

**GANG GIRLS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM
IMPROVEMENT**

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Gang Girls: Recommendations for Program Improvement

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“More than anything else, I believe it’s our decisions, not the conditions of our lives, that determine our destiny.” – Anthony Robbins

Abstract

Statement of the Problem

Female youth gang membership is a significant issue facing society today. It has been identified that young females do not participate in gangs at a level equal to that of young males. However, youth female gang membership has been under-reported and underestimated in the past. Girls' participation in gangs may not equal that of boys, but it is serious nonetheless. Statistics supporting this level of seriousness show that the delinquent activity of young females has been increasing. Taking this participation into consideration, it is imperative that society identifies why girls join gangs and utilizes this information to develop approaches in prevention and intervention that will be successful. Prevention and intervention programs exist today, but are deficient in providing programs specifically focused on juvenile females. Young girls are presented with risk factors specific to their gender, yet are placed in programs developed utilizing data driven by statistics collected on males. In doing this, society is not effectively serving these young females.

Method of Approach

This seminar research paper is composed utilizing secondary research. This research is provided primarily by way of online resources and books specifically addressing the topic of juvenile delinquency and female youth gangs. Empirical data in the form of statistics were gained via access to national assessments, previous studies, and self-report surveys. Internet research was utilized to identify current programs which address either youth gang membership

or juvenile delinquency in general, specifically those programs that consist of components tailored specifically to females. Specific criminological theories were also reviewed and applied specifically to the behaviors of young females.

Results of Study

Through the review of current programs addressing the issue of youth gang membership it is apparent that these programs are not effective at addressing the needs of young females. The success rate is dismal and the focus on risk factors and issues specific to the female gender are nearly nonexistent. Programs developed to address issues related to delinquency in general do provide gender specific components and appear to have achieved a reasonable level of success. The application of multiple theories assists in the recommendation for program improvements that will allow programs to better serve the needs of young females in today's society by addressing the risk factors that they face on a daily basis. In utilizing social bonding theory, social learning theory, and institutional-anomie theory, risk factors specific to young females can be explained and ultimately used in the development of new programs or the improvement of current programs. Without program improvements, an increase in youth gang membership as well as continued increases in overall female delinquency for young women can be expected.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Female participation in youth gangs is a problem. When reviewing raw membership numbers, historical estimates have been lacking due to inaccurate or incomplete data. Numerous studies estimate that female gang membership hovers at roughly 10 percent, and has for several years. Self-report data, however, typically identifies female gang membership at percentages that are significantly higher (Esbensen & Winfree, 1998; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001).

Historically, research regarding youth gangs has centered primarily on male gang membership. The implications of females' gang membership are incredibly significant. Female youth gang membership is a real problem, not only regarding raw membership numbers, but also in the increase in female gang-related offenses. Arguments could be made that even though females' tenure in gangs is generally shorter than that of males, the extent of their participation in gang-related activities is increasing and the long-term impact to the females' livelihood is significant (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001).

When reviewing programs which focus on the prevention and intervention of youth gang membership, it is evident that these programs do not effectively address the needs of females. These programs generally take a "one-size-fits-all" approach. They take a general approach at addressing issues that have been highlighted through historical studies, in which the majority of the data was driven by male membership statistics. For prevention and intervention programs to be successful, they must address the underlying issues that impact the youth

involved. In this case, those youth are females and current programs are not serving their needs.

Statement of Problem

Current programs addressing youth gang membership do not currently focus on needs specific to young females. The National Youth Gang Survey 1999-2001 (Egley, Howell, & Major, 2006) notes that “84 percent of the gang-problem jurisdictions reported the presence of female gang members...43 percent of the gangs identified by law enforcement had female members.” Historical studies involving gangs have traditionally not recognized females as active members. Based on this information, results of historical studies that relate to gender and gang membership are lacking. This is also true regarding data collected by local and state law enforcement agencies, as they historically have been more consistent about documenting male gang members than female gang members. Several studies (Egley et al., 2006; Howell, 1998; and Zahn, Brumbaugh, Steffensmeier, Feld, Morash, Chesney-Lind, Miller, Payne, Gottfredson, & Kruttschnitt, 2008) indicate that female gang membership percentages are much higher when self report surveys are conducted.

Based on the increases that society is seeing in female youth gang participation and the severity of that participation, the need for gender-specific prevention and intervention programs is critical. Young females experience their own set of specific stressors which need to be addressed for a program to be successful. Programs have been developed to address youth gang membership. These programs are offered at a community level through law enforcement

agencies, not-for-profit agencies, and schools. These programs, however, were not developed with gender- or age-specific issues in mind. In reviewing current programs, those tailored to meet the needs of female youth are minimal with evaluations of these programs being almost non-existent. When reviewing programs that target prevention of youth gang membership as a whole (not gender-specific), it becomes apparent that the current programs are not overly successful. For example, a five-year longitudinal study of Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), which is a program targeted at middle-school aged students, found that the program met the goals of increasing favorable attitudes toward police and increasing awareness of the consequences of gang activity but did not meet the goal of reducing raw membership numbers (Esbensen, 2004).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to provide recommendations for community based program improvements to better serve youth gang prevention where young females are concerned. Without these gender-specific programs, the needs of the female youth of today are not being addressed. Based on the current approach, female youth gang membership and the severity of their offenses within that membership will continue to grow.

The program recommendations include approaches utilizing social bonding theory, social learning theory, and institutional-anomie theory as a basis. Social bonding theory was formulated in 1969 by Travis Hirschi (2003) and is based on the idea that the development of poor social bonds can lead to

delinquency. Social learning theory as it applies to deviancy was formulated originally in 1966 by Ronald Akers (2001) and identifies that deviant behaviors can be learned, and are supported by reinforcement (either positive or negative) within the surrounding environment. Institutional-anomie theory was developed as an offshoot of Merton's theory of social structure and anomie in 1994 by Messner and Rosenfeld (2001). This theory basically explains that individuals believe that monetary and physical possessions define the importance of a person, and therefore will participate in deviant behavior as a means to an end. Studies show that a majority of youth gang membership occurs in lower socioeconomic areas (Howell, 1998; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Girls growing up in these areas learn through their environment that gang membership can provide them with economic wealth, respect, and peer support.

Gender-specific prevention programs must include components to address the issues that young females of today face. Reasons for joining gangs differ for males and females, and the prevention programs must thoroughly address these reasons and provide valid alternatives for these young women. Program improvements could possibly include tutoring, occupational training, and informational sessions on furthering education. Improvements could also include self-esteem building seminars which may include sessions used to develop leadership and decision making skills. Community activism and peer support could also be a part of the improved programs, as well as counseling regarding teen pregnancy and classes to assist young mothers with parenting skills.

Method of Approach

Secondary research and statistics have been used as sources of data. Several textbooks, online resources, and primary sources with substantial empirical research have been identified and used as tools in this research. The theoretical framework is grounded in social bonding theory, social learning theory, and institutional-anomie theory. These theories combined help to explain why young females join gangs. These root causes of gang membership have been utilized to develop the program recommendations. Addressing the root causes by incorporating the proper approaches in the prevention program will ultimately aid in the reduction of female youth gang membership.

Assumptions

Assumptions are being made that current program applications are not meeting the needs of young females. Through the review of secondary data and the application of theory, recommendations have been made to modify current programs to better serve young females. The ideal outcome would be to provide a primary proactive approach to combating female youth membership with a secondary reactive approach to assist in counseling female youth who are already gang members.

Limitations

Limitations include the availability of robust secondary data specifically related to females youth gang membership. As stated previously, the majority of available research is either not noted as gender specific or is targeted toward male gang membership. Historical data provided by law enforcement agencies is potentially skewed and not reliable based on under-reporting perhaps due to law

enforcement's mindset in the past on the severity (or lack thereof) of female gang membership. The availability of information regarding gender-specific gang prevention programs was also a limitation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

When discussing female participation in gangs, there are several data driven reports that provide solid statistics from different sources. When discussing female youth gang participation, the nature of these sources in the literature review becomes crucial. Data derived from law enforcement sources has been found to differ from self-report data due to the historical mindset of law enforcement and researchers regarding female youth gang participation. Depending upon which source is being reviewed, the results offered may vary greatly.

