

Gang Affiliation and Negative Perceptions About Authority, Law Enforcement, and Laws: Is Gang Affiliation a Precursor to Becoming a Threat to Homeland Security and Terrorism?

By
Suman Kakar, Ph.D.

Abstract

This study explored the connections between gang affiliation and negative perceptions about authority, law enforcement, and laws. It compared the young adults' (gang affiliated) perceptions about authority, law enforcement, and laws with young adults' (non-gang affiliated), perceptions. The objective was to explore whether negative perceptions about authority, law enforcement, and laws may enhance an individual propensity to join more serious and hard core groups and actually serve as precursor to becoming a threat to homeland security. Data indicate that although young adults with gang affiliation are more likely to hold negative perceptions and are more likely to be enticed by any organization that challenges authority and provides members with a sense of belonging and introduces gang members to terrorist activities, gang affiliation by itself is neither a certain nor an inevitable precursor to becoming a threat to homeland security and terrorism. The analysis of variance was conducted to examine the differences on measures of differences among the three groups. Gang members were found to have more negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws as well as more enthusiastic about engaging in illegal and criminal activities as compared to non-gang members. The gang members with negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws were more likely to justify terrorist actions as compared to non-gang members with lesser degree of negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws. The contribution of close affiliation and ties to gang membership to criminal gang activities was also examined. Gang membership was not found to independently affect justification for terrorist actions.

The proliferation of youth gangs since 1980 has fueled the public's fear and magnified possible misconceptions about youth gangs (David Starbuck, James C. Howell, and Donna J. Lindquist, 2001). The popular image of youth gangs ties them directly to drugs and violent crime (Klein, 1995). More recently, gang activities are also believed to be associated with more serious activities such as money laundering as well as drug and human trafficking. These perceptions have led some to believe that gang affiliation augments individual members' propensity to join more serious groups such as terrorist groups which in turn enhances their probability for becoming a threat to homeland security.

Literature on the relationship between gang membership and delinquency suggests that gang membership increases the frequency and severity of delinquent acts among youth. It is also evident from the existent literature that having delinquent friends also contributes to an individual's delinquency. In addition, having a criminal family member is

also known to intensify individual involvement in gang activities and delinquency. However, whether these associations with delinquent friends and/or criminal family members, and increased delinquency among gang members serve as precursors to joining more serious groups such as terrorist groups and becoming a threat to homeland security is not explored.

Being involved in a gang and being associated with delinquent friends have been shown to contribute to an individual's delinquent behavior. The unique contribution made by criminality in family to the gang membership and the unique contribution of gang membership to delinquency has also been studied (Kakar, 2005). However whether the increased criminal activity due to gang affiliation or gang membership by itself enhances the probability of becoming a threat to homeland security has not been examined. It is possible that increased criminal activities among gang members due to their status in gang serve as prototype and prepare young adults to join more serious groups such as terrorist groups. It is possible that gang membership contributes to the increased likelihood of terrorist activities and becoming a threat to homeland security.

Although it is believed and a great deal of research results show that gang members have a higher rate of offending than non-members, the proportion of the total amount of crime that can be attributed to gang members is not fully known (Thornberry and Burch, 1997). Similarly, although it is believed that gang membership and gang related activities may be acting as precursors to becoming a threat to homeland security and terrorist activities, no research has been conducted to examine this belief. Despite the fact that gang-related legislation has been enacted in every region of the United States, over 70 percent of all states have enacted some form of legislation relating to gangs, and a number of states have enacted Street Gang Terrorism acts similar to the act established originally in Illinois (National Youth Gang Survey Analysis, 2005), no systematic research has been conducted to examine the contribution to terrorist activities made by gang members and gang related activities becoming a threat to homeland security. Although it is believed that gang membership may serve as a precursor to join terrorist groups and lead to terrorist activities, no research exists to support this belief.

This is an important issue because, if gang members are at risk of actually becoming a threat to homeland security then it is crucial that we understand the nature and extent of threat caused by gang activities. In order to develop effective strategies to secure the nation and prevent terrorist activities, it is imperative that the contribution made by gang membership is fully understood. Thus, while the scholars have examined the contribution of gang membership to delinquency and crime, the contribution of delinquent friends to delinquency, and the contribution of family criminality to delinquency, the contiguous effects of gang membership, family criminality, and delinquent friends on subsequent terrorist activities and threat to homeland security have not been examined. This research explores this area. To examine these effects, this research compared the perceptions of three groups of young adults: (1)

perceptions of young adults with some gang affiliation and experience, (2) young adults with no gang affiliation but having friends who have some criminal history, (3) young adults with no gang affiliation and no criminal friends¹. The perceptions of these three groups about authority, law enforcement officers, as well as the government were compared to examine whether there were any significant differences.

