the California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP), which was passed in 1988. Since that date, this law has given police and prosecutors more power to arrest, prosecute, and punish "criminal street gangs." In stating the need for such a comprehensive law, the legislature noted in the act itself: "The State of California is in a state of crisis which has been caused by violent street gangs whose members threaten, terrorize, and commit a multitude of crimes against the peaceful citizens of their neighborhoods" (STEP Act of 1988, p. 67). In 1996, Californians also overwhelmingly approved propositions that created sentencing enhancements for the gang-related crimes of carjacking and drive-by shootings ("How California Voted," 1996).

Local law enforcement leaders in Orange County, the southern neighbor of Los Angeles County, became increasingly concerned about the "coming

storm” of gang activity during the 1990s and, in 1992, created the County-Wide Gang Strategy Steering Committee (GSSC). This committee set out to create an intensive, hard-hitting strategy to combat local gang crime through law enforcement suppression efforts and through educating the public about gangs and gang crime. Their mission was

to devise methods for improving the quality of life in Orange County by reducing gang violence and illegal drug use through education, enforcement, and community support. (Orange County Chiefs’ and Sheriff’s Association [OCCSA], 1997, p. 5)

Since 1992, GSSC suppression strategies have centered on Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Teams (TARGET)—a cooperative effort between the police, the district attorney, and probation to identify, arrest, and fully prosecute “targeted” gangs and gang members. To better understand their effects on gang crime trends, the GSSC created a cooperative database called the Gang Incident Tracking System (GITS) to track gang incidents on a countywide basis (see Vila & Meeker, 1997). These leaders also set out to educate the public about gangs and gang crime through an education and awareness program called Project: No Gangs and through press conferences to disseminate information about gang crime as collected through GITS (see OCCSA, 1998).

Local law enforcement and media activity prior to the survey used here is an important context to understanding its findings. Before late 1995 when the data for this study were collected, law enforcement and other local policy makers reported to the Orange County public increases in the number of gangs and gang members and increases in the number of gang-related murders. Between January 1991 and the end of 1995, the reported number of gangs and tagger crews increased from 192 to 341, and the reported number of identified gang members increased from approximately 12,000 to 21,328. According to a report by the Orange County District Attorney, the number of solved and unsolved gang-related murders increased from 31 occurring in 1991 to 70 in 1995 (Capizzi, 1996). In addition, in the years preceding this survey, there were some high-profile gang-related incidents that were widely reported by the local media as evidence that the county was “not immune” from gang violence (Saavedra, 1992, p. B6). Two cases received considerable media and policy-maker attention. First, in 1991, a teacher’s aide was shot and killed by gang members on the way home from the grocery store (Horton, 1991), and in 1993, a teenager was killed by gang members in an affluent area of the county not associated with gang activity (Saavedra, 1992).¹ The public was being informed by different agencies in the criminal justice system and

by the media that gangs and gang violence were growing problems just prior to the newspaper survey that is the subject of this analysis.

*IMPORTANCE OF SEPARATING GENERAL FEAR
OF CRIME FROM SPECIFIC FEAR OF GANGS*

The widespread political and criminal justice concern about gangs leads one to ask whether the general public is as concerned about gangs as policy makers would lead us to conclude. Gang-related fear of crime is an important issue not only for policy purposes but also for empirical and theoretical ones. Although researchers have noted that fear is likely to be crime specific, most studies have not examined fear of particular crimes (Ferraro, 1995; Rountree & Land, 1996; Warr, 1994). Measures of fear of crime are often broad (i.e., the standard General Social Survey and Gallup questions) and fail to delineate in their wording either types of crime (e.g., homicide, assault, burglary) or specific sources of crime (e.g., "random" assaults by gang members or other strangers versus "nonrandom" assaults by intimates). In fact, neither of the two most widely used questions in surveys even mentions the word *crime*, making it difficult to understand respondents' answers (Ferraro, 1995; LaGrange & Ferraro, 1987, 1989; Warr, 1994).²

This study attempts to address these concerns by comparing the general fear of crime to the specific fear of neighborhood gangs, groups that have been targeted by politicians and the media as committing random violence. Random violence associated with gangs seems especially likely to evoke different levels of fear than other types of crime. Inherent in the definition of *random* is the possibility that it can affect anyone, including those who do not frequent traditionally high-crime areas and who may even take specific precautions to avoid victimization. The media often portray gang violence with the image of an innocent bystander caught in a drive-by shooting or in the crossfire of gang warfare. The killing of "honor student" Corie Williams by gang members on a bus in Los Angeles illustrates this point. Corie was discussed at length in the national media and by the public not only because she died on the same day as Ennis Cosby but also because she symbolizes the capricious nature of gang violence.³ If an honor student can be killed, anyone can, thus reinforcing the randomness of crime in people's minds. Gangs may also be more likely to invoke fear in residents because gangs are often visible, hanging out on street corners in groups, wearing distinctive dress and hair styles, leaving identifying graffiti on walls and buildings, and making an effort to intimidate others within and outside their neighborhoods (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). As Ferraro (1995, p. 115) noted, "Gang activity and the

threat of robbery, car-jacking or assault . . . enter the minds of urban dwellers during the course of routine daily living.”

*FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FEAR
OF CRIME AND FEAR OF GANGS DIFFER*

Prior research has illustrated some relatively consistent yet paradoxical findings regarding the association between individual demographic factors and fear of crime. Studies have shown women and older individuals are more afraid of crime than males and younger people, although women and older people face the lowest objective risk of criminal victimization (Ferraro, 1995; LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989; Miethe, 1995). This consistent finding is called the *paradox of fear* (Warr, 1994, p. 12; see also Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Stafford & Galle, 1984). The finding regarding women's fear is consistent over time, and researchers generally assume it reflects women's concerns about sexual assault (Ferraro, 1995; Madriz, 1997; Rountree, 1998; Stanko, 1995; Warr, 1985). This assumption is supported by findings of lack of gender differences when specific crimes, excluding sexual assault, are studied. In recent research, for example, Haghghi and Sorensen (1996), Rountree and Land (1996), and Rountree (1998) found gender to be nonsignificant in predicting burglary-specific fear.

The data regarding older people are more equivocal. Yin (1985) and LaGrange and Ferraro (1987, 1989) have argued that the older people's fear of crime is overstated, and Ferraro (1995), Haghghi, and Sorensen (1996); Rountree and Land (1996); and Rountree (1998) found younger people to be more fearful. Chiricos et al. (1997) found that fear was significantly lower for older Whites with higher incomes, and McCoy, Wooldredge, Cullen, Dubeck, and Browning (1996) found that older people are not as fearful as some have discovered. Yet, others have argued that older people's fear levels do not match their victimization levels because older people often have taken steps to protect themselves (Skogan, 1990; Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

With regard to race, minorities (especially African Americans) are typically more fearful than Whites (Haghghi & Sorensen, 1996; Skogan, 1995; Warr, 1994), although Rountree and Land (1996) found non-Whites were less fearful of burglary than Whites. People who live in low-income areas are generally thought to be more fearful because they face more problematic community dynamics, such as social disorganization (Taylor & Covington, 1993; Warr, 1994; Will & McGrath, 1995). As noted earlier, the relationship between prior victimization and fear is problematic because those most victimized (e.g., young males) are not necessarily the most fearful (Taylor &

Hale, 1986; Warr, 1994). Given these mixed findings on the importance of demographics, it is likely that these variables will differentially predict the general fear of crime and the specific fear of gangs.

IMPORTANCE OF SUBCULTURAL DIVERSITY

One approach to examining the victimization-fear paradox has been to analyze community factors thought to be associated with fear. Most of the theories pointing to the importance of community factors for explaining fear of crime are situated within the social disorganization tradition. This perspective focuses on neighborhood factors such as low socioeconomic status, residential mobility, and racial heterogeneity as key in predicting crime and fear of crime (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Shaw & McKay, 1942). The subcultural diversity theory tested here is situated in the social disorganization tradition and posits that fear of crime primarily results from individuals' worries about living near people from different cultural (or racial) backgrounds (Merry, 1981; see also Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Skogan, 1995). According to this view, the manners and behaviors of these "others" are difficult to interpret, which leads to uncertainty in the environment and therefore fear. Merry (1981, p. 149) argued that racial and ethnic differences are a problem because residents interpret their neighbors' behavior "through the lens of their own culture." For example, she found that Chinese residents who were typically quiet and reserved did not understand the loud, boisterous behavior of the Blacks in their housing complex and therefore found them dangerous. When people fear others, they are less likely to feel they have the individual and collective efficacy in their neighborhoods to maintain social control and combat problems, such as groups of teenagers, gangs, and crime (see Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997).

Given the recent origin of the subcultural diversity model to explain fear of crime, there are few studies specifically testing this theory. However, there are findings in the literature that support this model. Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchirico (1982, p. 767) found that "the racial composition of cities influences fear of both Whites and non Whites." In their study, the proportion of interracial, White victimizations and the crime rate directly affected Whites' fear. Alternatively, segregation and percentage non-White directly affected non-Whites' fear. Although they did not directly measure fear in their study of attachment to place, Taylor, Gottfredson, and Brower (1985, pp. 539-540) found "that racial diversity at the block level was associated with lower levels of attachment" to the residential environment and suggested that this may be due to "confusion about the appropriate norms to follow," which directly supports the subcultural diversity argument.

Covington and Taylor (1991) specifically tested the subcultural diversity thesis, along with the other three dominant theoretical models that posit community factors as the primary causes of fear,⁴ and found some support for all four models. They concluded that subcultural differences among people living in the same neighborhood increase fear and argued that fear was greater in areas where the racial mix was changing rather than stable. Taylor and Covington (1993) subsequently found that neighborhoods experiencing unexpected increases in minority and youth populations had higher fear levels, supporting the subcultural diversity theory and confirming their earlier arguments.

