

**Street Life: Analyzing Strain and Peer Associations of Youth in Street  
Families in Toronto, Ontario**

by

**Ashley DePaola**

**A Thesis  
presented to  
The University of Guelph**

**In partial fulfilment of requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
Criminology and Criminal Justice Policy  
Program**

**Guelph, Ontario, Canada**

**© Ashley DePaola, August, 2015**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Street Life: Analyzing Strain and Peer Associations of Youth in Street Families in Toronto, Ontario**

Ashley DePaola  
University of Guelph, 2015

Advisor:  
Professor Bill O'Grady

The presence of street families among homeless youth has been a topic that has yet to be explored in-depth in Canada. Drawing on the 2009 secondary dataset which was carried out with a sample of homeless youth in Toronto, this research examines whether street youth have a higher likelihood of being in a street family based on their background experiences, situational adversities, and deviant peer associations on the street. The findings of this research show that youth in street families experience both past and current strains and develop deviant peer relationships more so than youth who are not members of street families. As evident by the results, theoretical integration is a possibility to achieve a comprehensive understanding of street youth crime and deviance. Both Differential Association Theory and Strain Theory provided analytic value when examining street youth membership in street families.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals who provided their insight, encouragement, and inspired me in pursuit of my Master of Arts Degree.

First, I would like to express the most sincere appreciation to my thesis advisor Professor Bill O'Grady, for providing his ongoing mentorship and support throughout the entire thesis process. He was very quick and efficient in providing feedback and always encouraged me to think critically about each section in my thesis project. I have known Professor O'Grady even before I began my Master's degree and I can genuinely say that he has sparked my interest in the field of youth crime and homelessness.

I would like to thank my second reader, Professor Ron Stansfield for his excellent criticism when reviewing my proposal and thesis chapters. Professor Stansfield provided insightful comments, remarks, and engagement throughout the learning process.

Additionally, I would like to thank the wonderful girls of the CCJP cohort of 2013-2015 who consistently supported me throughout this academic journey. Thank you for the continuous positivity when things were stressful. To all of the sleepless nights that we worked together before deadlines, the research chats, and all of the enjoyment we had these past two years, you girls were like sisters to me. You have all truly given me the inspiration to continue in academia. We have become such great friends and I'll always remember the memories we had together.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank my family, and specifically my mom, Julie Howard for always believing in my abilities and encouraging me to keep striving towards my career goals.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### *Chapter One*

INTRODUCTION.....	1
-------------------	---

### *Chapter Two*

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Characteristics and Formation of Street Families.....	5
Street Families and Criminal Behaviour.....	9
Gangs vs. Street Families.....	11
Theoretical Framework: Differential Association Theory.....	15
Theoretical Framework: Strain Theory.....	18
Statement of Research Question.....	22
Benefits of Research.....	22

### *Chapter Three*

METHODOLOGY.....	24
Measures.....	25
Analysis.....	33

### *Chapter Four*

RESULTS.....	34
--------------	----

### *Chapter Five*

DISCUSSION.....	52
-----------------	----

### *Chapter Six*

CONCLUSION.....	60
Limitations and Future Research.....	60
Policy Implications.....	62
REFERENCES.....	65

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Variable Definitions and Descriptive Statistics.....	30
Table 2: Money Making by Involvement in a Street Family.....	35
Table 2.1: Money Making and Involvement in a Street Family by Age.....	35
Table 2.2: Money Making and Involvement in a Street Family by Gender.....	36
Table 3: Visible Minority Status by Involvement in a Street Family.....	37
Table 4: Age First Homeless by Street Family Involvement.....	37
Table 4.1: Age First Homeless and Street Family Involvement by Age.....	38
Table 4.2: Age First Homeless and Street Family Involvement by Gender.....	38
Table 5: Sexual orientation by Street Family Involvement.....	39
Table 6: Institutional Care and Street Family Involvement.....	39
Table 6.1: Institutional Care and Street Family Involvement by Gender.....	40
Table 6.2: Institutional Care and Street Family Involvement by Age.....	40
Table 7: Level of Education by Street Family Involvement.....	41
Table 8: Living Conditions in the Past 30 Days by Street Family Involvement.....	41
Table 8.1: Living Conditions in the Past 30 Days and Street Family Involvement by Age.....	42
Table 8.2: Living Conditions in the Past 30 Days and Street Family Involvement by Gender.....	42
Table 9: Gone Without Food for a Day by Street Family Involvement.....	43
Table 9.1: Gone Without Food for a Day and Street Family Involvement by Age.....	43
Table 9.2: Gone Without Food for a Day and Street Family Involvement by Gender.....	43
Table 10: Levels of Drug Use by Street Family Involvement.....	44
Table 10.1: Levels of Drug Use and Street Family Involvement by Age.....	45
Table 10.2: Levels of Drug Use and Street Family Involvement by Gender.....	45
Table 11: Have Friends That Use Drugs by Street Family Involvement.....	46
Table 11.1: Have Friends That Use Drugs and Street Family Involvement by Age.....	46
Table 11.2: Have Friends That Use Drugs and Street Family Involvement by Gender.....	46
Table 12: Logistic Regression of Strain and Deviant Peer Relationships on Street Family Involvement.....	48