Current programs are provided through many different delivery methods. Based on a review of current programs, it was found that there is an abundance of informative literature regarding these programs, but very little evaluative data. A review of the various programs illustrates the shortage of programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of females. The majority of available programs are not gender specific and are general in nature. The programs that are gender specific are fairly new and, and at this time, evaluations have not been thoroughly conducted.

The literature review to follow will be divided into four basic sections. The first section will provide current statistics regarding the presence of females in youth gangs. These statistics are obtained from the National Youth Gang Survey, current arrest rates, and multiple sources of self-report data. In the second section, a brief discussion of the types of female gangs will be provided followed by a section discussing the reasons that girls join gangs. In the final

section of the literature review, three nationally recognized programs will be discussed in regard to their approach to gang intervention and prevention, as well as any focus they may currently have regarding female gang membership.

Types of Female Gangs

There are multiple types of female gangs, many of which have evolved over time. Initially it was believed that the only roles that females played within gangs were that of tomboys or sexual playthings for the male members (Thrasher, 1999). However, females have become valued members viewed as equals by male gang members. This equality occurred over time, and females' stature in gangs varies depending upon the type of gang and their role within it. In a sense the roles of females within gangs have mirrored the general liberation of females in society. As women have become more liberated and self-sufficient in society, they have also become more liberated in the gang environment.

There are three primary types of female gangs – co-ed gangs, subsets or auxiliary units of male gangs, and autonomous female gangs (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). Co-ed gangs are just that: gangs whose members are both male and female. Roles can be served by either gender, although at this point most leadership roles are served by males. Females hold varying levels of ranking within the gang, serving multiple purposes. Many female gangs are auxiliary units of male gangs. These gangs will generally adopt the name of the male name with the word “lady” in front of it (i.e. Lady Stones, Lady Counts, etc.) or adopt the female version of the male gang name (i.e. Latin Queens). These female gangs have a direct relationship with the male gang, but often have their own

hierarchy and act on their own behalf, with the general goals of the overall gang in mind. Autonomous gangs are stand alone female gangs which have no direct relationship with a male gang. The hierarchies of these gangs are comprised of female members acting solely in the best interest of their autonomous gang.

Regarding the growth of autonomous female gangs, in 1982 only six autonomous female gangs were identified in the locales of the Bronx and Queens (Curry & Decker, 1998, p. 100). However, by 1988 the National Youth Gang Survey reported 22 autonomous female gangs, and in 1992 an NIJ survey identified 99 independent female gangs (Curry & Decker, 1998, p. 100).

Hagedorn and Devitt (1999) reviewed a total sample of 248 women who held varying levels of status in Milwaukee gangs. The study consisted of face to face interviews consisting of over 500 questions populating 12 information grids. Of the total sample interviewed, 25% were identified as African American and 75% were identified as Latina. When asked about the decision making process in their gang, the majority of the girls in both groups identified that girls play a significant role in making decisions that affect everyday gang life. The responses provided in Table 1 (see Appendix A) identify that females are playing significant roles in present day gangs.

Statistics

Statistics regarding youth gang membership are abundant. These statistics present themselves in the form of information provided through the National Youth Gang Survey and national arrest rates. Self report data is also a crucial and very viable source of statistics where youth gang membership is concerned.

As identified in the following statistical sources, female gangs are currently an issue when discussing girls under the age of 18, as is delinquency in general.

National Youth Gang Survey. The National Youth Gang Survey is compiled annually based on data provided from law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. This report encompasses all levels of American communities from rural counties to large cities. The survey measures not only the presence of gangs, but also behaviors and membership statistics based on the reported information. In a review of the National Youth Gang Survey results from years 1999-2001, it was identified that “all law enforcement agencies in cities with a population of 250,000 or more and a large majority of those with a population of 100,000 - 249,000 reported youth gang problems in each year from 1996 to 2002” (Egley et al., 2006, p. v). The severity of the gang problem within those jurisdictions differed depending upon the size of the community served with larger populated areas reporting more severe gang problems than those in smaller communities. A review of the 2006 National Youth Gang Survey provided the following results:

- 86% response rate with 2,199 respondents
- roughly 785,000 active gang members identified
- 26,500 active gangs identified in the United States
- 86.4% of larger cities reported gang problems
- 51% of suburban communities reported gang problems (Egley & O'Donnell, 2008).

In a review of survey trends between the years 1996 and 2000, Egley, Jr., (2002) noted that youth gang membership ranged between 37 and 50 percent. As

noted earlier, in the year 2000 alone nearly half of the gangs noted had female members. Table 2 (see Appendix B) illustrates the identification of female gang membership from the 2000 National Youth Gang Survey. The 2000 National Youth Gang Survey offered supporting data to previous estimates of female gang membership being at roughly 10 percent, and also provided findings that the least populated areas reporting female gang activity reported roughly 17 percent female gang membership and larger populated areas reported female gang membership at nearly 10 percent (Egley et al., 2006). Based on previous estimates and the supporting documentation provided by the National Youth Gang Survey, a rough estimate of female youth gang participation nationwide would include roughly 78,500 females.

Arrest rates. Arrest rates are compiled by various organizations. The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) is compiled annually and provides insight into national arrest rates also providing details regarding gender, race, and age of those arrested. Chesney-Lind (2005, p. 179) identified that “between 1989 and 1998...arrest of girls for serious violent offenses increased 64.3 percent and arrests of girls for ‘other assaults’ increased an astonishing 103 percent above the 1981 rate, compared to a 27 percent for males.”

A review of the 2001 UCR identified the arrest rates by specific offense where females are concerned. It has been determined that males participate in violent crime at a much larger rate than females; however females participate in non-violent crimes at a significant level. The 2001 UCR found that females are arrested for status offenses at a rate of 26% and larceny at a rate of 22%,

compared to males at roughly 15% (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2001). Table 3 (see Appendix C) details the ten-year arrest trends based on UCR data for juveniles between the years of 1992 and 2001, and details that there have been significant increases in the arrest rates for girls when considering specific offenses particularly drug abuse violations. Table 4 (see Appendix D) illustrates the arrest rate trends in the 2007 UCR for current year over previous year, involving increases in offenses not previously shown in the 2001 UCR review. Both clearly show that arrest rate trends for females have been significantly higher than those for males when considering the offenses shown.

Specific to female gang membership, historically law enforcement agencies did not view female gang membership as a legitimate issue, therefore the numbers reported through law enforcement agencies could be skewed and not truly representative of the reality of the female youth gang problem. Data provided by law enforcement may also be skewed based on the fact that male gang members have been found to be more heavily involved in serious crime which allows for a larger representation of male gang membership in the law enforcement data collection.

Self Report Data. Self report surveys have become a useful tool in the collection of data where gangs in general are concerned and help to overcome some of the problems with official crime statistics. Most self-report surveys are provided through studies conducted to obtain specific information regarding gang activity. The Rochester Youth Development Study, the Denver Youth Survey,

and the Seattle Social Development Project are prime examples of the collection of self-report data and its use in determining female youth gang membership.

The Rochester Youth Development Study was a self report study conducted in 1988 in the city of Rochester, NY. The sample consisted of seventh and eighth graders enrolled in the Rochester public school system during that semester. The sample size was 1,000 students of which 729 were male and 271 were female (Battin-Pearson, Thornberry, Hawkins, & Krohn, 1998). The explanation for overrepresentation of male participants was due to the greater likelihood of males being involved in serious delinquency. Each of the participants and one of their parents were interviewed every six months between the years of 1988 and 1992 followed by annual interviews between the years of 1994 and 1996. The study found that 25 percent of all participants reported gang membership with 47 percent maintaining gang membership for more than a year (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). The results of this study found that female involvement in gangs was less than that of males. However, the findings did show that female gang members exhibit delinquent behaviors (particularly the selling of drugs) at a much higher rate than non-gang members.

The Denver Youth Survey began in 1987 with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This self report survey involved 1,527 participants representing 2 year age intervals between 7 and 15 years of age, all of which were from high risk neighborhoods in Denver (Browning & Huizinga, 1999). The highlights of this survey identified high risk behaviors concerning young females.

- When reviewing arrest rates for the participants, the study found that in the 5 years following the onset of the survey 41 percent of female participants were arrested.
- Across both genders, it was found that 50 percent of the participants abused alcohol, marijuana usage was at roughly 18 percent and other drug use was at 4 percent.
- Where victimization is concerned, the survey identified that as high as 87 percent of the participants were victims of violent offenses or theft between the years of 1987 and 1991
- In the age group between 11 and 15 years, arrest rates over the next 5 years were 64 percent for males and 41 percent for females (Browning & Huizinga, 1999).