In a more recent study, St. John and Heald-Moore (1996) found that prejudiced Whites were more likely to be fearful when they encountered a Black stranger than were nonprejudiced Whites, although both were more fearful when they came upon a Black versus a White stranger. Moreover, in their recent examination of neighborhood racial composition and fear of crime, Chiricos et al. (1997) found that when they controlled for demographics and perceptions of crime in the neighborhood, perceived racial composition was significantly related to fear for Whites—especially those who felt they were in the minority—but not Blacks. This study builds on this recent literature regarding the importance of subcultural diversity to fear of crime by examining its effects on the general fear of crime and the specific fear of neighborhood gangs in Orange County, California.

METHOD

The Research Setting

Orange County, California, is an ideal setting for the study of subcultural diversity and gang-related fear of crime because of its increasing racial and ethnic heterogeneity⁵ and the fact that most gangs in Southern California have arisen within the Hispanic culture (Jankowski, 1991; Klein, 1995; Moore, 1978; Moore, Vigil, & Garcia, 1983; Spergel, 1995). With the 1994 passage of Proposition 187 in California restricting civil rights and social services for all undocumented (often Latino) immigrants, there is strong evidence of racial and ethnic concerns across the state. As one legal immigrant told a newspaper reporter upon the passage of this law, “The Mexicans don’t understand the Americans, and the Americans don’t understand the Mexicans” (as quoted in Ferrell & Lopez, 1994, p. A21). With these racial and ethnic concerns and the earlier mentioned law enforcement focus on gangs, the subcultural diversity perspective is well suited to the study of fear of crime and gangs in this area.

Polls conducted before the current data were collected in 1995 indicate that residents of Orange County were concerned about crime during the early to mid-1990s. In 1993, 1994, and 1996, residents ranked crime as the most serious problem facing the county, and in 1995, crime was second only to the Orange County bankruptcy crisis (Baldassare & Katz, 1993, 1994, 1995b, 1996). Other than survey data collected by *The Orange County Register*, there has been only one survey asking residents specifically about gang-related concerns (in 1994), so there is no strong baseline with which to compare current concerns about gangs. However, the 1994 survey indicated that 75% of respondents had heard of gangs or gang-related problems in their communities, and 46% believed that youth violence had increased in the past few years. About half of the parents in the survey worried "very much" that their children could be in physical danger because of gangs and youth violence (Baldassare & Associates, 1994). These earlier polls, coupled with the criminal justice system's publicizing the increased problem of gang crime, clearly sets the stage for increasing public awareness of these issues.

Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

The data used here were originally collected by a marketing research firm for *The Orange County Register*, the county's local newspaper. The instrument was designed as a market survey and was conducted in two phases from September 19 to December 11, 1995. The first phase consisted of a 24-minute telephone survey of 1,223 randomly selected adults from Orange County, which primarily asked demographic questions. Adult respondents within each household were selected by the "most recent" birthday method (see Table 1 for sample characteristics).⁶ In the second phase, all respondents were mailed a 16-page self-administered questionnaire and then recontacted via telephone to obtain their responses to these more in-depth attitudinal questions. The firm chose this two-phase approach primarily because they expected to get a better response rate. According to Frey (1989, p. 240) a "major trend" in survey research is the use of this "mixed-mode" or "dual frame" approach. The use of more than one technique allows survey researchers to overcome the disadvantages of any one technique and increases the probability of getting responses from the original sample (Frey, 1989).

Dependent Variables

There are two dependent variables in this study, one measuring fear of crime and one measuring fear of gangs. The survey question asked the following:

TABLE 1: Sample Characteristics

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age			
18-24	1	172	14.1
25-29	2	154	12.6
30-34	3	182	14.9
35-39	4	156	12.8
40-44	5	139	11.4
45-49	6	116	9.5
50-54	7	81	6.6
55-59	8	76	6.2
60-64	9	39	3.2
65-69	10	50	4.1
70 or older	11	58	4.7
Gender			
Male	0	560	45.8
Female	1	663	54.2
Race and/or ethnicity^a			
Non-White	0	288	23.5
White	1	935	76.5
Education			
Not a high school graduate	1	51	4.2
High school graduate	2	265	21.7
Vocational and/or technical	3	25	2.0
Some college	4	376	30.7
College graduate	5	374	30.6
Postgraduate	6	132	10.8
Income (\$)			
Under 10,000	1	49	4.0
10,000-19,999	2	74	6.1
20,000-24,999	3	81	6.6
25,000-34,999	4	131	10.7
35,000-49,999	5	309	25.3
50,000-74,999	6	281	23.0
75,000-99,999	7	168	13.7
100,000 or more	8	130	10.6
Home ownership			
Own	1	631	51.6
Rent or other	0	592	48.4
Geographical region			
Inland central	1	331	27.1
Other geographical region	0	892	72.9

a. Our sample was primarily White (76%), which represents their proportion in the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). However, the non-White portion of the sample underrepresents Latinos, who represent the largest minority population in Orange County. According to staff at *The Orange County Register*, Latinos have a differential participation rate in surveys because they are difficult to reach. This low participation rate may be due in part to the fact that they are either too poor to own phones or unwilling to answer personal questions due to cultural restraints. In addition, the staff speculate that the sizeable undocumented immigrant population is less likely to answer questions due to fear of deportation.