## *Chapter One*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Canada, the term homelessness was only first recognized in the early 1980s (Hulchanski et al. 2009). Since then, the number of homeless people has been rising. The term was created in order to address the problem of de-housing. Since very little affordable housing was built after the Second World War, many people were living in poor-quality, aging and overcrowded housing (Hulchanski et al. 2009). At this time, homelessness became a problem because those that were once housed were no longer being housed, especially because of the lack of affordable housing (Hulchanski et al. 2009). In addition, the development of anti-psychotic medications and alternative care led to deinstitutionalization (Hulchanski, et al. 2009: ch. 2.3). As a result, many psychiatric patients were discharged from institutional care and many individuals were left without a place to live (Hulchanski, et al. 2009: ch. 2.3). The deinstitutionalization of the mental health sector led to an increase of homelessness with those that had a mental illness (Hulchanski, et al. 2009: ch. 2.3).

It is disturbing that youth account for such a large percentage of the homeless in Canada (Hulchanski et al. 2009). In fact, homeless youth account for approximately 20% of the homelessness population (Gaetz, et al. 2013: 7). Homeless youth (or commonly known as “street youth”) are typically defined as a group of adolescents and young adults, ranging in age from approximately 12 to 24, who live in shelters, on the streets, in abandoned buildings, or who otherwise do not have an adequate place to live (Hulchanski et al. 2009: ch. 3.1). However, homeless youth are most often defined as youth between the ages of 16 to 24 years old. When youth reach 16 years old, they are no longer cared for by child protection agencies and services for homeless youth do not apply to those who are under 16 (Evenson 2009).

Previous literature has suggested that there are several reasons why youth become homeless. Some young people become homeless when they run away from their homes as a result of conflict, abuse and rejection (Whitbeck, Danny & Ackley 1997; Hagan & McCarthy 1998; Gaetz 2000; Baron 2003; Gaetz 2004a, 2004b). Further, studies related to the experiences of street youth have attempted to understand the experiences and the dynamics of their relationships on the streets (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan, & Martin 2002; Butler & Rizzini 2003).

The Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Queer and Transgendered (LGBTQ) community also face multiple barriers at home which make them more likely to become homeless. Researchers (National Coalition for the Homeless 2009; Cunningham, Pergamit, Astone & Luna 2014) have concluded that the LGBTQ community is more susceptible to street life and homelessness due to a lack of acceptance and rejection from parents and relatives at home. Finally, those with mental health problems are also at risk for becoming homeless. Much of the research has recognized that having a mental illness does not directly relate to homelessness. In fact, an unstable income, violence, lack of supports and stigma associated with their illness most often leads to homelessness (Hulchanski et al. 2009: ch. 2.1; Hwang 2001). However, others argue that having a mental illness is the direct cause of homelessness, and factors such as low income or lack of employment may only increase their chances of being homeless (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health 2003).

Many of the street youth in Canada are concentrated in large urban centres, such as Toronto (Hulchanski et al. 2009: ch. 3.1). In fact, there are approximately 2,000 homeless youth on the street on any given night in Toronto (O'Grady, Gaetz & Vaillancourt 1999; Covenant House Toronto 2013). Since many street youth are highly visible in public places, and a certain

percentage of them are criminally involved, this means that they have become an identifiable population of ‘disorderly people’ which are further stigmatized by society (O’Grady, Gaetz & Bucciari 2011: 73). Social exclusion is most predominant among street youth since they have a lack of access to stable, safe, and affordable housing, which compromises their right to privacy, safety, food security, and a healthy lifestyle. As a result of this exclusion, youth have sought to form groups in order to fulfill their needs which were previously provided by their biological families (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002).

Since homeless youth account for the highest proportion of homeless people in Canada, they have become a large, marginalized, and alienated group in society (Hulchanski et al. 2009). To cope with this marginalization, many youth form fictive street families to obtain basic necessities more easily and receive the care they miss as a result of being alienated from their family of origin (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Smith 2008). While there is consistency in the research suggesting street families engage in criminal activity (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Denfeld 2007; O’Sullivan-Oliveira & Burke 2009), little is known about the money making strategies of youth in street families and whether background and situational strain experienced on the street influences membership in a street family. Additionally, no research has assessed the peer relationships of youth in street families to determine if their peer associations are more deviant than youth not in street families.

Given that little research has been done on street families, especially within a Canadian context, this research will provide insight into the criminogenic behaviour, strain, and deviant associations of youth in street families. Using a sample of 244 street youth in Toronto, Ontario, this research will utilize both Strain and Differential Association Theory since many street youth experience added strain and more exposure to people involved in crime on the streets (Baron



2001; Hagan & McCarthy 1998). This research attempts to address whether youth in street families engage in non-legitimate money making strategies compared to street youth who are not in street families. This will help to determine if youth in street families are more criminogenic. Strain and peer associations will also be assessed to determine if youth in street families are more disadvantaged than homeless youth who are not involved with such families. It is intended that this research will provide a better understanding about the role that street families play and raise awareness on an issue that is not well researched in Canada.

