

**Juvenile Delinquency and Gang Affiliation: *Family is not always Blood...***

Tamara Nunez

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Dr. Charles Awasu

## **I. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

**Frame a set of simple questions as part of the problem statement.**

**Why is this an important topic/issue/concern?**

**What is the potential benefit of further study in this area?**

**Discuss the population or groups affected by this problem. Who are they?**

**Size of population?**

**Are issues of culture and diversity relevant to this problem?.**

**How widespread and severe is this problem in the population?**

**Where or in what setting are they located?**

**What empirical evidence exists that this is a problem?**

This study explored the topic of a possible relationship between social status and social frameworks with Juvenile delinquency & Gang Affiliation. Within this study there were four main research questions used in this study: 1) Are there variables (internal and external) that can be considered determinants/predictors of juvenile delinquency and gang affiliation?

2) What is the connection between the area of living and how does it hold importance in regards to juvenile delinquency?

3) What historical relations, comparisons or connections can be seen through present day juvenile delinquency and gang affiliation?

4) How does an adolescent/ youth's involvement in their social networks contribute to the possibility of delinquency or gang involvement? (personal and group relationships)

The term *Gang* can be dated to as far back as the 1600s. Typically many people associate Adults when they think about gangs, which is accurate but many do not know or understand the concept of a juvenile being affiliated in or with a gang. According to an Official government fact

sheet called *Youth Gangs* written by James C. Howell it states that there is no single definition of what a juvenile gang is. The state and Local jurisdictions tend to develop their own.

Nevertheless, a youth gang is commonly thought of as a self- formed association of peers having the following characteristics: A gang name and recognizable symbols, identifiable leadership, a geographical territory, a regular meeting pattern and a collective action plan to carry out the illegal activities. From history to present day there seems to be a common thread, a longing for community among gangs, especially for Juveniles. Due to their young age, they are eligible to undergo the process of Restorative Justice, which helps to build back relationships through justice and rehabilitation, and there are biblical perspectives that can help researchers understand both victims and offenders and the causes and effects of gangs as well as the violence that they inflict upon others. Juvenile Gang Affiliation is a running topic of concern due to the increased risk factor of future criminal activity, substance abuse, familial issues, teen parenthood, Unemployment, dropping out of school, and victimization (ONLINESAU 2019). Gangs in general are spreading around the world every year and they are mainly characterized by their diversity. Gangs mostly involve youth & young children because they are vulnerable, they use them as mules at times. The youth may feel a need to be protected by at least one person, and when they join a gang it makes them feel like they have control. Potentially addressing and furthering study in regards to this topic of Juvenile Gang Affiliation could hopefully encourage families, parents, guardians, the community, teachers etc to invest in our youth and hopefully lessen or cease this issue. Youth are the direct population affected by this issue but they are not the only party that is impacted. Families, parents & guardians, friends, and the community can also be affected. Race and Ethnicity can play a role in gang affiliation and activity as well.

**WILL INSERT MORE INFO HERE**

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Include a review of research and theory on your selected topic. Use at least 16 scholarly journal articles or studies.**

**Focus on articles that examine those variables or issues you will be studying.**

**What is the previous thinking and experience in this problem area as evidenced in the academic literature?**

**How will your proposed study contribute to a better understanding of the topic?**

**What new ground will be covered by your study?**

**Make certain you've identified some of the most current research on your topic.**

**Attached a bibliography of at least 16 journal articles.**

When researching the history of Juvenile gangs many sites that pop up don't necessarily talk about juvenile gangs specifically, but more about how the initial gangs were created and what their motives were. According to an article/ Journal called *Juvenile Gang Members in the US top 1 million, New Study Finds* it talks about various studies showing that there are over 1 million juvenile gang members in the United States alone. The general age range for Juvenile gang members started from around as young as 5 years old to 17 years old. Many people stereotype the race of people in gangs, they assume that these people are only Black or Latino which is not the case, it is only now in the present day that gangs are becoming more multiracial (Sam Houston State University 2015). Another very common Misconception is that once you join a gang you can not leave which recent studies have proven this to be false. Studies have also shown that there are high turnover rates for juveniles joining gangs as well as leaving gangs . In the 1950's, the media portrayed an image of "black-jacketed" youth gangs. Their gang names were sort of romantic names such as the Sharks or the Jets, they had partaken in planned