Below is a list of day-to-day problems that may or may not particularly concern you. Please check the box that indicates how much you, yourself, have actually worried about each problem in the past year or so.

For each day-to-day problem listed, respondents were asked to mark whether they worried *frequently*, *occasionally*, *hardly ever*, or *never* (a 4-point scale). Two of the day-to-day problems listed were “crime” and “neighborhood gangs.” The answers regarding these two problems were reverse coded (1 = *never*, 4 = *frequently*) and constitute the dependent variables for this study.⁷

Independent Variables

The independent variables consist of demographic characteristics and a composite variable measuring concern about subcultural diversity. Demographic characteristics were included because prior research has noted the importance of examining the contribution of these individual factors to explaining fear of crime. The demographic characteristics entered into equations include age, education, gender, income, race and/or ethnicity, home ownership, and county region of residence (see Table 1).⁸ County region of residence was included as a measure of the community dynamics people face in Orange County—those living in the inland central region are more likely to experience social disorganization and gangs.

Three of the day-to-day problem questions constitute the variable measuring concern about subcultural diversity. The survey asked respondents how much they worried about “problems in racial and ethnic relations,” “foreign immigrants in Orange County,” and “changing moral standards.” To create a composite variable representing the construct of subcultural diversity, we again reverse coded the answers then summed the three scores together and divided by three, creating a mean score for each respondent.⁹ We chose these variables as indicators of subcultural diversity based on the qualitative work of Merry (1981). She argued that racial, ethnic, and cultural differences between community residents often cause people to believe they are in danger of being victimized by crime and hurt by other related problems, such as insults and intrusions on their own ways of life (see Merry, 1981, pp. 143-150). According to Merry, this sense of danger is in part a result of cultural differences in moral standards, such as norms about how to act, what to wear, and how to achieve success. In Orange County, previous research has indicated that much of concern about subcultural diversity is related to undocumented Latino immigrants, who residents believe are more likely to participate in local gangs and to bring disorder and different moral and behavioral standards with them, thereby causing neighborhoods to decline (Lane, 1998).

TABLE 2: One-Way ANOVA for Dichotomous Regression Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>F Value</i>	<i>Probability</i>
Fear of crime					
Gender	Females	3.382 to 3.492	3.44	10.5069	.0012
	Males	3.240 to 3.362	3.30		
Race	White	3.329 to 3.422	3.38	.0066	<i>ns</i>
	Non-White	3.284 to 3.459	3.37		
Home ownership	Owner	3.336 to 3.447	3.39	.6961	<i>ns</i>
	Other	3.296 to 3.417	3.36		
Geographical region	Inland central	3.311 to 3.463	3.39	.1250	<i>ns</i>
		3.321 to 3.419	3.37		
Fear of gangs					
Gender	Females	3.052 to 3.183	3.12	5.9846	.0146
	Males	2.925 to 3.068	3.00		
Race	White	3.004 to 3.114	3.06	.0613	<i>ns</i>
	Non-White	2.970 to 3.177	3.07		
Home ownership	Owner	2.936 to 3.074	3.00	5.8016	.0162
	Other	3.056 to 3.192	3.12		
Geographical region	Inland central	3.131 to 3.301	3.22	14.3394	.0002
		3.131 to 3.301	3.22		
		2.947 to 3.064	3.01		

TABLE 3: Zero-Order Correlations of Continuous Regression Variables

	<i>Fear of Crime</i>		<i>Fear of Gangs</i>	
	<i>r</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Age	.14	.000	.06	.027
Education	-.05	<i>ns</i>	-.12	.000
Income	-.06	.026	-.08	.007
Diversity	.46	.000	.47	.000

ANALYSIS

We conducted three types of analysis to determine the effects of demographic variables and concern about subcultural diversity on the fear of crime and gangs. First, we ran bivariate correlations and one-way ANOVAs with crime worry and gang worry to determine the bivariate relationships between the independent variables and fear of crime and gangs (see Tables 2 & 3). Second, we ran stepwise ordinary least squares regression equations for each

TABLE 4: Results of Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis for Fear of Crime

<i>Variable</i>	<i>R² Change</i>	<i>b^a</i>	<i>β^a</i>	<i>t^a</i>
Step 1	.03***			
Age		.018	.072	2.42*
Gender		.068	.047	1.79
Race		-.080	-.467	-1.75
Education		.002	.004	.14
Income		-.028	-.070	-2.41*
Home ownership		-.038	-.026	-.87
Step 2	.00			
Geographical region		-.025	-.015	-.59
Step 3	.19***			
Concern about diversity		.502	.451	17.32***
Constant = 2.089				
F = 43.75***				
Model R ² = .225				
Model adjusted R ² = .219				

NOTE: N = 1,223.

a. Coefficients from final model.