## *Chapter Two*

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### *Characteristics and Formation of Street Families*

This study will focus on the money making strategies of street youth who have formed street families, (“fictive kin”) versus those who have not. While research has shown that there is no concrete definition of what constitutes a street family, in general terms, a street family can be defined as a group of street youth who resemble a family unit. Teens may join fictive families in order to receive what they were previously missing at home (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Denfeld 2007; Bryfonski 2012). They may have distinct nick names like “dad”, “mom”, “brother” and “sister” which often dictates the amount of authority one has over the other, or determines how long that individual has been involved with the street family (Hagan & McCarthy 1998).

As has been suggested by previous research, many street youth leave home when their home life is a threatening space (Whitbeck, Hoyt & Ackley 1987; Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Smith 2008). Family disruption and childhood victimization are major reasons why many youth feel that they are no longer able to stay at home (Simons & Whitbeck 1991; Whitbeck, Hoyt. & Ackley 1997; Smith 2008). In one particular study Hagan and McCarthy (1998), noted that many homeless youth suffered abuse at home. In fact, 87% reported that their parents used aggressive force against them and 60% reported that they had bruises and bleeding on multiple occasions from being physically disciplined at home (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 23). Additionally, in her analysis of street families, Smith (2008) found that the majority of youth (77%) experienced all types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual abuse) and that this was their main reason for leaving home. Given that abuse is quite frequent for youth who leave home, it is not surprising that some street youth form surrogate families in order to

substitute what they missed at home or while under state care.

Previous literature has relied on the street youth themselves to define what they believed a street family was (Smith 2008; Hagan & McCarthy 1998). For instance, in a study by Smith (2008:763) the youth described their street families with words like “love, support, safety, and acceptance”. As such, the biological component that is often associated with a traditional family has little relevance to the organization of street families. In one response, a youth claimed:

You don't have to be related to someone to be a family. . . .  
Family to me means two things. One, you love each other no matter what. You know it's the unconditional love thing where you support each other and always care. The other thing is you have similar backgrounds. Like here, on the street, we, uh, form families because we care about each other and we all are going through the same things. You become bonded to someone and you just consider them family (Smith 2008: 763).

According to Stack (1974), individuals who seek to expand their personal networks are likely to attach kin labels to others that they can rely on or people that they can trust to reciprocate support. A certain level of trust is an important aspect in the formation of street families. One youth involved in a street family noted that “with family, they will be there for you no matter what. You can tell them things and not worry about them telling others and you can count on them for emotional support. With street friends, it's like you can't always count on them, or you can't always trust them” (Smith 2008: 763).

In a sense, street families reinforce traditional family roles. Zimmerman (1988) for instance, noted that there are certain tasks that each fictive family member is expected to perform such as: a) hygiene and care of family members; b) family expansion through adaption and desertion once mature; c) youth to take on adult roles; d) order and structure e) collection of goods in order to survive on the streets and; f) motivation to ensure task performance. However,

it is important to note that these roles are allocated based on support or the advice that members provide for one another. In fact, age and length of time on the streets do not dictate the specific role that a youth in a street family is expected to perform (Smith 2008). Like traditional families, street families often had gender distinctions when performing familial roles. Males who were considered “fathers” were more likely to be in charge of the street family or labelled “head of the house” while females who were considered “mothers” assumed more feminine roles whereby they were expected to provide emotional and nurturing support (Smith 2008: 766). “Brothers” were likely to provide security and protection and “sisters” were likely to run errands and gather/locate basic necessities to survive (Smith 2008: 766).

Street family formation is often spontaneous. Street youth also reported that the formation of the street families just “happened” or formed as a result of urgency. In fact, one youth claimed:

Well, it’s kinda this casual, unplanned thing that happens. In my case, I met some people while I was at this place [referring to a social service agency]. They kinda told me where to go, how to get food, things like that. We all instantly became friends and they let me crash with them at their squat. I did and we just started referring to each other as family (15-year-old male) (Smith 2008: 763).

Additionally, a street family member in Vancouver for example, noted that his street family formed suddenly when he was “just hanging around the block. Hangin’ out going to parties... Friends introduce you to other friends. It just goes like that” (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 159).

The formation of street families often occurred as a result of a series of conversations between several street youth. One youth stated:

After a couple of weeks of living on the streets, I started dating this guy. He had his friends and I had mine. And after a couple of weeks of us dating, all of our friends

started saying that we were like their mom and dad. So one night we all sat around and they were telling us how they looked at us like their parents, and I told them that I thought of them as family too. We all decided that we were going to assume my boyfriend's last name and be the "Wilson" family (Smith 2008: 764).

Although the formation of street families can occur quickly and informally, the average size of street families remains unknown. In one street family in Toronto, a member stated that dissolution was common but some of the relationships still exist after members separate. He noted: "I'm now one of the only, of the original twenty of us, all in total, and I'm the one, there's maybe three of the twenty left. And I'm the big brother sort of thing. Like everybody still comes to me with their problems [...]" (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 160).

The literature has been consistent when discussing the reasons why youth join street families. In many regards, street families serve to provide a means for protection for street youth. Researchers have concluded that membership in street families provide teens with support that traditional families generally give their children which includes protection against danger, supplying food, and giving them a sense of belonging and security (Plympton 1997; Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Sullivan-Oliveira & Burke 2009). Once on the street, many street youth are prone to criminal victimization (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). Many youth claimed that they were attracted to street families because they serve as a means of protection against the victimization they encounter while on the street (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; Smith 2008). In one such example, a youth stated "I feel a little safer when I am with my family than when I am by myself" (Smith 2008: 765). This type of protection was more evident for females than males.