In 1985, the Seattle Social Development Project began tracking 808 fifth-grade students from the Seattle public school system. Nearly half of the participants were female, and a wide array of ethnic backgrounds was represented. Based on predetermined precursors, nearly half of the participants were from low-income families. Participants provided information annually between the ages of 10 and 16, and then again at age 18; however information regarding gang involvement was not collected until the age of 13. Of the total participants, just over 15 percent reported gang membership between the ages of 13 and 18 years old, with 8.6 percent of females reporting gang membership (Hill et al., 2001). It was also identified that 31 percent of the participants who belonged to a gang at any point in time maintained gang membership for more

than a year (Hill et al., 2001). This study also identified childhood predictors of joining and remaining in a gang. These predictors included availability of marijuana in the neighborhood, neighborhood youth in trouble, family structure, parental attitudes toward violence, low school attachment, antisocial beliefs, and friendships with youth who exhibit delinquent behaviors. The results of this study also made general statements regarding the involvement of youth in gangs, identifying that the likelihood of delinquent behavior in gang members is greater than that in non-gang members as shown in Table 5 (see Appendix E).

In a study conducted by Giordano (1999), a total of 191 participants were selected from a state institution for juvenile offenders (total population of 108 participants) and a random sample of urban high school students (83 participants). The age range for the incarcerated participants was twelve to nineteen years of age, with the age range for the school participants being fourteen to nineteen years of age. Each of the participants was administered a questionnaire which would be used to measure the delinquent behaviors or tendencies of each participant. Giordano (1999, p. 95) reported “53.7% of the institutionalized group indicated that they had been part of a group of girls that could be called a ‘gang’ ...51.9% indicated that the gang had a name”. Giordano also identified that girls reported they were more likely to participate in delinquent behavior when they were acting as part of a group.

Reasons Girls Join Gangs

There are numerous reasons why any young person makes the choice to join a gang. These range from the age old idea of peer pressure to the necessity of

protection. There are, in fact, reasons for gang membership that apply to both males and females. Typically, males join gangs to gain respect or money, to lay claim to a neighborhood or territory, or to meet girls (Curry & Decker, 1998; Klein & Maxson, 2006). It has been identified, however, that girls have their own specific reasons for joining gangs in many cases. Empirical literature suggests that these reasons are closely tied to general instability in their home lives, cultural expectations related to gender, and abusive family relationships.

Unstable home. Unstable home environments have become more common with the evolution of the family structure, specifically in lower socioeconomic areas. Instability within the home has been identified as a risk factor for female youth gang membership (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). In many cases, girls are being parented by single mothers who very well have been teenagers themselves when they bore their first child. This leads to increased levels of responsibility placed on the young female, who may bear the brunt of raising themselves if their single mother works to support their family. These young girls may also become responsible for the care of any younger siblings, in essence assuming the role of mother at far too young of an age. Joining a gang provides them with a sense of stability that they do not find at home, as well as providing them with a sense of self that perhaps they lose within their “mothering” role in their family.

Cultural expectations. Many cultures have different expectations for males and females that have survived generations. The expectations surrounding young females are generally tied to mothering, housekeeping, catering to the men

in the family, and general “woman’s work”. In many cases, these young girls are raised to believe that women should be seen and not heard, dependent, and generally very reserved. These young girls are exposed, however, to other young females in their neighborhoods, within their schools, and have access to television and radio, which provides them with the knowledge that these expectations are not the same for everyone. They become torn between the cultural norms at home and the more liberal world around them. In these situations, the females see joining a gang as an act of independence. Cultural expectations have been identified as a primary reason that young females, particularly Latinas, join gangs (Campbell, 1999; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Joe & Chesney-Lind, 1999). Gangs provide them with an outlet to act on their own, make their own decisions, and control their own destiny.

Abusive families. Several researchers have identified that the impact of abusive family relationships has been a critical turning point in a young female’s choice to join a gang (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; Curry & Decker, 1998). The deterioration of family life in lower socioeconomic areas plagued by alcoholism, drug use, and violence leads to unbearable family situations for many young females. In many cases, these girls find joining a gang as the lesser of two evils. The gang provides protection against the abuse they experienced within the walls of their own home and also provides them with the bonds that they are missing within their family. Zahn et al. (2008, p. 15) identified that issues within the family heavily influence girls decisions to join gangs, as the gang provides an

answer to the social and emotional needs that are not being satisfied within their family unit.

Program Review

Many of the current programs used to address the youth gang problem focus on intervention rather than prevention. These programs are offered through public school systems, law enforcement agencies, and community action agencies. In reviewing these programs, it becomes clear that there is little or no focus on issues specific to females. Program evaluations are sparse even concerning programs that are not gender specific. There are hundreds of local programs offered throughout communities across the United States. However, the bulk of the available data focuses on programs that support larger locales or multiple sites.

This section will provide a review of three of the most widespread programs currently operating to address the youth gang problem, as well as two initiatives that currently offer gender specific programming to address general delinquency. The first program is the Department of Justice's Youth Gang Prevention Initiative, which is comprised of four pilot programs across the United States. Next is Gang Resistance Education Training (G.R.E.A.T.), which has a significant scope in that it is used both nationally and internationally. Thirdly will be a review of Targeted Outreach which is a program sponsored by the Boy's & Girl's Club of America. Finally, PACE and SafeFutures will be discussed. These are initiatives that currently operate with gender specific programming. Their

focus is the intervention and prevention of general delinquency, rather than a specific approach to youth gang membership.

Department of Justice's Youth Gang Prevention Initiative. The Department of Justice's Youth Gang Prevention Initiative is supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). This initiative is comprised of gang reduction and prevention activities targeted toward specific communities and neighborhoods. Currently the Gang Reduction Program is operating four pilot programs in East Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; North Miami Beach, FL; and Richmond, VA (OJJDP, 2009). Each of these pilot programs is sponsored by a local government division that oversees the activities in the specific community. Gang prevention activities include programs offered to schools and communities to prevent gang activity, as well as programs that provide funding to communities to help in their gang prevention efforts. Included in this initiative is the National Youth Gang Center which provides training to communities in accordance with the aforementioned funded programs.

In reviewing the pilot locations, it appears that only one of the four pilots offers programs specific to females. The North Miami Beach pilot was established in 2004, and is referred to as PanZOu Project (City of North Miami Beach, 2009). Within this project is a program called Developing Intelligent Voices of America (DIVAs). DIVAs addresses the social, emotional, and behavioral issues that females face while providing them with a safe environment to develop social bonds. The program focuses on building self-esteem, life skills training, and the development of character and personality. Gang prevention is not mentioned in

DIVAs program description; however, their approach applies the necessary techniques to provide a gang prevention outcome. Currently the program serves nearly 100 girls and meets once a week (City of North Miami Beach, 2009).

There are no readily available program evaluations of this project.

Gang Resistance Education and Training. The Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program is a nationwide program offered in community schools and supported by law enforcement instruction. G.R.E.A.T. was developed in 1991 in the Phoenix area and was taken nationwide a year later in 1992. This program is comprised of four components including programs for both elementary and middle schools, family training, and summer program. The middle school program is considered the core component of the program. They offer training to a wide range of communities through established training centers which are located throughout the country. In 2006 alone, G.R.E.A.T. programs were active in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam, and provided programming to over 400 communities (G.R.E.A.T., 2009).

Some of the core components of the this program focus on decision making skills, developing roles and responsibilities within the community, development of social bonds with the community, conflict resolution, communication techniques and anger management techniques. These programs are offered in group settings, generally within a classroom. Based on a review of the G.R.E.A.T. program, it does not appear that they currently have components specifically targeted towards females.

G.R.E.A.T. is one of the few nationwide programs where program evaluations are present and readily available. In 1995, the federal agencies that support the G.R.E.A.T. program sponsored a national evaluation of the program. This evaluation consisted of two basic components – preliminary comparison of students who completed the program against students who did not, and a longitudinal study of the short and long term effectiveness of the program. To provide insight into the first component the researchers reviewed a sample of 5,935 eighth-graders across 11 nationwide sites from 42 schools and 315 classrooms (G.R.E.A.T., 2009). In regard to the second component, researchers would revisit these students at preset intervals of one and four years after program completion to determine the long-term effectiveness of the program.