It is possible that more hard core members of terrorist cells may entice young gang members and may encourage a large proportion of already disfranchised young adults to join these terrorist groups. It will not be implausible to assume that more hard core adult gangs may be involved in training younger members as terrorists. Thus, understanding the role of gangs and young adults' perceptions about the role of gang membership is particularly important to ensure homeland security and reduce the overall amount of crime in society.

Several studies (studies conducted by OJJDP-supported longitudinal studies in Denver, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Rochester) have shown that gang members are responsible for a large proportion of both violent and nonviolent criminal acts, as self-reported in each study's sample. A substantial amount of research studies indicate that gang members commit serious and violent offenses at a rate several times higher than non-gang youth.

Research on gangs has focused on relationship between gangs and delinquency (Huff, 1990; Miller, 1990; Spergel, 1990; Kakar, 2002), ecological approach to gangs and delinquency (Shaw and McKay, 1942), gang involvement and drugs and delinquency (Fagan, 1989; 1990, Sirpal, 1997), gangs as delinquent groups (Hagedorn, 1988; Klein, 1971; and Miller, 1975). There have been many studies (Thrasher, 1927; Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Fagan, 1989, 1990; Rhodes and Fischer, 1993; Vigil, 1988; Spergel, 1990; Thornberry et al., 1993; Sirpal, 2002; Kakar, 2006) that have examined the relationship between gang membership and delinquency by comparing gang and non-gang members. Most of these studies have reported that, in general gang members are more involved in delinquency and commit more serious delinquent acts. Several have consistently found that gang members are far more involved in delinquency, especially serious and violent delinquency (Esbensen, 2000; Battin-Pearson et al., 1998). Increased gang violence and gang sophistication have been found to be associated with expanded involvement in drug trafficking (Quinn and Downs, 1993).

Thornberry et al. (1993) reported that when they compared the delinquent activities of gang members before and after joining the gangs, delinquency rates were significantly higher after joining the gangs than before joining the gangs. They also reported that gang members, when compared with non-gang members, did not have higher rates of delinquency before joining a gang. Bjerregaard and Lizotte (1995) reported that in their research they found that compared to non-gang members, gang members were twice more likely to carry a gun and commit more severe delinquency acts and three times more likely to commit drug offenses.

In addition to gang membership, other significant variables that seem to affect delinquency rates are: prior delinquency, delinquent friends and

family criminality. Several studies (Thornberry et al., 1994; Elliott et al., 1985; and Elliott and Menard, 1996) reported that prior delinquency and delinquent friends were some of the strongest correlates of delinquent behavior. Other researchers argue that youth gangs and their activities are grounded in community disorganization and/or the dysfunction of the family unit.

Elliott et al. (1985) and Johnson, (1979) reported that having delinquent friends was one of the strongest predictors of delinquency. Thornberry et al. (1994) found that association with delinquent friends reinforced and promoted the environment conducive to heightened delinquency. Elliott et al. (1985) reported that prior delinquency and friendship with delinquent friends were the primary and direct indicators of later delinquency and drug use. Most of these studies have compared juveniles with delinquent friends and juveniles without delinquent friends regardless of gang membership (Thornberry et al., 1991; Elliott et al., 1995; and Elliott and Menard, 1996).

Miller (1982) compared the crimes committed by non-gang youth groups and gangs. He called non-gang youth "law violating youth groups" and defined these groups as three or more youths whose members repeatedly committed crimes with support and cooperation from their friends. He reported that while youth groups had committed a large number of serious crimes such as larceny, burglary, drug and alcohol violations, assault, vandalism, and arson, gangs were involved at a higher rate in more violent offenses such as rape, assault, robbery, and weapon violations. Battin et al. (1998) investigated the contribution of gang membership to delinquency above and beyond having delinquent peers. They reported that gang members were found to have committed a higher rate of delinquent crimes as compared to non-gang members with or without delinquent friends. They also found that gang membership was found to independently predict both self-reported and officially recorded delinquency beyond the effects of delinquent friends and prior delinquency.