Not surprisingly, females were more likely to be members of street families than males

(Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Smith 2008). As one female member in a street family noted: “I think that when you are on the streets, you are most likely going to be a victim of a crime at some point. But I think that having that extra factor of being a girl, you will be a victim” (Smith 2008:765). Many females claimed that they were expected to perform sexual services for other members to ensure protection from victimization outside of the family. However, most females agreed that they did not mind providing sexual services if it meant that they would be kept safe on the street. In some cases, street families were entirely comprised of females. In one such example, a street family located in Vancouver emerged between pregnant females since they shared very similar experiences (Hagan & McCarthy 1998).

### ***Street Families and Criminal Behaviour***

Previous literature has also been relatively consistent regarding the role that street families have had in the commission of crime and other forms of deviant behaviour. In fact, researchers agreed that crime escalates with the presence of street families (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Denfeld 2007; O’Sullivan-Oliveira 2009). However, other research suggests that many street families simultaneously engage in ‘spiritual practices’ in order to maintain a positive street environment. In an article by O’Sullivan-Oliveira and Burke (2009), they discussed how some American street families practiced the Wicca religion (a pre-Christian pagan religion), in order to create a positive environment on the streets. The rituals of Wicca allowed the youth to feel a familial connection on the streets. For these teens, religion played a significant role in homeless ‘family’ ties. Divorced from their families of origin and mainstream society, these youth have pursued an alternative family in order to have a sense of structure and organization that promotes protection, familial hierarchy, and faith among hopeless teens on the streets (O’Sullivan-Oliveira & Burke 2009). To further illustrate the idea of faith in

street families, Plympton (1997: 78) noted that street families engaged in spiritual practices which would give them faith in order to feel a sense of belonging and guidance.

However, O'Sullivan-Oliveira and Burke (2009) noted that even with the presence of the Wicca religion, these street families also engaged in multiple risk activities which jeopardized their wellbeing on the streets. Many of the youth in the street families admitted that they sold drugs in order to supplement the money they made from panhandling and to fulfill their own drug addictions. One participant noted: "Drug transactions that's where people can make a lot of serious money... I live on the streets, making my money and doing it honestly. Selling drugs may be illegal, but I'm working. I'm learning what I'm making" (O'Sullivan-Oliveira & Burke 2009:158). When comparing street families with youth not involved with street families, Hagan and McCarthy (1999) found that youth in street families were far more criminal than other homeless youth. They discovered that approximately ¼ of street family members in their study engaged in acts of violence on the street compared to only 18% of youth who were not in street families (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 172). They posited that the intensity or frequency of violence was a result of tutelage from other youth in their street family.

Other research also suggested that street families engage in serious criminal behaviour. In a study in Portland Oregon, Denfeld (2007) concluded that with the emergence of street families and increased use of the drug methamphetamine, street families actually escalate violence and crime (Denfeld 2007). It was noted that street families can provide an opportunity for violent behaviour because they are immersed in an atmosphere that promotes alienation from society (Denfeld 2007). Denfeld studied a group of street youth in Portland known as "Nihilistic Gutter Punks" or NGP. At one point, their members reached between 70 and 100. The group became too large to squat together and therefore smaller families began to branch off; these groups were

known as splinter groups (Denfeld 2007).

Within one year, virtually all street teens formed their own distinct street families since these fictive families provided a better option when living on the street (Denfeld 2007). As youth created splinter families, “the elders”, or those that had been in the street family the longest, initiated homeless youth in their street families. Occasionally the “Sick Boys,” a splinter group, had initiation rituals where the new member would be beaten into the family, and have to inject a large syringe of methamphetamine into their necks (Denfeld 2007). Further, the girls who were members of the Sick Boys often had to commit assaults and robberies in order to earn the right to wear “Bitch Bangs” or the short fringe of hair they would keep when they shaved their head. If they wanted hair accessories in their hair, they had to commit more assaults (Denfeld 2007). Although some street families are considered to be less violent in comparison to the Sick Boys, most fictive families still agree that violence is prevalent to keep structure to their group. For example, Denfeld (2007: 64) noted that a street family in Tempe Arizona, spoke “with ease about taking disobedient members ‘down the tracks’ and beating them up”, even though they were considered a peaceful group. Given that street families have engaged in various crimes that are specific to some areas, like Portland and Tempe, there have been some inconsistencies regarding the identity of youth in street families; in fact, many have questioned whether street families are one representation of a gang.

### ***Gangs vs. Street Families***

Past research has therefore made comparisons between street families and gangs. There is no widely agreed upon definition on what constitutes a gang, and the term continues to be disputed amongst academics, government actors and the police. For the purposes of assessing the apparent differences and similarities between a street family and a gang, the Government of



Canada's definition of a gang will be used. This definition originated from academic research on gangs by Wortley (2010). As such, a gang contains certain criteria which include:

(1) age (e.g., members must be adolescents or young adults); (2) the existence of a group name; (3) distinctive group symbols or defining insignia; (4) control of a specific territory or turf; (5) group organization; (6) number of members; (7) durability or stability; (8) formal or informal gang rules; (9) initiation rituals for new gang members; (10) street orientation; (11) regular and/or continuous group involvement in crime, violence or delinquency; and (12) common ethnic or racial background (13) male dominated (Government of Canada 2013).

