
Female Gangs: A Focus on Research

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Template: Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Last modified: 11-12-2017

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Female Gangs: A Focus on Research

Description

This paper focuses on historic and current research regarding female gang membership, levels of criminal activity, ethnic and gender norms of female gang behavior. There are few and conflicting sources of information concerning these areas of female gang affiliation from law enforcement agencies, surveys and field studies. Because the definition of “gang membership” regarding females is undefined sources of research vary in regard to statistical and empirical evidence.

Management

Information generated from this research will be managed by The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- The proliferation of youth gangs since 1980 has fueled the public’s fear and magnified possible misconceptions about youth gangs. To address the mounting concern about youth gangs, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP’s) Youth Gang Series delves into many of the key issues related to youth gangs. The series considers issues such as gang migration, gang growth, female involvement with gangs, homicide, drugs and violence, and the needs of communities and youth who live in the presence of youth gangs.
- Given the lack of research, much of what has been written about female gangs and then reproduced in textbooks has been based on the reports of journalists and social workers and on the statements of male gang members. (p.1)
- Both male and female gangs proliferated in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Although the percentage of gang members who were female is difficult to ascertain, all sources agree the numbers were significant. (p.2)
- Though most females join gangs for friendship and self-affirmation (Campbell, 1984a, 1987; Moore, 1991), recent research has begun to shed some light on economic and family pressures motivating many young women to join gangs. (p.2)

Dissemination

As part of its comprehensive, coordinated response to America’s gang problem, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funds the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC). NYGC assists State and local jurisdictions in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies. NYGC coordinates activities of the OJJDP Gang Consortium, a group of Federal agencies, gang program representatives, and service providers that works to coordinate gang information and programs. NYGC also provides training and technical assistance for OJJDP’s Rural Gang, Gang-Free Schools, and Gang-Free Communities Initiatives.

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