Some research suggests that street gangs are related to other more serious criminal groups such as prison based gangs. The research also indicate that street gangs may also be involved in gang migration and organized crime (Maxson, 1993; Fong and Vogel, 1994; Maxson and Klein, 1996; Stevens, 1997; Zaitzow and Houston 1999; Knox, 1999, 2000). Street gangs are hypothesized to serve as a source of recruits by organized crime groups, be pivotal in trafficking drugs for organized crime groups, and assist organized crime groups in other illegal activities (Kelly and Caputo, 2005).

More recently, a great deal of media reports indicate that gangs are perceived to be a serious threat to the national security as declared by the Homeland Security Bureau and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau. For example, on March 14, 2005, the Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau announced Monday the launch of an operation focused on helping state and local law enforcement go after the nation's most violent gangs. The Homeland Security Department established a program Operation Community Shield, to target the Mara Salvatrucha 13 gang, commonly

known as MS-13 (<http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0305/031405c1.htm>).

On March 10, 2006 the following report appeared in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bulletin. During a two-week enforcement action that culminated yesterday, federal agents from the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested 375 gang members and associates in 23 states in a joint effort with law enforcement agencies nationwide. The arrests are the latest under the auspices of "Operation Community Shield," a comprehensive initiative launched by ICE roughly one year ago to disrupt and dismantle transnational, violent street gangs. Operation Community Shield represents the first time the federal government has used immigration and customs authorities in a combined, national campaign against criminal street gangs in the United States. (Operation Community Shield was launched in February 2005 after a threat assessment by ICE field offices identified MS-13 as one of the largest and most violent street gangs in the country). During Phase I, ICE arrested 359 MS-13 members including 10 clique leaders.

In May 2005, ICE expanded Operation Community Shield to include all criminal street gangs that pose a risk to public safety and a concern to national security, putting into motion an aggressive law enforcement action with the goal to investigate, arrest and prosecute any violent street gang members, leaders and/or associates of MS-13, as well as other gangs such as Sureños, 18th Street gang, Latin Kings, Vatos Locos, Mexican Mafia, La Raza gang, Border Brothers, Brown Pride, Norteno, Florencia 13, Tiny Rascal, Asian Boyz and Jamaican Posse, that routinely seek to exploit or engage in violent criminal activities. Under Operation Community Shield, ICE focuses its powerful enforcement tool on a single goal: dismantling gang organizations by targeting its members, seizing its financial assets and disrupting its criminal operations.

Building on the success of these operations, ICE launched another coordinated national enforcement action with its law enforcement partners starting February 24, 2006 and continuing through March 9, 2006. This enforcement action resulted in the arrest of 375 gang members and associates. Of those arrested in this operation, more than 260 had previous criminal or violent criminal histories. Roughly 73 were arrested on new criminal charges that ranged from drug and firearms violations to charges of re-entering the country after deportation.

Collectively, we have arrested members of over 80 different gangs as part of Operation Community Shield, and over half those arrested in the last two weeks have prior criminal histories. Many were gang leaders with exceptionally violent criminal histories. Among the horrific crimes committed by some of the people we have apprehended include murder, rape, assault, burglary, and, of course, weapons and narcotics offenses. For too long, these gangs have gone unchecked, flouting our laws and demonstrating a blatant disregard for public safety. . . . viewing gangs as a threat to our homeland security, and as a very urgent law enforcement priority. (An excerpt from Remarks by Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff at a Joint Press Conference on Community Shield [(Release Date: 08/01/05 00:00:00) For Immediate Release Office of the Press Secretary Contact: 202-282-8010]

On March 11, 2006, CNN broadcasted a story on "Gangs and Terror: Why Homeland Security is Worried?" Thus, a great deal of speculation is made on the role of gangs in terrorist activities and endangering the homeland security. However no study has been conducted to support/challenge this speculation. The present study endeavors to start this dialogue. This present study proposes to examine the relationship between general perceptions

about the role of gang affiliation in endangering homeland security.

While scholars have examined the contribution of gang membership to delinquency, the contribution of delinquent friends to delinquency, and the contribution of family criminality to delinquency, the contiguous effects of gang membership, family criminality, and delinquent friends and the increased criminal activity due to gang affiliation on more serious criminal activities such as becoming a threat to homeland security has not been examined.

Some studies have examined the importance of self-esteem and psychological health in young adults' perceptions a significant relationship between individual respect for social norms, authority and crime. Some studies also show that individuals with negative perceptions about authority are more likely to be enticed to engage in deviant and criminal activity. The apparent association of delinquency with self-concept and *attitudes towards authority* suggests the possibility of a correlation between negative perceptions about authority and involvement in various criminal activities.