*p < .05. ***p < .001.

TABLE 5: Results of Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis for Fear of Gangs

<i>Variable</i>	<i>R² Change</i>	<i>b^a</i>	<i>β^a</i>	<i>t^a</i>
Step 1	.03***			
Age		.007	.024	.80
Gender		.062	.036	1.40
Race		-.026	-.013	-.49
Education		-.029	-.047	-1.78
Income		-.016	-.033	-1.17
Home ownership		-.179	-.103	-3.46***
Step 2	.01***			
Geographical region		.151	.077	3.03**
Step 3	.21***			
Concern about diversity		.621	.469	18.29***
Constant = 1.540				
F = 49.73***				
Model R ² = .247				
Model adjusted R ² = .242				

N = 1,223.

a. Coefficients from final model (b, β, t).

p < .01. *p < .001.

dependent variable to determine the relative contribution of each predictor to each type of fear and to examine the difference in the predictive value of these independent variables for the two types of fear (see Tables 4 & 5). Finally, we conducted path analyses to test the subcultural diversity theoretical model,

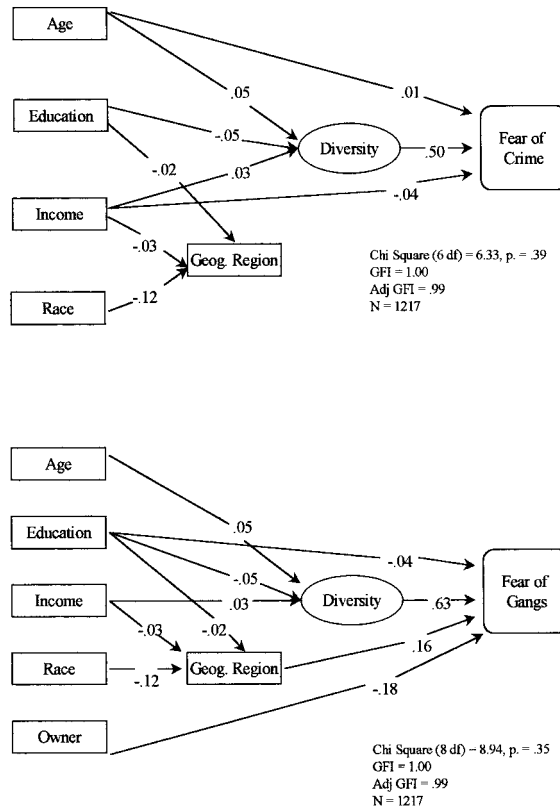


Figure 1: Path Analyses Predicting Fear of Crime and Fear of Gangs

which suggests that demographic variables influence concern about subcultural diversity, which in turn influences fear (see Figure 1).

RESULTS

We examined two research questions. First, are general fear of crime and the specific fear of gangs different? Second, how does concern about subcultural diversity or racial heterogeneity affect these types of fear? Fear of crime and fear of gangs, although significantly related, are not highly correlated for this sample ($r = .40$). The zero-order correlations for continuous regression variables and a series of one-way ANOVA tests for dichotomous regression variables indicate that at the bivariate level, females, older individ-

uals, people with lower income levels, and people who were concerned about subcultural diversity were significantly more fearful of crime and gangs. However, being female and being older were more important for fear of crime than fear of gangs. For fear of gangs but not fear of crime, those with lower education levels, those who did not own homes, and those who lived in the inland central region of the county, where more social disorganization and gang activity occurs, also were more concerned. It is interesting that race (ethnicity) is not significantly related to fear of crime or fear of gangs, even at the bivariate level (see Tables 2 & 3). Bivariate results would lead us to believe, as prior research has shown, that being female and being older are important variables predicting fear and that being in more unstable environments (e.g., renting a home, living in a more diverse and crime-ridden area) is more important to gang-related fear than broader crime-related fear.

Stepwise Regressions Predicting Fear of Crime and Fear of Gangs

The next step is to predict fear of crime and fear of gangs based on the demographic variables already stated and subcultural diversity variable while controlling for other factors. Tables 4 and 5 report the results of the stepwise linear regression analyses predicting fear of crime and fear of gangs. Due to the importance of age, gender, race, education, income, and home ownership on fear of crime (see Warr, 1994), we entered these variables on the first step. For fear of crime, these variables together explain only 3% of the variance but are significant ($R^2 = .03, p < .001$). For fear of gangs, these variables also predict only 3% the variance ($R^2 = .03, p < .001$).

Because of the strong regional differences in crime, and gang crime especially, we entered the respondents' county region of residence next. For fear of crime, the county region of residence does not explain any additional variance and is not significant. But for fear of gangs, county region of residence significantly increases the R^2 by 1% (R^2 change = .01, $p < .001$).

