Juvenile Delinquency: Social Risk Factors of Gang Membership

A Presentation by Franklin Emeka
1. Introduction:
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   - Basis of study
   - Research Questions

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6. Questions
Problem Statement

- Society
  - there is no reason why kids should join gangs
  - juvenile gang is a problem

- Why would any child join gang?
  - Cost to society
  - Progression of criminal behavior
  - Net-widening of juvenile crimes
  - More punitive juvenile laws
  - do kids arbitrarily join juvenile gangs?
  - become gang members based on certain social risk factors

- Are there social risk factors?
  - Do they contribute to juvenile gang membership?
Problem Statement

- What are some of those suggested social risk factors

- **Race**
  - Divisiveness (Petersen & Moore, 2004)
  - Gangs form along racial lines (Shelden, et al., 2004)

- **Gender**
  - Socialization of boys vs. girls (Kohlberg, 1981)

- **Family Structure**
  - Nuclear vs. Single parents (Agnew, 2001)

- **Economic Hardship**
  - limited access to social resources (Merton, 1968; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960)

- **Adolescent Fear of crime** (May, 2001)
  - Protection from neighborhood other gangsters
Theory &
Juvenile Gang Membership

Strain Theory

- Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivator
- **Basic Tenets** (Merton (1968))
  - Conformity
    - If life affords you opportunity, conform
  - Innovation
    - If no opportunity exist, innovate thru deviance
  - Ritualism
    - When deviance isn’t possible, ritualist (status quo)
  - Retreatist
    - If doing usual is tiresome, retreat
  - Rebellion
    - Doing usual not in our interest, rebel (join gang)
Social Disorganization Theory

- **Criminogenic environment** (Shaw McKay, 1942; Thrasher, 1927; Vito et al. 2007)

- **Juv. gangs thrive in socially disorganized neighborhoods** (Thrasher 1927; Shaw & McKay, 1942)

- **Structural Inequality; Economically trapped** (Wilson, 1987)

- **Resource deficits & Lack of legitimate jobs**

- **Disrupted families ;Absent fathers** (McLanahan et al.,1994; Miller, 1968)

- **Mistaken deviance** (Liebow, 1967)
Purpose of Study

- Identify risk factors of juvenile gang membership
- Examine how social risk factors contribute to juvenile gang membership.
UCR Report:
- In 2007, violent crime arrests in U.S = 597,447
- Only 2.8% - committed by juveniles

Roberson (2000):
- Juv. gang is a quandary, but what are the causes?

Elrod et a., (2008)
- Risk factors could lead to juv. delinquency (gangs)

Shaw & McKay (1942):
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods

May (2001):
- Strain manifests fear
Research Questions

1. To what extent is race associated with gang membership?
2. To what extent is gender associated with gang membership?
3. To what extent is family structure associated with gang membership?
4. To what extent is economic hardship associated with gang membership?
5. To what extent is fear of crime associated with gang membership?
6. What are the predictors of gang membership?
Methods:

Approach

- Data Collecting
  - Qualitative & Quantitative
- Nature of my data lends itself to quantitative research

Source of Data:
- Secondary data
- from ICPSR: Inter-university Consortium for Political & Social Research under National Institute of Justice

Participants
- 8th graders
  - G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education & Training)

SPSS Random Seed Generator
- To randomly select a sample.
- To ensure Statistical equivalence
- 800 participants (400 gang members & 400 non-gang members)
- From: Non-gang members: (N=5,413); Gang members: (N=522)
Methods: Statistical Design / Procedure

- **Descriptive Statistics**
  - Breakdown of dataset
  - Frequencies
  - Distribution

- **Inferential Statistics**
  - Used Chi Sq. to examine the association between variables
  - Logistic Regression to predict gang membership. (because GM is categorical)
    - Forward Stepwise method
    - Pair-wise Comparison of variables
Methods: Variables for the study

- Independent Variables
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Family Structure
  - Economic Hardship
  - Adolescent Fear of Crime