Results of several studies provide evidence of a relationship between more negative *attitudes towards* institutional *authority* and self-reported delinquency (Reicher & Emler, 1985; Emler & Reicher, 1987; Rigby, Mak, & Slee, 1989; Rigby, 1989, 1982, 1990; Rigby and Black, 1993). Thus, based on the existing literature, it is not improbable to hypothesize that young adults who develop a negative attitude towards institutional authority (parents, teachers, law enforcement etc.) may have a higher propensity to be affiliated with gang members and be attracted to more hard core groups such as terrorists. This research explores this area. To examine these effects, this research compared three groups of adolescents: (1) adolescent gang members with delinquent friends and criminal family members (self reported), (2) non-gang adolescents with delinquent friends but not criminal family members, (3) non-gang adolescents with no delinquent friends or criminal family members². The criminal activities of these three groups were compared to examine whether there were any significant differences.

METHOD

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Data were collected from college students in an urban university located in the Southeast region of the United States. The data are gathered from the students at three levels (Sophomore, Junior, and Senior) from various majors (Criminal Justice, Business, Psychology, Biology, Sociology, and undecided). Self-report surveys were used to gather data.

Data on all three groups (respondents who had gang affiliation and criminal friends, respondents who had no gang affiliation but had friends who belonged to gangs, and the respondents who had no gang affiliation and did not know any gang members) were gathered from a urban university. These respondents were from the same levels and had same majors except that they had no association with gangs and did not know any gang members. All the students who opted to respond to the surveys were given credit for one of the class assignments. Those who chose not to participate were given an option of completing the class assignment and get credit without any negative consequences. All the students were required to finish the survey during the assigned class period and return it to the professor who then delivered these surveys to the researcher. Out of 300 surveys 201 completed and usable surveys were returned. These surveys were divided into three groups: (1) respondents with some form of affiliation with gang or gang members and (2) respondents with no form of affiliation with gang or gang members. There were 68 respondents who reported not having any affiliation with gang or a gang member and having no delinquent friends, 71 respondents reported not having any affiliation with gang or a gang member but having friends who were in trouble with law while the remaining 71 reported having some affiliation with gang or a gang member and having known someone who had violated law. These data are presented in Table 1.

The third group included 71 young adults who stated that at some point in their high school career, they had some affiliation with a gang. They also reported having delinquent friends and all of them claimed knowing at least one person who had been a gang member. They also reported that they had known someone who was either in prison at present or had been in prison during the last five years. These respondents were between the ages of 20 and

23 with the mean age of 21.5. Approximately 26% of them identified themselves as African Americans, 55% as Hispanic, 17% as European-Americans and 2% as other. They all reported their family income below \$29,000 a year. A majority (62%) of these respondents were male and 38% were female. Majority of the respondents reported having left gangs before they got in any trouble. Several of these respondents (49%) reported in the past five years they had friends who had some criminal history.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Characteristic	%
Race	
African American	26
Hispanic	55
European-American	17
Other	02
Gender	
Male	62
Female	38
Mean Annual Income	\$29,000
Mean Age	21.5

MEASURES

The variables used in this study included gang affiliation, knowledge of gang and/or gang member, knowledge of a friend/family member's criminal background and/or prison record.

Group status was determined using the information gathered from all respondents. They were divided into following three groups: (1) young adults with some form of affiliation with gang or gang members, (2) respondents with no affiliation with gang but having some association with gang members, and (3) respondents with no affiliation with gang and no association with gang members.

The first group included respondents who indicated that they had some form of affiliation with a gang during their high school career and knew a member of a gang in the past year and identified the gang by name. These respondents also reported having at least one of their friends involved in criminal activity and having at least one of the friends/family members currently in prison or had been in prison during the last five years. The second group included respondents who identified themselves as non-gang members and reported that some of their best friends had engaged in behavior that has either gotten them in trouble with law or could get them in trouble and none of their family members or friends had ever committed any crime. The third group included respondents who identified themselves as non-gang members and reported that none of their best friends had engaged in behavior that has either gotten them in trouble with law or could get them in trouble and none of their family members or friends had ever committed any crime.

Gang affiliation was determined by asking the question, "Did you ever have any friends who were gang members? Did you ever belong to a gang?" Follow up questions were asked about the gang's name, structure, and characteristics. Although gang membership is a certain indicator of having gang affiliation, yet they were asked this question. Self report survey to determine gang membership is a method accepted by gang researchers (Klein, 1995; Kakar, 2006).