In some cases, street families are similar to gangs. Both groups have close social bonds and typically have a common interest between members (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 173). In addition, both groups engage in criminal behaviour. Furthermore, these groups both have identifiable leadership, but gangs are more likely to have a leader and street families are more likely to be led by authoritative figures like "mom" or "dad" (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 173).

According to the literature, street families and gangs differ based on territoriality, gender, class, type of offending and duration of membership. Street families and gangs differ based on the hierarchal structure that exists in either group. While street families have an adaptive hierarchal structure, gangs tend to be very possessive. Street families are more likely to form spontaneously and are not necessarily territorial. While street families might occupy a certain space (e.g., sleep outside of Toronto City Hall), they are more adaptive than possessive over these spaces (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 173). Therefore, they would be more accepting to share the space with others who also need a place to sleep. Gangs, on the other hand, are more likely to claim their own territory and be less accepting of sharing the space with other groups. Gangs are more likely to be housed, while street families have no place to dwell; this was considered a key reason why street families were more adaptive and more accepting of other groups. As such,

one youth noted that gangs “are not street kids. They have a home. They have a place to live. I hear kids from Danforth Tech saying that. They’re living at home.... They have their own groups, school gangs. I call them gangs because *they are gangs*. They’re out there hustling people and bullying people into giving them money and stuff like that” (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 176).

In addition, gangs are more likely to be male-dominated, even with some evidence that the numbers of female gang members may be increasing since the 1980s (Campbell 1991; Hagan & McCarthy 1998). In most instances, female gang members enter a gang if they have maintained a relationship with a male gang member (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). With this in mind, Hagan and McCarthy noted that out of the 218 youth who claimed to be a member of a street family, in 25% of street families, females outnumbered males, and 12% of street families were exclusively female (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 174). This illustrates that street families are more likely to be composed of mixed genders while gangs are often predominantly male (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). Further, gangs are more likely to have members from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, while street families are more likely to have previously come from middle-class backgrounds (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 174).

The type of offending also differs between street families and gangs. Offending is more likely to occur in street families at the individual level compared to gangs which are more likely to engage in crime as a group (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 175). As shown by Hagan and McCarthy (1998), members of street families were likely to engage on their own in drug use, drug selling, theft, and, to some extent, prostitution.

Street families can also be short-lived. In fact, street families may change their members after a few days, weeks or months, while gangs keep their members for longer periods of time

(Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 178). Some members left one family in order to join another and some were banned from their former street family for engaging in behaviour that was in violation of the family rules. In fact, a male explained how street families changed often. He stated that:

Some just leave to go to another family. Maybe they were in a relationship with someone in the family, meet someone else, start a relationship with them, and join their family. Sometimes someone violates the house rules or fights with someone with a lot of power in the family and is asked or told to leave. And sometimes people just travel on and leave their family behind. There are tons of reasons why street families change (Smith 2008:768).

It is clear that street families have different dynamics than gangs. These distinctions are particularly important because the activities that each group are involved in can be analyzed by different criminological theories, such as Differential Association and Strain Theory.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Although several criminological theories could be used to explain street crime among street families, after reviewing the literature, two theories were most predominant: Differential Association and Strain Theory. These theories are suitable to understand the composition, characteristics, and dynamics of youth in street families with respect to illegal money making.

Advocates of Differential Association Theory assert that crises on the streets can place youth in a position that stimulates tutelage in crime (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). In fact, homelessness itself does not cause crime; instead the process of socialization encourages criminal behaviour (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). Therefore, there is reason to believe that tutelage would be more evident in street group associations where criminal behaviour is favoured in a group environment. On the other hand, Strain Theorists posit that street youth experience alienation from the formal economy which forces them to maintain an income in illegitimate ways (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; Baron 2001; Gaetz & O'Grady 2002). Given that previous

research has confirmed that street families are more criminogenic than those who form non-familial connections, it is not surprising that they may experience more strain as well.

### *Differential Association Theory*

Differential association theory is one theory to explain the deviant relationships between members of street families. According to Sutherland (1947) criminal behaviour is learned through different connections with individuals who violate the law. As such,

these criminal connections provide a forum for acquiring techniques as well as motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes that facilitate crime. [...] in other words, differential association provides people with the knowledge and skills which encourage them to interpret situations as potential opportunities for offending (Sutherland 1947 as cited in Hagan & McCarthy 1998:136).

In other words, criminal behaviour occurs through the process of socialization. Sutherland (1947) developed the word 'tutelage' meaning 'tutor' or mentor which emphasized the learning of criminal skills. Thus, a person is likely to be criminally involved if they are surrounded by others who are favourable to the violation of norms (Sutherland 1947). Those who are immersed in a culture that is accepting of crime are more likely to commit crime as well.