- Dependent Variable
  - Gang Membership
Descriptive Statistics

- Frequencies
- Distribution
Results:
Descriptive Statistics

- Original Dataset
Race

- White: 40%
- Blacks: 26%
- Hispanics: 19%
- Native Americans: 2%
- Asians: 6%
- Other: 2%

Results: Descriptive
(original dataset: N=5,935)

Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Original Dataset (N=5935)
Results: Descriptive
(original dataset: N=5,935)

Gender
- Females: 52%
- Males: 48%

Original Dataset (N = 5,935)
Results: Descriptive

(Original dataset: N = 5,935)

- Age
  - 13 yrs: 29%,
  - 14 yrs: 60%,
  - 15 yrs: 10%,
  - Over 15 yrs: 1%,
Family Structure

- Both parents: 64%
- Mother only: 27%
- Father only: 4%
- Grandparents: 2%
- Mother & other relative: 1%
- Father & other relative: 1%
- Relative other than mom/dad: 1%

Original Dataset (N = 5,935)
Descriptive Statistics

- Sample Dataset
Results: Descriptive
(sample dataset: n=800)

Race

- White: 53%,
- Blacks: 19%,
- Hispanics: 20%,
- Native Americans: 3%,
- Asians: 3%,
- Other: 2%
Results: Descriptive
(sample dataset: n=800)

- Males: 57%
- Females: 43%

Sample Dataset (N = 800)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results: Descriptive (sample dataset: n=800)

- 14yrs.: 61.8%
- 13yrs.: 21.5%
- 15yrs.: 14.5%
- 11yrs< or 18yrs>: 2.2%
Family Structure

- Both parents: 65%
- Mother only: 24%
- Father only: 4%
- Grandparents: 1%
- Mother & other relative: 3%
- Father & other relative: 1%
- Relative other than mom/dad: 2%

Results: Descriptive (sample dataset: n=800)
Results: Inferential Analysis
Results: Inferential Analysis

Research question #1:

*To what extent is *Race* associated with gang membership?*

**Pearson Chi-Square Results (\(\alpha = .05\))**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>No (N%)</th>
<th>Yes (N%)</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Total (N%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>313 (80.1%)</td>
<td>78 (19.9%)</td>
<td>312.707</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>391 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>7 (5.1%)</td>
<td>131 (94.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>138 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>30 (20.5%)</td>
<td>116 (79.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7 (28.0%)</td>
<td>18 (72.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28 (38.9%)</td>
<td>44 (61.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>385</strong></td>
<td><strong>387</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(N=772)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:**

- Significant difference between at least two groups
- Whites, compared to the other categories, are less likely to join gangs
Research question #2:

**To what extent is Gender associated with gang membership?**

**Pearson Chi-Square Results (α = .05)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No (No. %)</th>
<th>Yes (No. %)</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Total (No. %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>196 (43.4%)</td>
<td>256 (56.6%)</td>
<td>20.397</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>452 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>202 (56.6%)</td>
<td>137 (43.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>339 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>393</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=791)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:**

- Significant difference between male and female
- Males are more likely to join gangs than females to join gangs
Research question #3:

To what extent is **Family Structure** associated with gang membership?

Pearson Chi-Square Results ($\alpha = .05$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Structure</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother Only</td>
<td>52 (26.8%)</td>
<td>142 (73.2%)</td>
<td>114.539</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>194 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Only</td>
<td>9 (28.1%)</td>
<td>23 (71.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Parents</td>
<td>328 (64.2%)</td>
<td>183 (35.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>511 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td>1 (10.0%)</td>
<td>9 (90.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother &amp; Relative</td>
<td>1 (25.0%)</td>
<td>3 (75.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father &amp; Relative</td>
<td>1 (33.3%)</td>
<td>2 (66.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5 (18.5%)</td>
<td>22 (81.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>397</td>
<td>384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=781)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation:

- Significant difference between at least two groups
- Low percentage of juveniles who live with both parents, compared to other categories, are less likely to join gangs
Research question #4: To what extent is *Economic Hardship* associated with gang membership?