fighters that required the participants to have courage and be brave. These fights were more for fun; they were not dangerous to the general public; they listened and obeyed the rules put in place by outreach programs by social workers, and enforcement measures by the police. In the early 1960's, the gangs were gone. The gang front was silenced for almost 10 years. The gangs suddenly reappeared, bearing such names as Savage Skulls and Black Assassins which were no longer such sweet romantic names. They began to form in the South Bronx in the spring of 1971, and quickly dispersed to other parts of the city, and by 1975 there were around 275 police-verified gangs with 11,000 members. These new gangs were, as portrayed by the media, far more lethal than before, heavily armed, directed by violence-hardened older men, and their acts were more to harm other citizens rather than themselves. The violent activities of these new gangs peaked in the mid-1970's and then ended. For the rest of the years the gangs were pictured as slightly stable with an occasional outburst of violence. Public concern with collective youth crime shifted from the gangs to the robbery bands. This New York Centered picture of youth gangs develops in the 1950's, death in the 1960's, revival in the early 1970's (Miller 1992). One is left wondering why was there such a long silence among these gangs? Was it related to the time period and the other events going on during this time period such as peaceful protest, and negotiations to end wars etc?

Because there was an increase and spread in the number of Youth Gangs in the United States the concept of youth gangs had begun to become more prominent in the United States. Many can say that gangs in present day society can't be defined as the same gangs from the past. Gangs have changed a lot due to social and economic factors. According to a document called *Defining the Youth Gang Issues of the 90's and Strategies for the Future* it gives different statistics about various crimes related to youth gang violence. It states that there were nearly 2.2

million arrests in 1990 of individuals under the age of 18. Based off of FBI statistics these youth are counted for 16% of all arrests total. Some examples of specific crimes done include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter (14%), Forcible rape (15%), Robbery (24%), aggravated assault (14%), burglary arrests (33%), motor vehicle theft arrests (43%), and drug arrest (7%) (Foreman n.d.).

When feeling like you have to be in control at a young age it could make you feel like you have power over others. Power can be violent because once you target someone and hurt them it could make you feel released. This type of feeling could come from the way someone has mistreated or neglected them, so in conclusion violence could become second nature to them. According to a scholarly journal published on [www. Onlinelibrary.wiley.com](http://www.Onlinelibrary.wiley.com) researchers concluded that there is a link / connection to antisocial behavior in youth and Youth gang membership. This study was taken over a span of 10 years and there was data taken from 858 participants. This study took place in Pittsburgh Youth study to identify the periods of before, during and after gang membership. There were independent and dependent variables in this experiment/ research. Such as age calendar times and for taking into account any type of gang membership before the study was assessed. Studies have found that males are more likely to be associated with gangs rather than females. While this is true the study also showed that males tend to show more delinquency before even joining the gang to begin with versus males who do not associate with gangs. During this process they replicated research which depicted that drug selling, drug use, violent behaviors and vandalism of property increase significantly when a youth joins a gang. A mechanism of socialization for juvenile affiliated gang members is to hang out with delinquent peers. They had determined these results based on self reports, but they are also seen in reports from parents and teachers on boys behavior and delinquency. The

article also states that according to time trends there is a new finding of an increase in delinquency being a temporary thing rather than permanent. They also find that delinquency falls in pre-gang levels when boys no longer continue to affiliate with gangs (American Academy of Pediatrics 2014)

A peer reviewed journal article titled, "*Lower Class Culture As A Generating Milieu Of Gang Delinquency*" outlines that gang delinquency is very problematic in the United States. Studies show that the geographical location of these youth and adolescents have a high percentage of gang involvement already posing an inevitable path for these youth. There are etiology factors that cause juveniles to get affiliated with gangs. The three main etiology factors that can influence the child's behavior and they are physiological, psychodynamic, and environmental. Physiological would refer to the cause of delinquency as an "organic diagnosis" which in simpler terms can be explained as a type of brain syndrome/disease that the adolescent was born with. This can cause the child's behavior to be more erratic than the typical adolescent due to the many associated symptoms such as uncontrolled movements, loss of intellectual abilities, and emotional disturbances. Psychodynamic is the relationship between unconscious and conscious emotional and mental elements that can be determinate factors of an adolescents personality and motivation. Lastly, is the environmental factor which insists that the status of the community determines the behaviors and personalities of the youth and adolescent. Cognitive behavior plays a big role in adolescents because their minds are not fully developed; they act impulsively and act upon emotions rather than logic (Miller 1958).

