

ABSTRACT

RISK FACTORS OF GANG MEMBERSHIP: RESULTS FROM AN ANALYSIS OF SELF-REPORTED GANG MEMBERS IN THE FRESNO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA JAIL

This thesis quantitatively analyzes a population unusually studied in the annals of gang research. As part of a larger cross-sectional demographic study of inmates inside of the Fresno County jail, data for this study were drawn from a portion of the instrument pertaining to gang involvement. Stratified random sampling was employed to attain a sample of 282 inmates and face-to-face interviews were used to obtain inmate responses. In addition to significance tests between the gang and non-gang population, logistic regression was used to find risk factors that significantly predicted gang membership. Gang membership was predicted by cultural influences, juvenile arrest, low self-control, and growing up with gang family. Across a number of independent variables, the results indicate significant disparity between the current gang and non-gang population but no significant differences between the former gang and non-gang population. Implications from this study suggest further research address the duration of gang involvement with the effects of low self-control and growing up with gang family.

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