We entered subcultural diversity last because we wanted to determine if this factor was a significant predictor of fear of crime and gangs after controlling for the other variables. For fear of crime, this variable caused a significant change in the R^2 (R^2 change = .19, $p < .001$), increasing the explained variance in fear by 19%, leading to a total adjusted R^2 of .219 for the final model. For fear of gangs, subcultural diversity explains an even larger, significant increase in the R^2 than it does for fear of crime (R^2 change = .21, $p < .001$), leading to a final adjusted R^2 of .242 for the model.

Tables 4 and 5 also report the regression coefficients for the final fear of crime and fear of gangs regression models, with demographics, region of residence, and concern about diversity included as predictors. Although age ($t =$

2.42, $p < .05$) and income ($t = -2.41$, $p < .05$) are still significantly related to crime-related fear, they are no longer important to gang-related fear. So, the older one was and the lower his or her income, the more fearful that person was likely to be of crime in general but not gangs in particular. Although gender was important to both fear of crime and gangs in the bivariate analysis, gender is no longer significant in the final regression models. Being female is not a predictor of either kind of fear once we control for other factors. As expected, based on the bivariate analyses, race is not important to either type of fear. We found that education and home ownership were significantly and negatively related to only gang-related fear at the bivariate level. In the regression equation, only home ownership remains significant ($t = -3.46$, $p < .001$), so those who do not own homes are still more fearful of gangs after controlling for other factors.

As in the bivariate analyses, region of residence is not a significant predictor of fear of crime but is a significant predictor of fear of gangs ($t = 3.03$, $p < .01$). Those who lived in the inland central region, which is generally associated with more social disorganization and gang problems, were more concerned than those who did not live in this area about gangs but not about crime in general. The concern about diversity variable is significantly and positively related to fear of crime ($t = 17.32$, $p < .001$) and fear of gangs ($t = 18.29$, $p < .001$). Those individuals who were more concerned about race and ethnic relations, immigrants, and changing moral standards were much more likely to worry about crime and gangs. In sum, the stepwise linear regression equations indicate that demographic factors differentially predict fear of crime and fear of gangs. And, these models show that concern about diversity explains a lot of variance in both equations—more in the fear of gangs model (21%) than in the fear of crime model (19%).

Path Analyses Predicting Fear of Crime and Fear of Gangs

The stepwise regression analyses confirm that both residential location and concerns about subcultural diversity are important predictors of fear of gangs, whereas only the latter is important to fear of crime. The final step employs path analysis to determine the role of these variables as intervening causal effects between demographics and fear of crime and gangs. As noted earlier, the hypothesis that guided the development of the path model was that demographic factors would predict the geographical region of residence (which theoretically varies in racial heterogeneity and crime), which in turn would predict concern about subcultural diversity, which would predict fear. Again, the results of the analyses are different depending on whether we examine fear of crime or fear of gangs.

For simplicity, Figure 1 reports the standardized coefficients for the paths with significant *t*-values in each path model or those variables that have significant direct or indirect relationships with the dependent variables—fear of crime and fear of gangs. Consistent with the stepwise regression findings, gender (being female) is not important to either model. Each path model provides a good fit. For fear of crime, the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) is .99, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) statistic is 1.00, and the chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic is 6.33 (6 *df*, *p* = .39).¹⁰ For fear of gangs, the AGFI is .99, the GFI is 1.00, and the chi-square is 8.94 (8 *df*, *p* = .35).

As would be expected, the indirect paths to fear of crime and fear of gangs from the exogenous demographic variables of age, education, and income to the endogenous variable of concern about diversity are significant and of the same magnitude for both models. Age and income are positively related to concern about diversity, whereas education is negatively related to these diversity concerns. The paths from the exogenous demographic variables of education, income, and race to the endogenous variable geographical region are significant and negative for both models. As we expected, people with lower educational levels, lower incomes, and non-Whites were more likely to live in the inland central region. For both models, concern about diversity has a significant direct positive effect on fear.

