

# [Theories for youth gang crime
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\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

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1. [Introduction](#introduction) \n \t
2. [Structureof gangs](#structureof-gangs) \n \t
3. [Recommendation](#recommendation) \n \t
4. [Conclusion](#conclusion) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Reasons Why Teens Engage in Street Gang Related Crime

## Introduction

The rapid increase of criminal gangs in the United States of America has been alarming in the recent past. It had been reported that these criminal gangs have been recruiting juveniles as members of the gang (Howell, 2015). Due to this tremendous increase, there has become the need to address this issue critically and extensively. The issue of radicalization of the youth can also be addressed on this topic (Howell, 2015). Most youths haveenrolled themselvesin these gangs for a couple of reasons such as the need for affiliation and peer pressure, weak social; control structures among others. The thirst of power for these youngsters can also be seen as a driving factor to the enrolment to this criminal gang. The gangshave structuresthat are determined by the ability and willingness to commit crimes (Howell, 2015). These gangs are a major heat to the well-being of the people they operate around due to their actions of robbery, assaults and uncontrolled killings. Failure of the federal government to implement harsh laws on criminals bears all the blame for the increase in street gangs.

## Structureof gangs

Most types of gangs form the generalstructure of the organized group.  Thegroup members, as derived from the definition of a gang, are from a similarbackground and share a common interest (Ratcliffe, 2016). The members ofthese groups are arranged in hierarchies which are determined by specificfactors such as the ability to fight, physical structure, the willingness tocommit crimes among others.  Most gangsoperate informally having their leadership falling on whoever takes control. The structure depends on their primary size which in most times ranges fromfive to thousand (Krohn & Eassey, 2015). The structure ofgangs may also depend on the mission of the gang. It may have subgroups initself that report to the main group.

Research done by the federal board ofinvestigations indicates that about thirty-three thousand criminal gangsoperate in the United States of America. These gangs have been reported toenroll about 1. 4 million members in the past fourteen years (Ratcliffe, 2016). Another study by statistic brain found that about forty percent of the gangs inthe US are below eighteen years of age. It further analyzed that about eightpercent of the gang members are females. Large cities and their suburbs remainsthe hub of street gangs in the United States America having about forty-one andtwenty-five percent respectively (Phillips, 2015). Street gangs costthe government about one million dollars to establish the gang riskintervention program that was initiated in the Los Angeles school system

Social control theory postulates that mostpeople would commit crimes if not for the controls that the society puts onthem (Krohn & Eassey, 2015). In this case, mostchildren will engage themselves in crimes since the society has less strictrules that guide the conduct of the children. The society may lack thefundamental structures that control the children such as the school. Due tothis, the children are likely to be pulled by their peers to enter into crimeand criminal related activities to so as to quench their thirst of affiliation (Krohn &Eassey, 2015). The failure of the school to develop affirmative guidelines to control thebehavior of the students can lead the students to crimes.

Strain theory assumes that the society setsgoals for the people to achieve. The people are guided by the societal valuesso as to achieve that target. When people fail to achieve the targets in themost moral ways, they use every means to make sure that they at least accomplishwhat the society expects regardless of the moral drive (Krohn &Eassey, 2015). By so doing, they find themselves engaging in criminal acts. In most times mostpeople who engage themselves in crimes do not like hard work and delayedgratification, therefore, thy look for a better and faster way of achievingtheir goal.

Social disorganization theory postulatesthat a child’s physical and social environments are key factors that shape thebehavior of the child. A society that has weak structures is likely to moldpeople who are weak in their morality. In this theory, the society a personlives in is held into account of the person’s choices (Howell, 2015). A society that ischaracterized by poor schools, high rate of unemployment, and a mix of theresidential and commercial property is likely to have many young peopledeveloping criminal behaviors. For example, a child living in a filthyenvironment will tend to have a behavior that leans towards crime while thatwho lives in a physically and morally clean environment is likely to have abehavior that leads the towards morality and deviance to crimes.

Engaging in crimes violates the law. Gangviolence is a threat to the social and economic welfare of the country. Gangviolence drives away investors since they threaten investment. People whoengage themselves in crimes are an economic liability to the society (Krohn &Eassey, 2015). Also, the cost of incarcerating gang members is very high and strains thepublic finance for the federal government. The other problem of young peopleengaging in crimes is that they act as a threat to security. Young people areusually very energetic, and if engaged in criminal activities they can causehigh insecurity to the lives of peoples and their property. Criminal gangsdissolve the societies’ values but acting in defiance of the set rules. Themeaning of the laws set by the society is lessened by the criminal activities (Krohn &Eassey, 2015). Criminal gangs tamper with the social order. They change the usual way ofliving and after that dismantle the already existing social structures. Thesegangs give teachers and the law enforcers a hard time during their correction.

The social structures such as the schoolshould be made stronger so as to prevent radicalization of the youth. Theyshould have an elaborate structure of governance that offers strict rules andregulations to be used as a guidance tool for the conduct of the youngchildren. Teachers, for example, should conduct themselves in a way that isworth copying by the children (Howell, 2015). They should act asrole models for the children to emulate and embrace their behavior. The schoolshould have mechanisms that control the children behavior not only in theschool environment but also in their entire interactions in the society atlarge.

The federal government of the United Statesof America has set up the National gang intelligence center with the aim ofcurbing the growth of criminal gangs which have been reportedly increasingtremendously. The NGIC has the mandate to integrate the gang intelligenceacross the individual states and the local law enforcement agencies (Ratcliffe, 2016). The center provides timely and accurate information by ensuring that itprovides strategic analysis of intelligence. The

The Transnational Anti-Gang task force hasbeen established to curb the MS-13 and the 18th street gangs which are verypopular in the United States. The mission of this force is to investigateinterrupt and dismantle any of these transnational gangs (Howell, 2015). This force operatesas a team with the FBI. The government should also ensure that they initiatethe safe neighborhood projects that will help in reporting crimes when thegangs start to form. This will help combat the criminal gangs from thegrassroots.

## Recommendation

Parents must be provided with the necessaryeducation on how to spot the signs of aging associations of their children. They should also be taught on how to work with their children to make the valueof the gangs seem less fashionable. Families also need help to deal with their children who show aspects ofdeviance by joining street gangs (Krohn & Eassey, 2015). The school alsoshould put in place viable measures that will help in reducing the pressure forthe children to join the street gangs. The school should provide the lawenforcers with the right information on the development of gangs in theschools. it should also give accurate information on drugs to the students (Phillips, 2015). The teachers should also teach the students on how to “ say no” to drugs andother crimes.

## Conclusion

As from the above statistics, street gangsare very dangerous and bring about extensive problems (Howell, 2015). They are verycritical, and they should be dealt with immediate effect because they getbigger and worse when they realize that there is no action being taken againstthem. Even after the efforts of the government, and the social structures tocombat the gangs, the gangs have continued to grow tremendously in the United Statesof America (Phillips, 2015). The aboverecommendation is believed to bring an amicable solution if put in place sincethey deal with the criminal gangs at the grassroots.

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