The response rate for the initial questionnaire was just over 98%. Of those students that responded, 45% noted that they had completed the program, and the 55% who were identified as not having completed the program became the control group (Esbensen & Osgood, 1997, p.3). The questionnaires were developed to identify specific characteristics including (but not limited to) family status, parental education, age, and sex. At the one-year review, it was determined that G.R.E.A.T. was meeting its program objectives. The evaluations participants who had completed the program showed more positive attitudes towards police, more negative views in regard to gangs, and showed lower levels of delinquency and gang affiliation than did the comparison group of participants who did not complete the program (Esbensen & Osgood, 1997).

The evaluation at the four year interval was not as optimistic. It was determined at this stage of the evaluation that G.R.E.A.T. was meeting two of the three main objectives. When reviewing the long-term effectiveness of the program, it appears to improve overall awareness of the consequences of gang activity and improve overall attitudes toward law enforcement. However, the program did not appear to make an impact where the reduction of gang membership was concerned. In fact, the percentage of improvements even in the program components that were considered a success averaged at only 5%.

Targeted Outreach. Targeted Outreach is a program sponsored by the Boy's & Girl's Club of America. Targeted Outreach provides both preventive and intervention approaches to youth gang membership. Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO) and Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach (GITTO) are the two main initiatives of this program (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002). These initiatives involve components that address the development of youth by utilizing interest based activities partnered with case management activities related to the individual youth and their families (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002). This organization recognizes that the youth who are in the highest risk category for gang involvement are generally the hardest to reach where programs are concerned. They have identified the recruitment of these particular young people as one of their key objectives. It does not appear, however, that either GPTTO or GITTO is gender-specific or has gender-specific components.

An evaluation of GPTTO and GITTO was conducted in 1997 to determine the effectiveness of the programs in regard to their objectives of attracting high-risk youth and making a positive impact on the youth the program did reach. The study included 21 Boys & Girls Club facilities, 932 GPTTO participants, and 104 GITTO participants (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002). The method of approach for this evaluation was multi-faceted consisting of a review of case management records, questionnaires submitted to the identified program participants (at recruitment and again one year after recruitment), a survey of Club directors, and interviews with focus groups from each of the sites involved in the evaluation.

The evaluation found that both programs were successful not only at recruiting high-risk youth, but also at retaining their participation in the program for at least a year. The findings also showed that the participants showed lower levels of delinquent behavior and gang affiliation when compared to the control or comparison group. Based on the data provided within the evaluation, male participants represented in the study were estimated at 62% of the GPTTO participants and 82% of the GITTO participants (Arbreton & McClanahan, 2002, p. 62-63). There was no evaluation data provided that specifically defined the success rates for female participants.

PACE Center for Girls. Serving young females between the ages of 12 and 18, PACE Center for Girls is a highly successful non-residential gender based program providing both prevention and intervention services. PACE (Practical Academic Cultural Education) is not specifically a youth gang program, but

instead focuses on the issue of general delinquency and truancy. This program operates on nine basic principles:

- Honor the female spirit – value and promote the female perspective
- Focus on strengths – identify and build on each girl’s strengths
- Act with integrity and positive intent – teaching ethics and the value of honoring differences
- Embrace growth and change – teaching that growth and change are imperative for a girl to reach her full potential
- Value the wisdom of time – teaching girls how to determine when immediate action is required and when patience is better suited to the situation
- Exhibit courage – teaching effective risk-taking, using your voice in a positive manner, and accountability for ones actions
- Seek excellence – teaching high standards, an ability to reflect critically on accomplishments, seeking innovative solutions, and having an open mind to what could be
- Create partnerships – nurturing the development of positive relationships within the family and the community
- Invest in the future – establish a faith in long-term development and growth (PACE, 2009).

These principles are met through programs utilizing academics, community service requirements, and involvement of parents if at all possible. PACE also provides a gender-specific life management program called Spirited Girls (PACE,

2009). Upon completion of the program, PACE staff monitor the participants on both a personal and educational level for three years.

Participants in the PACE program arrive via referral. They all must be identified as truant, in need of academic skills, or delinquent, and must meet the intake requirements before being accepted into the program. To be accepted in the program, a young female must be a student in grades 6 thru 12 with a current GPA of 2.0 or less, be failing two or more academic classes, have achievement scores below the expected ability level, or have been held back the previous school year or one or more times in prior years (PACE, 2009). The individual's attendance record will be reviewed for truant behavior, as well. Girls are referred to the PACE program through several different outlets including the Department of Juvenile Justice, parents, schools, and self-referral. PACE has served nearly 21,000 girls since the program's beginning in 1985. The program currently has 17 sites statewide and 7 outreach centers, serving multiple communities. Table 6 (see Appendix F) details the risk factors that have been identified in PACE participants and the percentage of participants who exhibit those risk factors.

Reports referred to as Outcome Measure Evaluations are published by PACE annually to determine if the program is meeting its identified goals. The two goals identified involved the reduction of delinquent or truant activity and improved success both personally and academically. For each of the two goals, outcome measures were identified to assess whether or not the goal was being met. Information regarding recidivism on participants is obtained through the Department of Juvenile Justice for the prior year. Of the three outcome measures

identified to address the reduction of delinquent or truant activity, all were exceeded by a significant percentage. Of the eleven outcome measures identified to address the improvement of personal and academic success, all were exceeded with the exception of one. PACE identifies that outcome measure 1D was not met, which identified that “a minimum of 20% of youth shall mainstream to an appropriate educational setting” with that educational setting being something other than a public school. However, upon review 23 percent of participants transitioned to an appropriate educational setting, exceeding the original goal (PACE, 2009). Table 7 (see Appendix G) provides detail on each of the Outcome Measures as defined in the Outcome Measure Evaluation for Fiscal Year 2007-2008.

SafeFutures. Encouraging communities to create programs specific to the needs of their locales was the primary goal of SafeFutures. This initiative has three common goals which include the reduction of risk factors and increase of preventive factors in relation to delinquency, providing services for at-risk youth as well as juvenile offenders, and developing programs that hold youth accountable to both their victims and the community (Roman, Naser, Rossman, Castro, & Lynn-Whaley, 2006). This program is supported and partially funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The SafeFutures initiative is comprised of six locations nationally including Contra Costa County in California and St. Louis. Through SafeFutures specific funding is allocated to the development of programs for at-risk and delinquent girls. Both the Contra Costa and St. Louis sites have developed programs that have been

moderately successful at addressing delinquency issues specific to young female offenders.

Step Up and Lead is one of two programs offered at the Contra Costa site, targeting girls between the ages of 12 and 18, with the majority of participants being referred through their contact with the juvenile justice system. A significant number (52 percent) of the participants were not in a traditional school setting at the time of intake, attending either court or alternative school (Roman et al., 2006). This program consists of frequent face-to-face meetings, relationship building exercises, and referrals for additional services if necessary. Field trips to local businesses were also incorporated into the programming to provide exposure to career development. Families were given the option of choosing a preference regarding the ethnicity of their mentor. Of those participating in the program, 11 percent lived in a two-parent home, 36 percent lived with a single mother, 7 percent lived with a single father, 25 percent were in kinship care with a relative or family friend, 7 percent were in foster care, 11 percent lived in a group home, and 4 percent lived in other settings (Roman et al., 2006). When reviewing information regarding arrest rates the following information was identified.

- 83 percent of participants had information available, of those participants
 - 72 percent had no arrests,
 - 24 percent were arrested prior to involvement in the program but not after,
 - and 4 percent were arrested both before and after involvement in the program

- The average number of arrests prior to intake across the participant population was 6.1
- The average number of arrests post intake was 0.4 (Roman et al., 2006).

These results detail that the program made significant headway in those girls who had arrests prior to the program but none after, with the result being a significant percentage.

The St. Louis site of the SafeFutures initiative supports a program called Project Change. This program caters to girls who have shown patterns of delinquency and are currently attending an alternative school program. The majority of the participants were from low-income households. This program relies on a multi-faceted focus consisting of five basic components – self control, self esteem, pregnancy prevention, academics, and encouraging positive behavior (Roman et al., 2006). These components were supported through counseling in individual and group settings, tutoring, volunteer projects, art classes, career minded training, skills development, and mentoring, all of which supported the goal of delinquency prevention and/or intervention. When reviewing data regarding contact with the family court system, the following results were identified.