Data on *criminal friends* was gathered by asking the respondents to think of their four best friends. A series of questions were asked about each of these four friends. Two of the main questions were asked to determine whether any of the friends were criminal included: (1) In the past two years, has this friend of yours ever been arrested? (2) In the past two years has this friend done something that could get him/her in trouble with the police? (3) In the past two years has this friend engaged in some criminal activity such as stealing, drugs, vandalism etc.?

Prior criminal history was determined using self-report data from the respondents. A general index was constructed by using a sum of 12 self-reported measures indicating the frequency with which the respondent committed various offenses. The list of violent offense

index included offenses such as hit friends, hit siblings, hit parents, used force to get some things, picked a fight, shoved, pushed, or threw things at others with an intent of hurting someone. Nonviolent offenses included acts such as stealing something worth more than \$50, stealing something worth more than \$5 but less than \$50, breaking into a house, destroying property, selling or doing drugs.

Negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws were also measured using self-report data from the respondents. A general index was constructed by using a sum of 18 self-reported measures indicating the frequency with which the respondent expressed disregard and contempt for authority. These included disobeying parental and family rules, disrupting in class, ignoring rules and regulations at school, disrespect for teachers, elders, leaders, sarcastic and cynical attitude towards laws and law enforcement officers, condescending perspective towards the government and other formal agencies that regulate. These measures also included views on economy, religion, politics, immigration and foreign policy, as well as international relations.

Threat to homeland security was measured by the extent of contempt for the authority, enthusiasm to get involved in cleansing activities, and eagerness to join in efforts for bringing change through force and violence.

Outcome Measures were divided into three general categories: (1) contempt and disregard for authority, (2) condescending perspective towards the government, and (3) eagerness to get involved in cleansing activities. Ten measures of negative perceptions about authority were used to examine the effects of gang affiliation on these outcomes. The six indices were constructed for eagerness to join more serious gangs and enthusiasm to participate in cleansing efforts. Enthusiasm was measured using self-report data. Self reported contempt for the established rule and economy were also included and analyzed as an outcome measure. This was done because literature suggests that gang members are generally found to have negative attitude towards authority and condescending perspective towards the government and other regulating agencies. The literature also indicates that gang members are generally involved in drug related offenses especially drug selling.

The general individual contempt index was computed by combining the self-reported responses (already mentioned). The questions included: "How many times have you ignored school rules in the past year?" (ignoring authority). "How many times have you actively disrupted peace in the past year?" "How many times have you smoked marijuana during the past month?" (Substance use). "How many times in the past month have you used crack, cocaine, tranquilizers, sedatives, narcotics, or any other illegal drug?"

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Analysis of variance was used to compare the negative perceptions means for all three groups on each of the measures. This compared means for all three groups for each of the eighteen measures. The results indicate a consistent pattern across all measures. Means for the respondents with no affiliation with gangs had the lowest index means for negative perceptions as well as condescending attitudes towards authority. These respondents were also the least enthusiastic about joining more serious gangs and least eager to participate in cleansing efforts, means for the non-gang youths with delinquent friends and/or criminal family members higher than the first group and the means for respondents with some gang affiliation with delinquent friends and/or criminal family members were the highest on all measures of contempt and disregard for authority, condescending perspective towards the government, and eagerness to get involved in cleansing activities and substance use. For example, respondents with gang affiliation had a mean of 5.83 for contempt and disregard for authority - the highest of the three groups while the respondents with no gang affiliation had a mean of 1.15 for contempt and disregard for authority - the lowest of the three groups. Similarly respondents with some gang affiliation had a mean of 6.59 for condescending perspective towards the government (the highest of the three groups) as compared to 1.01 of the respondents with no gang affiliation.

To determine the significance and the location of the differences between the three groups, Analysis of Variance was conducted. The results indicate significant differences ($p < .05$) between the non-gang youth with non-delinquent friends and gang members on all measures. Respondents with gang affiliation had the highest score on all

indices for contempt and disregard for authority, contempt and disregard for authority, condescending perspective towards the government, and eagerness to get involved in cleansing activities. - the highest of the three groups while the respondents with no gang affiliation had the lowest score.