As in the stepwise regression models, people who were more concerned about diversity were more concerned about gangs than crime in general. However, the path analyses show differences in relationships among fear, subcultural diversity, and other variables. For fear of crime but not fear of gangs, age has a direct positive effect and income has a direct negative effect on fear. Consistent with the literature, older people and individuals with lower incomes were more likely to fear crime in general. For fear of gangs but not fear of crime, education and home ownership have direct negative effects. People with lower education levels and renters were more likely to worry about gangs. Geographical region of residence or living in the inland central region has a direct positive effect on fear of gangs, and education, income, and race have negative indirect effects on fear of gangs through geographical region. Findings for both models are consistent with prior research in that the *R*²s were modest—.22 for fear of crime and .24 for fear of gangs (see Chiricos et al., 1997). In sum, the path models show relationships between demographic variables and fear that were nonsignificant in the regression models and fear. For fear of crime, education now has an indirect negative effect through concern about diversity. For fear of gangs, age and income have a positive indirect effect and education has a negative indirect effect through concern about diversity. In addition, education, income, and race have negative indirect effects through geographic region.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In all three types of analyses conducted, the results were different depending on the dependent variable—fear of crime or fear of gangs. Although much of the previous research has been problematic in its measurement of fear of crime, it has shown relatively consistent findings with regard to demographics. In general, women and older people have been most fearful, although they face the lowest objective risk of victimization by street crime. It is interesting that the *t*-values in the first and second steps of the regressions indicate that when diversity is not in the model, gender is a significant predictor of both fear of crime and fear of gangs. But, the current results are noteworthy in that they do not show a gender effect on either fear of crime or fear of gangs when we control for concern about diversity. Other recent studies have also found that gender is not significantly related to fear (e.g., Rountree & Land, 1996). We suspect that the political war on crime and gangs and the media's attention to these issues, and especially the attention to "random" violent crimes and immigration "problems," have made concern about gangs more universal among men and women in Orange County. As Madriz (1997) noted, crime (and in this case gang crime) may have become "code language" for both race and class (here, poor Latino immigrants) (see also Baer & Chambliss, 1997). On the other hand, it may be, as Rountree and Land (1996) argue, that gender is differentially predictive of fear depending on how it is measured. Here, fear is measured as "worry." It is possible that the men in this study felt less threatened by the question wording—feeling more comfortable to admit "worry" than fear—and were more honest about their concerns. It is also possible that for some people, however, this question measured altruistic fear, and people were "worrying" about their children or spouses (see Ferraro, 1995).

Although the typical finding that women are more afraid than men rarely was questioned until recent studies examining specific crime types found different results (e.g., Rountree, 1998; Rountree & Land, 1996), some experts have continued to argue that older people are not as fearful as some researchers assume (LaGrange & Ferraro, 1987, 1989; McCoy et al., 1996; Rountree & Land, 1996; Yin, 1985). The current analysis indicates that age does have a small, direct significant effect on fear of crime but not on fear of gangs. However, age is linked to concern about diversity and therefore affects both fear of crime and fear of gangs indirectly. Consequently, studies that do not allow for indirect relationships to emerge in the analysis design but find that older people are not so fearful may miss some important intricacies that better gauge this complex issue.

As in previous studies, the effects of income, education, and race are mixed. An interesting finding with regard to income is that it is significantly and negatively related to fear of crime but not to fear of gangs. The effects of income on fear of gangs are positive and indirect through concern about diversity. This relationship also holds for fear of crime. So, people who have more income are more likely to worry about diversity issues, which leads them to worry about crime and gangs. People with lower incomes are more likely to live in the lower income areas, which are more likely to have major "problems" with gang crime. Lower income individuals are also more likely to be minorities in Orange County. And, for fear of gangs, income and race do have indirect negative effects on fear through geographical region of residence. In other words, minorities and lower income individuals are more likely to live in the inland central region, and those who do are more likely to be afraid of gangs. Most of the previous research focusing on race effects has examined the difference between Whites and primarily African Americans, even when the analysis distinguishes between Whites and non-Whites (e.g., Liska et al., 1982, Rountree, 1998). This analysis looks at Whites and (primarily) Latinos, and our results may indicate that race effects are a function of the minority group studied. Future research projects might closely examine differences among many racial and ethnic groups to see how these groups differ.

The negative relationship between home ownership and fear of gangs is interesting, too. Because of financial and nuisance problems with graffiti, one might expect homeowners to be more worried about neighborhood gangs. Yet in this analysis, renters are more likely to worry about gangs. This finding is independent of income and the geographical location of renters. It suggests that renting may be a surrogate indicator for other social disorganization variables, such as increased mobility, single-parent households, greater density, and larger numbers of children, which may be more associated with fear of gang crime.

The relationship between concern about diversity and both fear of crime and fear of gangs supports those who argue that racial and cultural misunderstandings are the key factors in predicting fear of crime. Merry (1981) argued that people's sense of danger is related to their fears of strangers and that racial and ethnic differences accentuate these fears due to people's inability to understand the behaviors of individuals who belong to different cultural groups. These data support her theory.

The effect of concern about diversity on fear of gangs, in particular, is likely because the majority of gangs in the local area are Latino barrio gangs and because the majority of this sample is White (Capizzi, 1996; see also Vigil, 1988). It is possible that this finding is due to an association in the

(White) public's mind between gangs and Hispanics. Everyday conversations with Whites indicate that many people in the area avoid those areas that are primarily Latino because they are afraid of crime and gangs. For example, one woman indicated to one of the authors that she would only go to a city in the inland central region of the county, where many gangs claim territory, during the day and even then would take off all her jewelry and dress in old clothes to avoid victimization. Still others talk about avoiding certain streets and taking the long way to the shopping areas at night to avoid gangs who reside in the barrios (Lane, 1998). Based on these survey data, in Orange County, there is a direct, independent, and positive connection in the public's mind between concerns about diversity (e.g., Latino immigration) and worries about crime and gangs. This link is independent of other theoretically important demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, education) found in previous literature (see Warr, 1994). Our findings show that the relationship between race and fear is complex. For example, fear of other races (or ethnicities) is key to our models, but differences between Whites and minorities are not significant.