- 48 percent of the participants had previous contact with the family court for delinquency related offenses
- 43 percent had no contact with the court before or after their participation in the program

- 29 percent had contact with the court prior to the program, but not during or after their participation in the program
- 10 percent had contact with the court after enrollment
- 19 percent had contact with the court both before and after enrollment
- The average number of arrests prior to intake across the participant population was 2.4
- The average number of arrests post intake was 0.4 (Roman et al., 2006).

Based on the identified results, it appears that Project Change has affected the participants positively by reducing both the average number of arrests as well as the number of participants who have contact with the court after completion of the program.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Many theories have been applied to why young people join gangs. The application of theory relies heavily on the viewpoint of the researcher and how they identify the relationship between their findings and the issue at hand. Social learning theory, institutional-anomie theory, and social bonding theory provide substantial insight into why females join gangs, and in turn should guide the development of program improvements where female gang membership is concerned.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory stems from Sutherland's differential association theory which was developed in 1947 (Akers & Sellers, 2004). Differential association theory is comprised of nine basic principles.

- Criminal behavior is learned
- Criminal behavior is learned through interactions with others via communication, with communication being both verbal and physical
- The learning primarily occurs in "intimate personal groups"
- The learning includes not only the behavior, but also the techniques of crime as well as the "motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes"
- Motives and drives are learned and related to the "definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable"
- Delinquency occurs when definitions in favor of crime outweigh those identified as "unfavorable to violation of law"

- Differential associations may not be consistent or constant, meaning they can change in duration, priority, etc.
- Learning of criminal behavior through associations “involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning”
- Needs and values may be a reflection of criminal behavior, but do not justify that behavior (Sutherland & Cressey, 2003).

Simply said, differential association theory developed the basic thought process that criminal behavior can be learned through associations with others who participate in criminal behavior.

Social learning theory was originally developed by Robert Burgess and Ronald Akers in 1966, with Akers continuing research and applying the theory to delinquent and deviant behavior in 1973 (Akers, 2001). Basically, the theory applied the mindset that criminal behavior is learned through associations with others who view that behavior as favorable behavior (Akers, 2001). Social learning theory utilizes the basic application of differential association theory paired with the critical component of reinforcement.

The basis of social learning theory relies heavily on the evaluation of interactions between individuals. It implies that individuals participate in deviant behavior, in this case gang membership, as a learned behavior through associations with other gang members. The thought process that leads to their joining a gang takes into consideration any perceived positive or negative reinforcements that may result from their membership in said gang. If they

perceive few or no negative reinforcements and feel that the positive reinforcements outweigh the negatives, their decision is thus made.

Taking this into consideration, social learning theory not only relates to learned behavior through associations but also relates to motivations and controls of behavior through the aforementioned reinforcements. These reinforcements lead to a thought process that is based on perceived rewards and punishments (Akers, 2001). Rewards and punishments may not be a direct action, but rather an inferred or indirect result of the decision being made. For instance, a reward may not be a monetary or physical reward but may be an avoidance of a negative outcome.

Social learning theory also relies heavily on imitation as a determining factor in decision making. If an individual observes behaviors and outcomes in another person, they may then imitate those same behaviors in an effort to achieve the same outcomes. Imitation is directly related to gang membership in that young people see the possessions and monetary wealth gained by other gang members in their communities; therefore, connecting gang activity to monetary wealth and personal gain.

Institutional-Anomie Theory

In today's world, young people can be driven by their desires for something more. That something more may be a nice car, money, designer clothes, or even jewelry. The desire for material things has become central to young peoples' decision making processes. Institutional-anomie theory addresses how these desires may provoke gang membership in young people.

Merton's theory of social structure and anomie was developed in 1938 and provided the preliminary though process for institutional-anomie theory with the idea that a mismatch between "cultural ends and legitimate societal means to those ends" can cause delinquent behavior (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001). As time progressed, Messner and Rosenfeld delved into the intricacies of this theory developing what is considered a contemporary version known as institutional-anomie theory. This theory is built on four basic ideas:

- Achievement orientation – a belief that the value of a person is dependent upon their achievements or possessions,
- Individualism – a belief that each individual in society is competing for something and that whether or not an individual "makes it" is purely based on their own drive,
- Universalism – a belief that the expectation of society is that individuals all want the same things,
- "Fetishism" of money – the idea that monetary possessions hold the utmost value in life (Akers & Sellers, 2004, p. 175-176).

The combination of these basic principles create an environment of "survival of the fittest" where only those that fend for themselves and put themselves first will rise to the top of society. When operating within society's norms, these basic principles promote determination and ambition. However, when these principles are applied in an environment where the norms are skewed, delinquent behavior results. This is especially true when the norms do not discourage deviant behavior, or even worse condone it as in the case of gangs. Messner and

Rosenfeld (2001) identify that in these situations the responsibility for discouraging delinquent behavior or correcting the skewed view of norms falls on the family and schools.

Social Bonding Theory

Social bonding theory was developed in 1969 by Travis Hirschi (2003) as an extension of control theory which was first developed by Reiss in 1951. The premise behind this theory is different from most in relation to deviant behavior in that theories generally explain why deviance occurs, whereas this theory explains why deviance is avoided. This theory is grounded in the belief that the bonds that individuals develop with their families and society play a large role in the decision making process where delinquent behavior is concerned.

The four key tenets in social bonding theory are attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs. This theory is directly tied to individuals' personal relationships with their family, peers, and society as a whole. Generally it is believed that all of these principles are related, and that if one of these four principles suffers they all suffer due to their interconnectedness.

Attachment represents the level at which an individual is attached to those around them. This attachment leads to identification with others which breeds a sense of conscientiousness about the expectations that others have for you and sensitivity to those same individual's opinions (Hirschi, 2003).

Commitment represents the level of commitment or responsibility that an individual feels toward those the people they are attached to. This tenet basically represents the weighing of pros and cons in the decision making process.

Commitment refers to stake the individual has in that decision making process, or better yet, what they stand to lose in making a bad decision. Simply stated, commitment refers to the commitment of that individual to societies norms based on what they have to lose by violating the norms (Hirschi, 2003).

Involvement represents the level at which the individual participates in “conventional” activities (Akers & Sellers, 2004). These conventional activities may be family time, music, or sports related activities. Ultimately, this level of involvement evolves into commitment and attachment which further strengthen the social bonds of that individual. This involvement also allows little time for participation in non-conventional or deviant activities.

Beliefs represent the belief in “conventional” norms and values (Akers and Sellers, 2004). This is not necessarily referencing a faith or religious based belief, but rather a belief that the norms of society are generally valid. This tenet suggests that the individual accepts that the values and morals presented by society should be obeyed (Hirschi, 2003).

The emphasis of this theory is that strong social bonds can deter an individual from participating in deviant behavior. Therefore, the weakening of those social bonds may, in turn, promote deviant behavior. The four basic components are critical to the development and sustained strength of those bonds.

Application of Theories

As identified earlier in the literature review, the three primary reasons for female youth gang membership are unstable home environments, cultural expectations, and abusive family relationships. Each of these factors plays a role

in the application of theory where young females are concerned in regard to gang membership. It has been determined that youth who present higher risk factors for gang involvement reside in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. Generally, these are also the neighborhoods with the most gang activity. In a study of San Diego youth, Klein and Maxson (2006) found that girls identified a primary reason for joining gangs as relationships with current gang members. This relationship allows for a greater likelihood that these young girls will have an association with one or multiple gang members. In these neighborhoods, gang activity is considered commonplace, part of daily life, or a social norm for that particular neighborhood. For these girls gang members are not people you see on television or in movies, they are your brother, sister, neighbor, best friend, or boyfriend. These relationships allow for less negative reinforcements of gang membership, relating directly to social learning theory. Akers and Sellers (2004, p. 95-96) identify that gang membership provides long term associations that initiate increased delinquent behavior through the reinforcement of the gangs behavior and the norms found within the gang.

Both cultural expectations and associations with gang members directly relate to institutional-anomie theory. Cultural expectations may breed anger, resentment, and a desire for more than what is offered in these young girls. Portillos (1999) identified that traditional cultural expectations can make young females feel smothered and subjected to a double standard. It may drive them to want the things they are told they cannot or will not have even more so than a normal teenager. Combine this feeling with established associations with gang

members, and the decision to join a gang becomes quite easy for these females. In their neighborhoods, gang members drive the nicest cars, wear the best clothes, and have money, all of which equates independence and social status to these young females. The gang provides a path for them to break free of cultural expectations and become the independent and valued person they want to be.