In general in comparison to non-gang affiliated respondents scored the highest on all three indices and had the highest means on all measures. Gang affiliation appeared to intensify the respondents' contempt and disregard for authority, condescending perspective towards the government, and eagerness to get involved in cleansing activities participation in self-reported. No clear association was detected between gang affiliation and becoming a threat to homeland security.

Although the analysis indicates that gang members have more negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws as well are more enthusiastic about engaging in illegal and criminal activities as compared to non-gang members, no clear association is found between the two. When the contribution of close affiliation and ties to gang membership to criminal gang activities was examined, the gang affiliated respondents with negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws were more likely to justify terrorist actions as compared to non-gang affiliated respondents with lesser degree of negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws. Gang membership was not found to independently affect justification for terrorist actions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has some limitations, and the two most substantial limitations are about the sample. First, sample is small. A larger sample is needed to conduct further analyses. This limitation negatively affects the generalizability of the research. Future research should collect data from larger samples. Such a study is planned. The second limitation is that while the sample of this study included three groups, the process of sampling was not random. This limitation negatively affects the representativeness of the sample. In addition, this method is less accurate than random sampling or stratified sampling strategies because sampling errors occur. However, despite these limitations, the study presents some very significant results.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The contribution of close affiliation and ties to gang membership to criminal gang activities was also examined.

The preliminary analysis of these data indicate that gang affiliation and negative perceptions about authority, law enforcement, and laws are associated. The results of this study reveal that although young adults with gang affiliation are more likely to hold negative perceptions and are more likely to be enticed by any organization that challenges authority and provides members with a sense of belonging and introduces gang members to terrorist activities, gang affiliation by itself is neither a certain nor an inevitable precursor to becoming a threat to homeland security and terrorism. Gang affiliated respondents were found to have more negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws as well as more enthusiastic about engaging in illegal and criminal activities as compared to non-gang affiliated respondents. The respondents with negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws were more likely to justify terrorist actions as compared to respondents with lesser degree of negative perceptions about the authority, law enforcement, and laws. The contribution of close affiliation and ties to gang membership to criminal gang activities was also examined. Gang membership was not found to independently affect justification for terrorist actions.

These results suggest a role for public policy. Early interventions to aid at-risk youths may divert these individuals from gang involvement and the violence and criminal activity associated with the gang. It is proposed that a comprehensive, multifaceted approach should be established for helping the youth in gang and their families. Such an approach should incorporate prevention, intervention and suppression activities. Communities in which gangs operate and families should be educated and solicited for assistance in helping the youth and preventing further gang activities. Further research is needed to examine this significant issue. The present study has provided some preliminary information addressing these significant questions. A more comprehensive research is needed to examine the

relationship that may exist between gang affiliation and negative perceptions about authority, law enforcement, and law. Research based on larger and random sample is necessary to examine if gang affiliation can serve as a precursor to becoming a threat to homeland security and terrorism?

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About the Author

Suman Kakar, Ph.D. is Associate Professor at Florida International University, College of Health and Urban Affairs. She specializes in the areas of juvenile delinquency, child abuse, family dynamics, minorities, and violence prevention and conducts research in these areas. She has published two books: *Child Abuse and Delinquency* (1996) and *Criminal Justice Approaches to Domestic Violence* (1998). Her most recent publications appear in the *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, *Journal of Criminal Justice Policy Review*, the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, and the *Journal of Gang Research*. Her other publications include articles in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*; the *Journal of Crime and Justice*; the *Studies on Crime and Crime Prevention*; the *Journal of Gang Research*; and *Journal of Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies*; and the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*. She has also served as a guest editor of a special issue for the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*.

END NOTES:

¹ Data are collected from three groups : (1) adults with some gang affiliation and some friends with criminal history (2) young adults with no gang affiliation but having friends who have some criminal history, (3) young adults with no gang affiliation and no criminal friends. The surveys revealed that some respondents had some gang affiliation and knew some adults who had criminal history, others indicated knowing people with some criminal history but having no personal gang affiliation. Yet some respondents indicated not having any criminal friends and no gang affiliation. Thus, the three working comparison groups were formed.

² Data are collected from three groups : (1) adults with some gang affiliation and some friends with criminal history (2) young adults with no gang affiliation but having friends who have some criminal history, (3) young adults with no gang affiliation and no criminal friends. The surveys revealed that some respondents had some gang affiliation and knew some adults who had criminal history, others indicated knowing people with some criminal history but having no personal gang affiliation. Yet some respondents indicated not having any criminal friends and no gang affiliation. Thus, the three working comparison groups were formed.