Social capital is another aspect that can be achieved through the use of tutelage. According to Bourdieu (1985: 248), social capital is defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - in other words, to [have] membership in a group". Therefore, social capital can be achieved in street families because the connections that street youth have with one another allows for access to resources that might have been out of reach if they were on their own (Barker 2012:731). Social capital originates through interactions with others who depend on the trust, honesty and mutual obligation to

achieve a common goal (Portes 1998:7).

As noted earlier, most street youth are drawn to street families because they are able to rely on each other and receive more protections from the street than if they were on their own (Hagan, McCarthy & Martin 2002: 832). Further, their relationships allow for the creation of “wider solutions to their problems than any one person in the same situation could possibly offer” (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002: 836). However, some street youth do not believe that being in a street family is beneficial and instead choose to live on their own. For instance, in McCarthy, Hagan, and Martin’s (2002) study of street families, youth were sometimes reluctant to join street families given that they believed they could achieve social capital, and without the help of familial connections on the street. One youth stated: “I never got into that whole street brother, sister. . . I never got into that at all. I had street friends. But I always knew what I wanted, you know what I mean. Like, I wanted things for myself” (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002: 850). The relationship dynamics, and the level of intimacy (i.e., strong versus weak ties) affect one’s decision to join. Further, the duration of the relationship, the status of the members (maybe associated with a more prestigious or less prestigious group), and the location where the relationship exists all affect their level of group compatibility (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002: 834).

Hagan and McCarthy (1998) applied Sutherland’s theory and emphasized that the interactions that street youth have with other street youth foster criminal behaviour in order to acquire the essential necessities to survive on the street (Hagan & McCarthy 1998:136). The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups like street families who join together to support and care for each other without having the legitimate means of attaining their own capital. Different associations that are developed on the street help

to legitimize offending in order to acquire the necessary resources (food, shelter, etc.) to survive.

In Hagan and McCarthy's (1998) study of street family membership and crime, they concluded that there was a very strong correlation between membership in a street family and tutelage or mentoring. Youth in street families could be mentors for other youth and train them to pursue violence and crime on the streets (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). When comparing members of street families to non-members of street families, Hagan and McCarthy (1998) concluded that drug use, theft, drug dealing, prostitution, and violence were all greater for the street family group compared to the non-street family group. Street families had peer affiliations on the street which fostered their likelihood of committing crime. Furthermore, their findings suggested that spending time in groups not only had a substantial effect on attaining food, shelter and money, but it also contributed to individual offending. Although membership in street families did not have a substantial effect on group crime, membership encouraged individual involvement in crime through tutelage and criminal capitalization (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). Street crime from street families doubled compared to a non-street family member.

In their 2002 study of street families, McCarthy, Hagan and Martin examined how social capital is created in street families. In their findings, they noted that social capital was evident in street families, but has both negative and positive consequences. The relationships that foster social capital may lead youth to attain shelter, food and protection more easily, but more often than not, these types of relationships lead to deviant associations and criminal embeddedness (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002).

Additionally, Smith (2008) found that role modeling within street families was very common. She suggested that youth who were members of street families cultivated relationships with other members and learned "new street lifestyle" behaviour (p.762). Smith also found that

street family membership promoted social capital. Each member of a street family “help[ed] to mitigate the continuing demands of life on the streets (i.e., by providing temporary shelter, allowing for an exchange and pooling of resources, and allowing members to watch out for one another)” (p. 764).

This theory is applicable to my research as it will determine if street family involvement is based on deviant peer associations that youth in street families develop. For example, are youth in street families who engage with other peers that use drugs more likely to be in a street family? Additionally, this research points to the importance of incorporating more than one theory of crime to explain street family membership.

### ***Strain Theory***

Not only do peer associations between street youth foster criminal activity, but the strain associated with attaining immediate goals also contributes to their level of crime on the street. Previous strain theories (Cohen 1955; Merton 1957) focused on the experiences that lower class individuals faced when trying to achieve monetary success. However, these theories neglected to discuss the attainment of immediate goals, were unable to explain middle class delinquency; they neglected non-monetary goals that were achieved; neglected to discuss barriers to goal achievement that do not relate to one’s social status; and failed to mention why only some individuals who experience strain commit criminal activity (Agnew 1992: 51). Rather than suggesting that strain occurs when goals and the means to achieve those goals cannot be achieved, Agnew (1985) claimed that strain also occurs when one is unable to escape a bad situation or experience.

In 1992, Agnew proposed a General Strain Theory which suggested that strain occurred as a result of: 1) those that prevent the achievement of a positively valued goal; 2) individuals

who threatened or removed a positively valued stimuli; and 3) individuals that experienced negatively valued stimuli (Agnew 1992: 50). Agnew's General Strain Theory is directly applicable to that of homeless youth since many of the youth commit crime if they are unable to meet their basic needs on the streets. For example, Hagan and McCarthy (1998: 84) noted that homeless youth often committed crime as a way to satisfy their immediate needs (locating food, finding an adequate place to dwell etc.). They noted that the youth were likely to commit theft as a way to satisfy their subsistence on the street and this only further separates them from receiving help from legitimate institutions (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). Therefore, homeless youth in this regard experience more strain since they are unable to improve their current adversities.