Each of the three primary reasons that young girls join gangs impact social bonds. Unstable home environments can cause a rift between parents and young females, making the girl feel as though she is being robbed of her childhood. If a young girl does not accept the cultural expectations that are placed on her by her family or culture in general, those bonds will suffer. Moore and Hagedorn (2001) identified that many female gang members suffered victimization within their own homes. Abusive family relationships are the most harmful to social bonds, potentially creating a situation where the girl does not feel comfortable establishing bonds with anyone even those outside of her family unit. This type of victimization can lead to poor social bonds and prompt girls to join gangs. Perhaps they feel that the gang can serve as a surrogate family, providing the emotional and mental support that she does not feel currently. She may also feel that becoming a gang member provides her with protection from the things she is trying to escape.

Chapter 4: Program Recommendations

Program improvements need to be made to address the issue of youth gang membership. These improvements may come by way of modification of current programs or new programs developed with gender specific issues in mind. Ultimately, these programs need to address basic components to be completely successful, including intake requirements, age specific programming, interest-based initiatives, and gender based programming. Through the review of PACE and SafeFutures it becomes apparent that these approaches lead to a successful outcome. These two programs both utilize some or all of the components discussed below in their approach (PACE, 2009; Roman et al., 2006).

Intake Requirements

Establishing intake requirements for program participants is very beneficial. The development of pre-set requirements for program participation allows for the establishment of a baseline which in turn allows for measurement of performance to goals at a later time. Specific intake requirements are especially important when considering a program rooted in prevention and intervention, in this case those programs addressing gang membership. These requirements allow the facilitators of the program to register participants based on risk factors or current participation in a gang. Intake requirements allow the program facilitators to be sure they are reaching the youth that are in need of their services the most. Without those requirements, the program may not be truly reaching its target audience.

The specifics determining intake requirements could fluctuate by program. However, it would appear to be worthwhile to focus on the obvious risk factors such as past offenses, academic issues, and truancy. These risk factors should be heavily weighted in the intake requirement formula, in that they are all leading indicators to gang membership. A review of other risk factors including family environment, social bonds, and history of abuse would also be key to the intake requirements, along with economic background.

Age Specific

Age specific programming is important, in that, the views or values of a pre-teen are very different than those of a female in her late teens. The age of a young female plays a large part in how she views the world and her place in it. Not only are the views of these girls different, they are at varying maturity levels and their interests may vary greatly depending upon their age range. Age as a component in programming is crucial in that the program must fit the maturity and interest level of the girls being served. If it does not, the participants will lose interest and the program will fail. The programs discussed in the literature review appear to cater to the ages of 12 through 18 years.

It would, perhaps, make the most sense to break the age groups into pre-teens (ages 8-12) and teenagers (ages 13-18). The purpose for this break in age groups is to allow an opportunity to best serve each group. A broad age range in one large group would make it difficult for the program and its employees to focus specifically on issues or topics without either boring the older girls or losing the interest of the younger girls due to a general misunderstanding of the content.

Not to mention that teenagers over the age of 13 generally deal with a different set of more complex issues (i.e. pregnancy, date rape, etc.) than do girls in the pre-teen age group.

Interest Based

Interest based programming is critical in that it serves multiple purposes. These types of programs can help the girls cultivate an interest in a positive social activity, while also allowing them to develop a connection to something other than deviant peers. Social bonding theory is based on the four tenets of attachment, involvement, commitment, and beliefs. With the development of a conventional interest, these four tenets are all satisfied. Interest based programs can assist young girls in developing an attachment to positive peers, rather than deviant peers. These programs obviously satisfy the tenet of involvement, and in turn, develop a commitment to others, especially when considering interests (such as sports) that require group participation. Ultimately, the combination of these three principles will serve to begin to build the beliefs that constitute the final tenet. As these attachments and commitments mature, the stakes that these girls have in making positive life decisions increases.

As explained in social learning theory, many young girls approach gang membership due to association with deviant peers. Interest based programs will allow them to build relationships with peers who are active in more positive activities and abide by social norms. As time progresses, these associations will provide them with an opportunity to recognize that the gang activity in their

neighborhood may not be the norm for everyone and that there are other options where life choices are concerned.

Gender Based

It has become apparent that gender based programming is critical. Treating the special needs of young girls is the only viable resolution to the female youth gang problem. As seen with the highlighted programs that achieved a level of success, it becomes apparent that gender based programming can and does work. With the addition of components which address self-esteem building, cultural expectations, mentoring, and individual case management, programs can begin to meet the needs of these at-risk females.

Self Esteem. Identified risk factors have included prior abuse (both physical and mental), unstable family environments, and cultural expectations, all of which can severely affect a young girl's self esteem. Building strong, self-confident young women should be a primary goal of a gender based program. Increased self-esteem can lead to further independence which will help them cope with the issues in their past, as well as help them to make better choices in the future. This increased self esteem can also aid if peer pressure ever presents itself as an issue.

Cultural Expectations. Identifying and discussing cultural expectations is a critical component to gender based programs. This is especially true when dealing with young females in cultures that generally have very traditional views about differences in status between men and women. As women become more liberated in society, these young girls see that there are opportunities but are often

led to believe that those opportunities do not apply to them. Moore and Hagedorn (2001) identified that by the 1980s, the majority of gang members were African American or Latino. Additionally, Egle, Jr., (2002) identified through his review of trends in the National Youth Gang Survey that 47 percent of gang members were Latino and seven percent were Asian. With significant numbers of Hispanics and Asians joining gangs, it is imperative that any issues specific to cultural expectations be addressed.

Implementing cultural expectations, or the discussion thereof, as a program component would be valuable to these young females. The program would give them an outlet to discuss their frustrations and any confusion they may feel, while providing a supportive environment. It would also serve as a learning tool for them to research options and opportunities such as college and careers that the traditional cultural expectations do not support. Simply said, they can utilize this tool to do their own research and make their own decisions about where their opportunities lie, rather than being made to feel like they are destined to become only what is viewed as acceptable by their culture. It would be imperative that the staff assisting in this portion of the program are sensitive to cultural issues and address these in the appropriate manner. Having a successful female from a female repressed culture (for lack of a better term) serve as the facilitator of the group would potentially serve multiple purposes, in that she would be sensitive to the cultural norms while also providing a positive role model for the girls in the group.

Mentoring. The use of mentoring in gender based programs is very valuable. Allowing the program participants to build social bonds with positive peers and role models is beneficial. Mentoring allows a program to introduce young females to successful and ambitious peers and mentors who can provide them with an outlook that they may have never considered. Mentoring provides positive associations and increased social bonds. In a study reviewing factors that prevent delinquency in juvenile females, Hawkins, Graham, Williams, and Zahn (2009, p. 5) identified that “the extent to which adolescent girls believed an adult cared about them served as a protective factor against several forms of delinquency.” Mentoring also allows the young females to see that there are other, more positive and legal, approaches to obtaining monetary wealth and possessions. In addition, and more importantly, it may assist these young girls in understanding that monetary wealth and possessions are a part of life but do not define you as a person.

Individual Case Management. Individual case management is necessary in the development of a robust gender based program. Although it has been determined that young females and males face different risk factors, they cannot be lumped into one large category based on gender. Each young person, whether male or female, has a specific background comprised of specific risk factors and life situations. As a society that is often driven by cost, programs that provide individual case management are sometimes hard to develop due to the lack of funding and the increased cost of this type of case management process. Having said that, individual case management provides a level of knowledge about the

background of a participant that is unmatched through other information collection methods. This increased knowledge allows programs to provide or recommend programming that is specific to the needs of the individual. It also allows for the program facilitators to make referrals to outside agencies if the participant needs the help of additional resources that cannot be provided through the program.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Ultimately, the literature review details that female youth gangs, although not as prevalent as male youth gangs, are a serious problem. Gender-specific programming specific to gang prevention and intervention is lacking. A summary of the literature review, identified conclusions, and program recommendations are provided.