The next peer-reviewed article is titled "*Teenagers and Gangs,*" and it focuses on the behavior, environment, and the motivation of why teens would be involved in a gang. Studies show that within time the number of gangs have become more prevalent within small cities,

suburbs, and rural areas rather than large cities. This is due to the fact that larger cities have a greater authoritative presence as well as are funded more than suburbs and rural areas. This can make individuals in the community feel vulnerable and have the urge to find their own justice and protection. The behavior of these teens would drastically change if they joined a gang. They could become more violent, distance themselves from their family or friends, and they could also have a higher chance of participating in illegal activities. This article discusses many possible factors leading to juvenile gang affiliation such as having low self-esteem and a history of academic failure, feeling like you are not good enough in society, loss of affection, or not feeling accepted. Youths then can join a gang because it gives them a feeling of acceptance, wantedness, power, and "love." The article has also listed some signs that you can use to try and recognize possible gang activity. For example a change in friends, wearing the same color combination repeatedly, flashing hand signs, secrecy about his/her whereabouts and activities, suddenly having money with no known resources, loss of interest in school, symptoms of substance abuse, and tattoos: either self-drawn in ink or professionally executed. When being initiated into a gang you are expected to do certain things to be deemed worthy. The first few tasks may be harmless but it can get worse and more demanding as time goes on. Within time they could become involved with drugs, gunplay, vandalism, and theft. These kinds of crimes could be thought of as impossible once a new teen joins but once you are involved long enough it becomes adaptable.

This article titled, "*Antisocial Behavior and Youth Gang Membership: Selection and Socialization*" researchers concluded that there is a link / connection to antisocial behavior in youth and Youth gang membership. This study was taken over a span of 10 years and there was data taken from 858 participants. This study took place in Pittsburgh Youth study to identify the periods of before, during and after gang membership. There were independent and dependent

variables in this experiment/ research, such as age calendar times and for taking into account any type of gang membership before the study was assessed. Studies have found that males are more likely to be associated with gangs rather than females. While this is true the study also showed that males tend to show more delinquency before even joining the gang to begin with versus males who do not associate with gangs. During this process they replicated research which depicted that drug selling, drug use, violent behaviors and vandalism of property increase significantly when a youth joins a gang. A mechanism of socialization for juvenile affiliated gang members is to hang out with delinquent peers. They had determined these results based on self reports, but they are also seen in reports from parents and teachers on boys behavior and delinquency. The article also states that according to time trends there is a new finding of an increase in delinquency being a temporary thing rather than permanent. They also find that delinquency falls in pre-gang levels when boys no longer continue to affiliate with gangs.

#### **IV. HYPOTHESIS**

##### **What are the major hypotheses (or hypotheses) your study will test?**

- There are direct relationships between delinquency and familial relationships.
- The results of gang affiliation with youth can be more detrimental to them in all aspects. (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual etc)
- Youth in lower income neighborhoods are more likely to partake in delinquency and gang activity.

##### **What will the hypothesis/hypotheses proved?**

This will prove that parents, guardians, the community and adults in general need to invest and care about the youth more.

## V. METHODOLOGY

**Research design. How do you propose to test your hypotheses?**

**What type of design will you use?**

**State the specific type of design**

**Why did you choose this design?**

**What are the strengths and weaknesses for the problem you wish to investigate?**

**Discuss threats to validity and how the research design addresses the threats.**

**How will you address ethical issues?**

The methodology and design of study that will be used would consist of conceptual, theoretical and analytical frameworks

Correlational and Causal Comparative research would be used.

I chose these designs because they fall into my problem statement as well as my hypotheses.

## VI. SAMPLING

**Who will comprise the study subjects?**

**What are their characteristics?**

**How will you obtain a sample of subjects for your study?**

**How will they be chosen?**

**Through what kind of selection procedure?**

**From what population?**

Why is this the most relevant population for you to study?

If the sample is being drawn from subcultures or stigmatized population, are any additional safeguards planned for protection of subjects?

## VII. QUESTIONNAIRE

**What is the central question?**

Is there a correlation and impact between your home life with your social life, behaviors and actions?

**What other questions will you pose to elicit the right response?**

I'M NOT SURE YET

**Will you use open-ended questions?**

yes

**Or close-ended questions?**

yes

**How will you administer the questionnaire?**

Use of mail, door-to-door, face-to-face, phone; random, or a combination?

**How will you record the responses?**

Video, audio, note taking, memorization, photographs?

**Provide informed consent forms identifying any risk to the subjects.**

Yes

1ST section of questions: About you

2ND section of questions: About home life

3RD section of questions: 3 Open ended questions about what makes the gang special to them?

## VIII. DATA COLLECTION

How will data be collected?

Who will collect the data?

When will data be collected?

What procedures will you use to collect the data?

Are there issues of diversity (e.g., language) that need to be addressed?

The data collection process would consist of 3 major parts:

- 1) Picking neighborhoods that match my criteria of study to ensure no bias
- 2) Creating a survey that is understandable for all ages yet still informative
- 3) Having all youth complete the survey!

Data collection should be done over the course of the study and analysis can be completed after all surveys have been submitted.