The support for the subcultural diversity model in explaining fear of crime and, more important, fear of gangs has important implications for policy makers. Indeed, as crime has decreased in recent years throughout the country and in Orange County (Boucher, 1998), fear of crime has remained high (Baldassare & Katz, 1993, 1994, 1995b, 1996). These findings suggest that policy makers concerned about decreasing fear of crime will have to do more than "just" decrease crime. People's feelings about their neighbors and their neighborhoods are just as important as crime levels or even more important in contributing to fear of crime. Without efforts to address these factors, fear is likely to remain high.

NOTES

1. The local police chiefs routinely mention these two incidents as key events triggering community awareness about gang crime in Orange County (see Lane, 1998).

2. The typical fear of crime questions vary in their wording but include versions of two different questions. The National Crime Survey uses "How safe do you feel or would you feel being out alone in your neighborhood at night?" (Ferraro, 1995; LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989). Although the wording of the General Social Survey (GSS) question varies, it generally reads "Is there any area around here—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night (or during the day)?" (Ferraro, 1995; Warr, 1994).

3. Corie Williams was caught in the crossfire of a gang retaliation shooting while riding on a Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) bus in Los Angeles on January 16, 1997, the same day that Ennis Cosby, the son of actor Bill Cosby, was shot while changing a tire on a Los Angeles freeway (Goldman, 1997). Both incidents made the local and national news for weeks as examples of random violence.

4. The other dominant theoretical models are “indirect victimization” (see Skogan, 1977; Tyler, 1980), “incivilities” or “disorder” (see Covington & Taylor, 1991; Lewis & Maxfield, 1980; Skogan, 1990), and “community concern” (see Conklin, 1975; Covington & Taylor, 1991; Garofalo & Laub, 1978).

5. From 1980 to 1990, the percentage of the county population that was Hispanic, Asian, or African American increased 14% (Baldassare & Katz, 1995a).

6. We conducted secondary analysis and had no control over the sampling procedures, which are as follows. For Phase 1, the research firm contacted 2,012 people through a random-digit-dial procedure using a computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. Of these, 1,223 completed the survey, for a response rate of 60.8%. In Phase 2, these 1,223 individuals were recontacted and 69% of them completed the remainder of the survey. To ensure a complete sample for the newspaper, the firm matched the remaining 31% of the sample (379 respondents) to respondents who finished the questionnaire and the missing attitudinal responses were imputed based on matching demographic characteristics. The firm described the imputing process as follows. Each person with missing data was matched as closely as possible on all demographic and location variables (more than are included in our analysis) to another respondent with complete data. The firm replaced the missing data by substituting the complete data from the matched respondent. The firm asserts that it followed standard survey methodology in using this matching and substitution process. The final data set of 1,223 respondents given to us does not indicate which cases were assigned responses. Consequently, we cannot judge whether there was differential attrition between the two phases of the survey. However, the final data set is representative of the Orange County population with regard to all demographic characteristics reported in Table 1 except race. The White portion of this sample is equal to the proportion of Whites in the population (about 76%), but the non-White portion of the sample underrepresents Hispanics, who are about 23% of the counted population but only 12.5% of this total sample (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994).

7. The authors believe that “worry” is very close to the construct as people may define it for themselves and therefore was likely interpreted to mean fear. For example, lay people often talk in daily conversation about being “worried” that their car might be broken into or about letting their children go out unsupervised where they might be victimized (e.g., parks; see Lane, 1998; Madriz, 1997). It is on this latter point that the current measurement may be problematic—it is unclear whether people were thinking about personal fear or altruistic fear when they completed the survey. But even with this ambiguity, we believe that these questions are at least as adequate as the typical questions used to measure fear of crime (e.g., GSS and the National Crime Victimization Survey).

8. *The Orange County Register* segments the county into five regions. We separated the respondents into two categories—those who lived in the “inland central” region and those who lived elsewhere. The inland central region has more urban density, more poverty, higher crime rates, and the largest concentrations of gang crime (Orange County Chiefs’ and Sheriff’s Association, 1998).

9. We conducted a simple factor analysis, and these three items loaded on a single factor, indicating these items represent a single construct. All the correlations between these three items are significant.

10. We used LISREL 8 to conduct the path analysis. Based on previous research, we designed the analyses to test the theory that demographic characteristics affect region of residence, which in turn affects concern about subcultural diversity and fear. For this analysis, we made the normal assumptions. The errors of the endogenous variables are not correlated, but we allow the errors of the exogenous terms to correlate. The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) indicate how well the model fits the observed data. A

GFI and AGFI greater than .90 indicate the model fits the data well. Likewise, a nonsignificant chi-square indicates the model fits well.

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