Summary of Findings

Studies in the past regarding youth gang membership have primarily focused on males. Due to this focus, the majority of current programs are not gender specific and are providing a general approach to both males and females. Because of this lack of gender specific focus in current programming, at risk females are not being exposed to the necessary prevention and intervention programs where youth gang membership is concerned.

Secondary research and statistics were utilized in the literature review. There are significant amounts of empirical research that provide supporting evidence to the issue at hand. Data collected nationally through the National Youth Gang Survey, arrest reports, and self report surveys all identify that females' participation in youth gangs is an issue, and that arrest rates in general for young females are on the rise. The three primary types of girl gangs were reviewed – co-ed gangs, auxiliary gangs, and autonomous gangs.

Girls are joining gangs for various reasons, primarily due to instability within the home, rejection of cultural expectations, and abusive family environments. Social learning theory, institutional-anomie theory, and social

bonding theory all relate to these reasons. The application of these theories helps to identify and explain the rationale of young girls who make the decision to join gangs.

There are many programs currently operating to provide services specific to the intervention and prevention of youth gang membership. These programs are provided at a community level ranging from local efforts to nationwide initiatives. A review of three widely used programs specific to youth gang prevention were reviewed, as well as two initiatives that are currently operating to address delinquency intervention and prevention not specific to gang membership.

Identified Conclusions

The information presented in the literature review provides insight into the issue of female youth gang membership. Overall arrest rates for juvenile females are on the rise, and female youth gang membership is not decreasing.

Researchers seem to now understand that female youth gang membership is a real issue. They have come to recognize that girls are active members in gangs, not just subservient sidekicks to male gang members or sexual toys to be used. This understanding comes by way of increased research into the female youth gang membership problem, and an open-minded approach concerning the roles that females play in gangs today.

Prevention and intervention programs are being utilized, but unfortunately do not currently meet the needs of juvenile females. It has been identified that girls join gangs for different reasons than do boys. If these specific reasons are not addressed in the programming being offered, the desired outcome will not be

attained. Communities cannot continue to apply programming designed with males in mind to the female population. This issue cannot be solved with a one-size-fits-all approach. Based on the review of these programs, it becomes clear that the current programming specific to gang membership is not working. However, the delinquency programs that apply gender-specific components have been successful. Programs focused on the intervention and prevention of youth gang membership need to provide gender-specific initiatives to truly address the female youth gang membership issue.

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Appendix A

Table 1

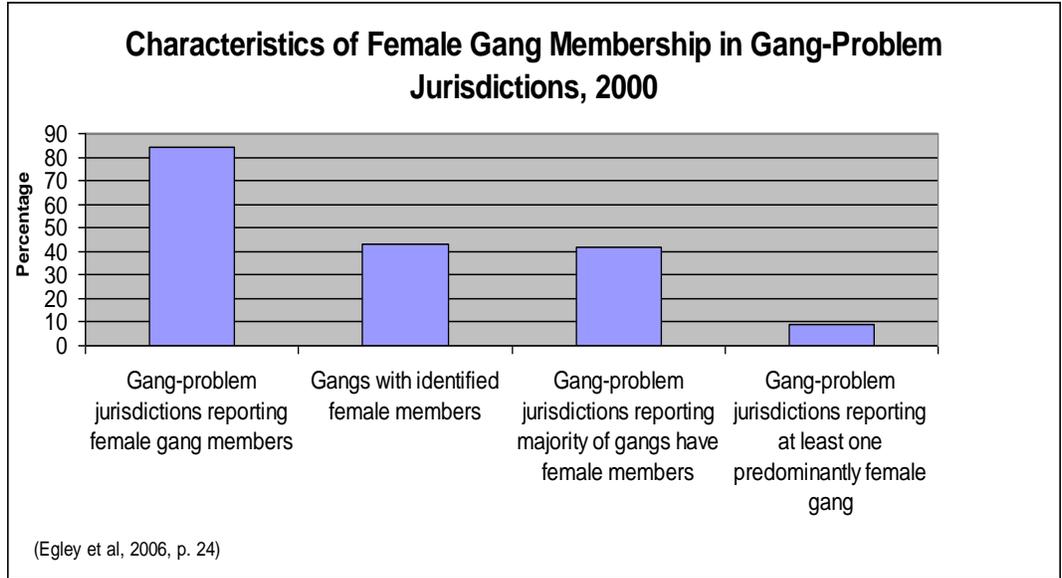
Gang Structure by Ethnicity

<i>Gang Structure by Ethnicity</i>		
Interview Questions	African Americans	Latinas
Who called the shots?		
Girls on their own	88.2	46.2
Both girls and guys	5.9	15.4
Guys	5.9	23.1
Other		15.4
Who decided who got in?		
Girls on their own	87.5	44.2
Both girls and guys		32.7
Guys	12.5	17.3
Other		5.8
Did the girls have meetings on their own?		
Yes	77.8	31.5
No	22.2	66.7
No response		1.9
Did gang have leaders?	66.7	53.8
Yes	33.3	46.2
No		
How organized was the gang?		
Very organized	16.7	3.8
Organized	50.0	71.2
Not very organized	16.7	21.2
Not organized at all	16.7	3.8
(Hagedorn & Devitt, 1999, p. 267)		

Appendix B

Table 2

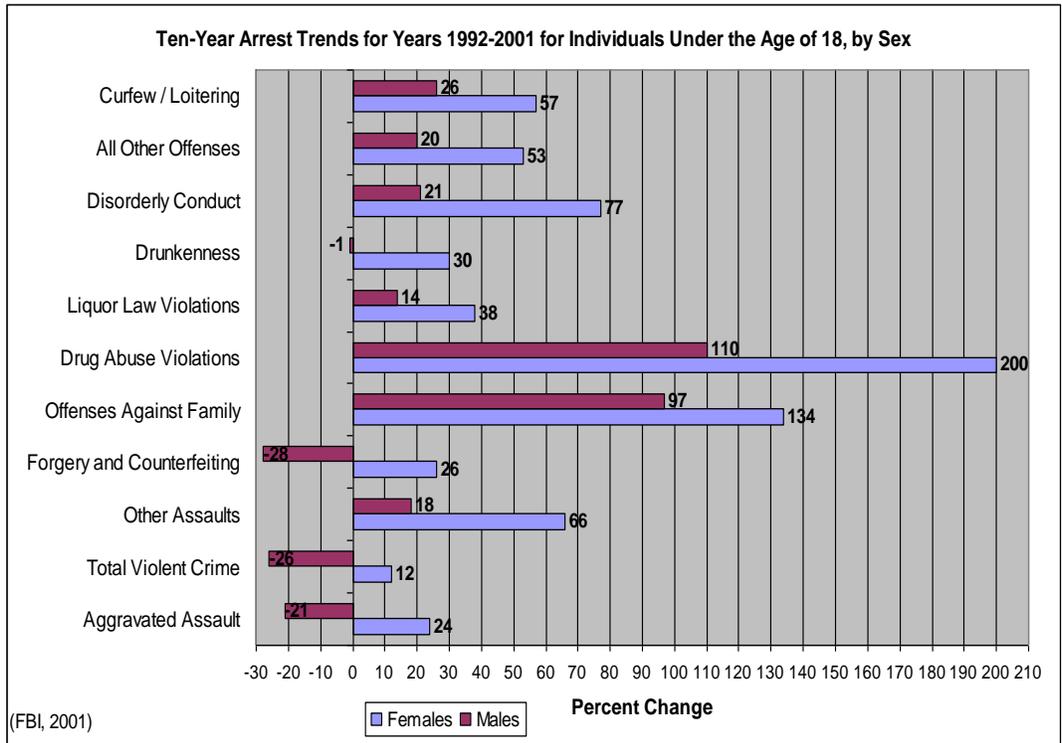
Characteristics of Female Gang Membership in Gang-Problem Jurisdictions, 2000