As illustrated, it is clear that street youth experience additional strain given their marginalization on the street. Street youth have no choice but to search for income in unusual or illegitimate ways. In fact, there are several researchers that have focused on the process of making money by homeless youth (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; Baron 2001; Gaetz & O'Grady 2002). Baron (2001) conducted a study which assessed how unemployment affected homeless youth. He argued that due to labour market strain (which includes internal and external attributions such as lack of work experience and failure of government to create jobs), homeless youth were more likely to commit criminal activities in order to maintain their subsistence on the street (Baron 2001). Baron (2001) concluded that homeless youth went through a number of negative experiences in the labour market which only lessened their chance for long-term employment. The youth are therefore forced to make money in alternative, less legitimate ways. With no promise of legitimate employment, homeless youth look to crime to maintain an income (Baron 2001: 190).

Gaetz and O'Grady (2002), interviewed 360 homeless youth in Toronto to determine



what money making strategies the youth used to survive. They suggested that homeless youth had significant barriers when it came to maintaining employment. Therefore, many were forced to turn to alternative strategies for making money which included working in the informal economy (p. 434). Overall, the researchers determined that homeless youth engaged in both flexible and variable money making strategies that were frequently illegal such as panhandling, squeegeeing, prostitution, and selling drugs. Further, they found that the informal economy was socially patterned since the money making strategies of youth typically depended on their backgrounds and current experiences on the street (Gaetz & O'Grady 2002: 437). In their analysis, they used situational variables such as hunger, shelter and drug use and background characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and level of education to measure whether these characteristics had an impact on the money making strategies that homeless youth engaged in (Gaetz & O'Grady 2002). Gaetz and O'Grady (2002: 439) concluded that the majority of youth had illegal or semi-illegal strategies to make money. In fact, 18% of the homeless youth engaged in crime to make money, 12% panhandled, 17% squeegeed, and 10% were in the sex trade. In contrast, only 42% engaged in money making strategies that were legitimate. In this case, 15% were paid a wage, 15% were on social assistance, and 12% were supported in "other" ways (O'Grady & Gaetz 2002: 439).

Hagan and McCarthy (1998) affirmed that homeless youth were more likely to engage in illegitimate money making activities. In their study, they concluded that homeless youth were involved in theft, drugs, prostitution and violence in order to make money on the streets. They concluded that homeless youth often engaged in more than one money making strategy to survive on the streets (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). To illustrate the flexibility of working several jobs, one homeless youth stated: "Well, I'm far from a drug dealer, but I've probably sold more

drugs than I stole... I've never really been involved in prostitution, but um, I did the odd deals for people and made a couple of bucks on the side" (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 115). It is evident that the strain each street youth experiences contributes to their likelihood of committing crime on the street.

Although research on street families is relatively new, Strain Theory has been referenced as a plausible theory to explain delinquency among youth in street families. Informed by Agnew's version of General Strain Theory, Hagan and McCarthy (1998) examined the motivating factors for joining street families in Toronto and Vancouver. They particularly looked at former abuse at home or an unstable home environment (e.g., violent father, broken home, etc.) as the key determinants for joining a street family (Hagan & McCarthy 1998: 167).

Since it has been confirmed that street families engage in more violent and serious crime than individual homeless youth, it is not surprising that they would experience more strain as well. It is necessary to analyze the background and situational strain of youth in street families because it will help to determine why some youth choose to be members of street families and some youth choose to be on their own. For example, do youth who experience foster care, high levels of drug use and who rely on the emergency shelter system more likely to become part of a street family? This research will seek to determine whether the amount of strain that a youth experiences dictates their involvement in a street family.

Based on previous literature on street families, there is justification to utilize Differential Association and Strain Theory for this analysis. The variables in this analysis (discussed later) are constructed from the main characteristics or features of each theory.

### ***Statement of Research Question***

This study will explore the extent to which homeless youth who are members of street families engage in crime compared to street youth who are not members of street families. The research questions are as follows: Are the money making strategies of street families different than those that are not members of street families? If so, do the backgrounds and/ or situational adversities of homeless youth involved in street families differ than those not involved in street families? Further, do deviant peer relationships impact street family involvement more so than individual homeless youth?

Previous studies have looked at characteristics and the formation of street families. However, no research to date has been conducted that has specifically looked at the background and situational strain of youth in street families. Further, it is unknown whether youth in street families are influenced by other youth to engage in illegal activity on the street. Thus, this research will first examine the money making strategies of youth in street families to see if they are, in fact, more criminogenic compared to homeless youth who are not in street families. Next, this research will look at the background strain, situational strain, and deviant peer associations of youth in street families to assess if these youth are more disadvantaged compared to individual homeless youth. In other words, are youth in street families more likely to come from broken homes, have lower levels of education, have harsher situational adversities, and engage with deviant peers on the street than street youth not in street families?

### ***Benefits of Research***

Differential Association Theory and Strain Theory provide a comprehensive foundation in order to examine strain and deviant peer relationships among street families. This research will seek to understand why some youth join street families and some would rather remain on

their own. As such, what makes street family membership so attractive to some youth but not others? Given that street families exist as observed in several American and Canadian cities, it is evident that there needs to be effective programming targeted at homeless youth in these groups.