Pearson Chi-Square Results \((\alpha = .05)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Hardship</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9 (4.5%)</td>
<td>193 (95.6%)</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>202 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 (4.5%)</td>
<td>168 (95.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>176 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>361</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=378)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation:
- No significant association between Gang Membership and Economic Hardship.
- Suggest that juvenile are less likely to join gangs due to economic hardship.
Research question #5: To what extent is Fear of Crime associated with gang membership?

Pearson Chi-Square Results (α = .05)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fear of Crime</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>181 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>197 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>361</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=378)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation:
- No significant association between Gang Membership and Fear of Crime.
- Suggest that juvenile are less likely to join gangs due to fear of crime.
Research question #6: What are the Predictors of Gang membership?

Logistic regression Results ($\alpha = .05$)

**Coefficients for the Variables Included in the Model:** (N=800)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.022</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>15.523</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.701</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>4.314</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>2.590</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td>11.94</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>13.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Crime</td>
<td>2.125</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>9.306</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>8.376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:**
- Suggesting predictors (risk factors) include gender, economic hardship and fear of crime
Results: Inferential Analysis

Research question #6:
Logistic regression Results continues (α = .05)

Coefficients for the Variables NOT Included in the Model:
(N=800)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>3.492</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Structure</td>
<td>.579</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation:
- Suggesting predictors (risk factors) does not include race and family structure
Summary of Results

- Study is built on the current body of knowledge
- Intended to add to understanding juvenile gangs
- Explored how social factors contribute to juvenile gang membership
- Identified Risk Factors are:
  - Gender, Economic Hardship and Fear of Crime
Limitations of Study

- Secondary data
  - Missing data [187 out of 5,935]

- Sample / Participants
  - Disproportionate distribution
    - SPSS Random Seed Generator (N=5,935)
      - Non-gang members: (N=5,413);
      - Gang members : (N=522)

- Data collection
  - Public school omit many students

- Limited generalization

- Data
  - Self-report survey
    - Under-reporting or exaggerated reporting
Findings suggest social risk factors do contribute to juvenile gang membership.

- **Gender**
  - Greater freedom = less parental supervision
  - Socialization of boys vs. girls

- **Economic hardship**
  - Money driven culture

- **Fear of crime**
  - Some kids join gang for protection
Conclusion: Applications

- Significant risk factors can be applied to everyday life:
  - **Gender:**
    - Socialization
      - Equal supervision and expectations for boys and girls
  - **Economic hardship**
    - Maximize employment opportunity
    - Help those in need economic need
    - Invest in poor neighborhoods
    - Develop programs to break cycle of poverty
      - Reintroduce Johnson’s “War on Poverty” program
  - **Fear of crime**
    - Provide services (escort) for kids who need protection
    - Get parents involved in providing protection
Conclusion: Contributions to Juvenile Justice Studies

- Built on existing body of knowledge
- Cumulative knowledge of juvenile delinquency – specifically, juvenile gang affiliation
- Explanation of risk predictors of juvenile gang membership
Conclusion: Distinction from most Studies

- Application of risk factors
  - social risk factors as intrinsic / extrinsic motivators
    - Race:
      - (extrinsic): divisiveness
      - (intrinsic): creates a sense of belonging
    - Gender:
      - (extrinsic): social privileges
      - (intrinsic): more risk for boys
    - Family Structure:
      - (extrinsic): ascribed social privilege
      - (intrinsic): child abuse
    - Economic Hardship:
      - (extrinsic): lacking privileges & opportunity
      - (intrinsic): motivator to quick-get rich scheme
    - Fear of Crime:
      - (extrinsic): seeking protection
      - (intrinsic): anxiety, feeling threatened
Recommendation for Future Research:

- Examine statistical interaction between gang membership and race
- Examine statistical interaction between gang membership and family
- Examine if bi-directional family-child relationship contribute to juvenile gang membership
Conclusion & Questions

Thank you,

Franklin Emeka

Juvenile Delinquency:
Social Risk Factors of Gang Membership