Appendix C

Table 3

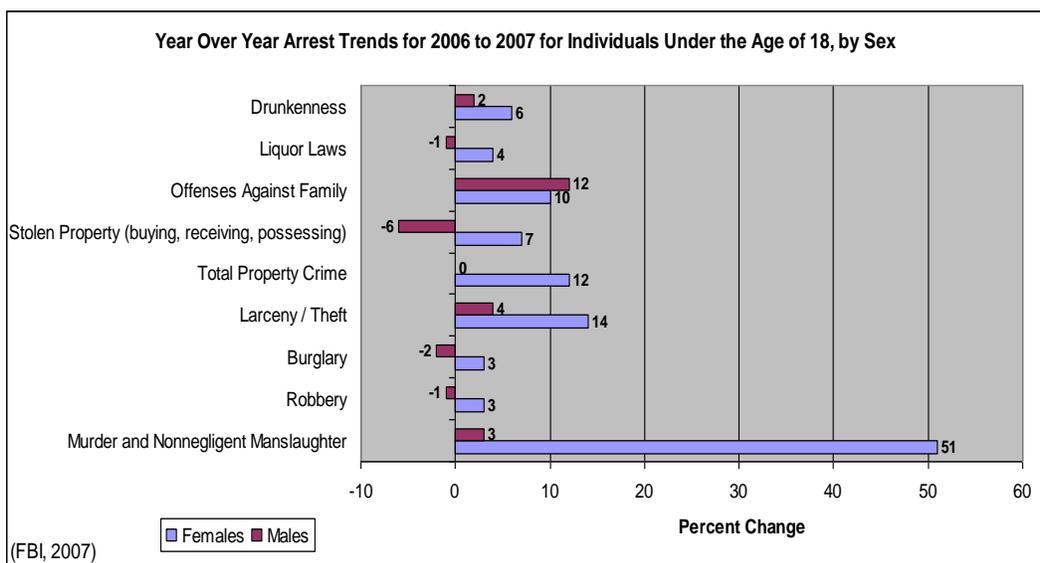
Ten-Year Arrest Trends for Years 1992-2001 for Individuals Under the Age of 18, by Sex



Appendix D

Table 4

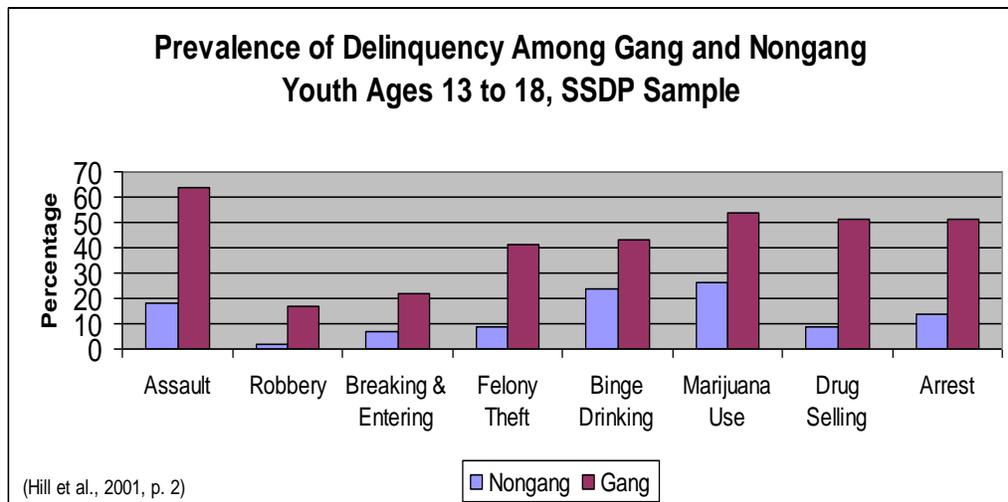
Year Over Year Arrest Trends for 2006 to 2007 for Individuals Under the Age of 18, by Sex



Appendix E

Table 5

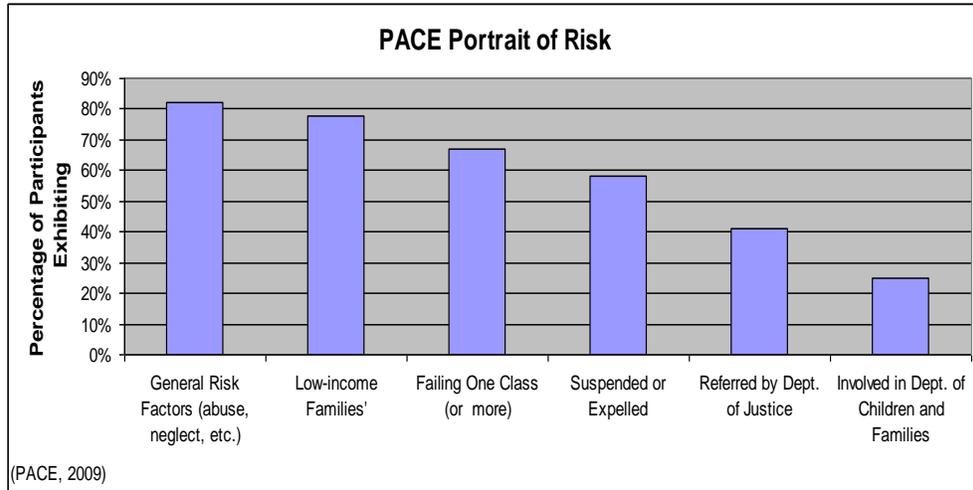
Prevalence of Delinquency Among Gang and Nongang Youth Ages 13 to 18,
SSDP Sample



Appendix F

Table 6

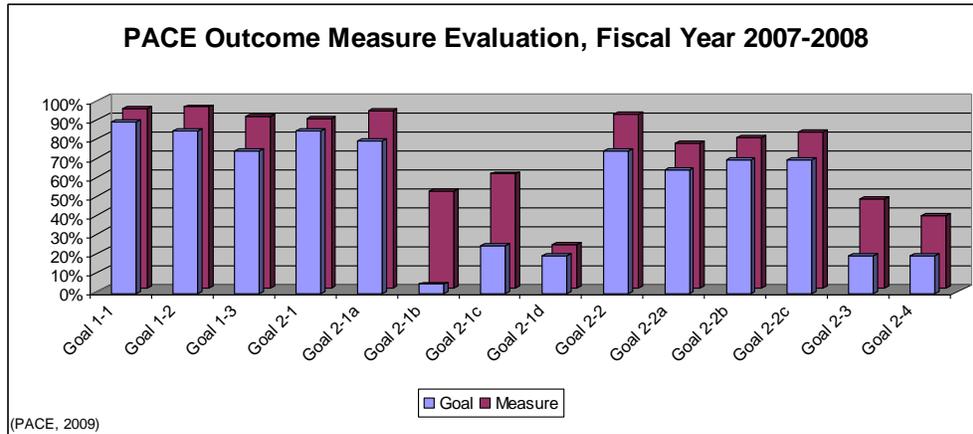
PACE Portrait of Risk



Appendix G

Table 7

PACE Outcome Measure Evaluation, Fiscal Year 2007-2008



Goal 1-1: A minimum of 90% of all youth shall not be adjudicated or have adjudication withheld while enrolled in the program.

Goal 1-2: A minimum of 85% of all youth shall not be adjudicated or have adjudication withheld within 6 months of release from PACE.

Goal 1-3: A minimum of 75% of youth shall not be adjudicated or have adjudication withheld within one year of transition from the program.

Goal 2-1: A minimum of 85% of youth shall earn a high school diploma (or GED), or mainstream back to public school, an appropriate educational setting, or be gainfully employed or placed in an appropriate placement based on the individual treatment plan.

Goal 2-1a: A minimum of 80% of youth shall remain enrolled for 30 days or longer.

Goal 2-1b: A minimum of 5% of youth (who are 18 years old at transition) shall earn a high school diploma or GED.

Goal 2-1c: A minimum of 25% of youth shall mainstream back to public school.

Goal 2-1d: A minimum of 20% of youth shall mainstream to an appropriate educational setting.

Goal 2-2: A minimum of 75% of all youth who participate shall increase their academic functioning (grade level, GAP, or other academic progress) while enrolled.

Goal 2-2a: A minimum of 65% of all youth who participate shall increase their grade level by at least one school year as evidenced by increasing one full grade level on the BASI test (SSS score) or promotion to next grade level.

Goal 2-2b: A minimum of 70% of all high school youth who participate shall increase their cumulative GPA.

Goal 2-2c: A minimum of 70% of all youth who participate shall make measurable academic progress as evidenced by the completion of elementary or middle school courses or earning high school credit.

Goal 2-3: Upon completion of the transition program, of all girls who are able to be located, a minimum of 20% of youth shall be enrolled in college or other appropriate educational setting.

Goal 2-4: Upon completion of transition, of all girls who are able to be located, a minimum of 20% of youth shall be employed.