Therefore, this area of research is also policy oriented. The advancement of knowledge in this area may create more effective programs and resources to get youth off the streets so that they do not have to rely on street families to satisfy their basic needs. The results of this study could have implications for promoting the implementation of effective interventions to help street families transition off the streets. As Smith (2008: 769) suggested, “interventions should focus on understanding the values and beliefs that are embodied among youth already living on the streets, recognizing the importance of youth’s continuing identification with the street and with street peers”.

### *Chapter Three*

## **METHODOLOGY**

This analysis used secondary data originally collected by researchers Bill O'Grady (University of Guelph) and Stephen Gaetz (York University) in 2009. The goal of that study was to collect quantitative and qualitative data on 244 homeless youth in the City of Toronto to examine various dimensions about how homeless youth experience life on the streets. When conducting research on homeless youth many challenges occur, especially in terms of establishing a representative sample from a diverse and often hard to reach population. Since it is virtually impossible to collect a random sample of street youth, a purposive sample was therefore used. Between March and June of 2009, participants were recruited through a range of street youth serving agencies<sup>1</sup> in downtown Toronto and surrounding suburbs.

Those eligible to participate had to be between 16 and 25 years of age since these are the ages that were mainly served by youth agencies. In addition, the participants had to have been homeless either in shelters or without shelter for at least one week during the previous month. The research design included a self-report survey followed by face-to-face interviews. Each participant was asked to complete a standard self-report survey in order to gather a range of information, including demographic characteristics. For those that had literacy issues, the research team helped these youth to fill out the questionnaire. After the questionnaire was completed, the street youth were then interviewed face to face by a member of the research team. The interviews were meant to gather supplementary information about the street youth's experiences on the street which may not have been captured by the self-report questionnaires. All of the subjects were given an honorarium of \$20 for participating in the research study. Monetary

---

<sup>1</sup> Agencies contacted for recruitment purposes: Covenant House; Eva's Place; Eva's Phoenix; Horizons; Second Base Shelter; Shout Clinic; Stop '86; Street Outreach Services; Touchstone; Turning Point; Yonge Street Mission; Evergreen Centre for Street Youth; Youthlink Inner City; Youth Skills Zone; and Youth Without Shelter;

support was given to the street youth for taking the time to help with the research and because most have difficulty gaining or maintaining an income. The surveys that were conducted were given an identification number to ensure anonymity of the participants. Data were then imported into SPSS for analysis.

### ***Measures***

As previous literature has suggested, youth in street families are involved in more illegal behaviour than those not in street families. Therefore, this study will explore the various reasons why this is the case, after showing the extent to which youth in street families are more involved in crime. This research will help to determine whether the backgrounds (e.g. education, experience with foster care, sexual orientation, visible minority status and age homeless) and/or situational adversity (e.g., where they sleep, how often they go hungry, levels of drug use), and/or peer associations of youth in street families differ compared to youth who are not in such families. If so, it is important to consider if these factors explain why youth in street families are more likely to participate in illegal money making than youth who are not involved in street families. In order to investigate the background strain, situational adversities and peer associations of homeless youth who self-identified as being in street families, thirteen variables were used or constructed by creating or recoding existing variables.

The initial question for this analysis would assess if youth in street families are more involved in illegal money making compared to youth that are not in street families. The variable “Main way to make money: legit vs. non-legit” was a variable that was already constructed in the secondary dataset. The variable was dichotomized and included legitimate work (1) and illegitimate work (0). Any legitimate form of making money included: welfare; family benefits; employment insurance; personal needs allowance (small amounts of money that youth are given

while staying in shelters); parents/caregivers; paid work non-temporary; temporary work; and student loans. Any illegitimate/illegal or semi-legal forms of making money included: panhandling; squeegeeing; prostitution; escort services/massage; pimping, theft (B&E); selling drugs; drug runner; selling stolen property; and scamming. After this association has been established, the analysis will seek to determine if youth in street families are more likely than non-street family youth to have experienced strain before taking to the streets. Moreover, this study will try to understand the role that situational adversity and associating with deviant peers has on illegal money making

The question was “have you ever been involved with a group of friends that could be described as a street family?” will be used to measure street family involvement. The individuals that helped develop the survey were service providers in Toronto who confirmed to the research team that the definition of a street family was widely understood by street youth. Therefore, no definition was provided to respondents. For the purposes of this analysis, the variable was then transformed into a categorical variable which included “0” as no and “1” as yes. A frequency of the recoded variable showed that 53.1% have been involved in a street family at some point in time, which provided substantial grounds to conduct further analyses.

A number of independent variables were selected for this analysis and were categorized into three different groups: background strain, situational strain, and peer associations. Incorporating background strain was essential because it was important to know whether one’s background affected their involvement in a street family. These variables included visible minority status, age first homeless, sexual orientation, institutional care, and level of education. The variable “ethnicity” was transformed into a binary variable called “visible minority status” with “0” being non-visible minority and “1” meaning visible minority. All ethnicities except for

“white” listed under the original variable were categorized as “visible minority”.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that this question assessed whether the respondent saw themselves as a visible minority; therefore, this variable is a subjective assessment. The variable “age homeless” was recoded such that under age 16.85 is “0” and age 16.85 and over is “1”.<sup>3</sup> “Sexual orientation” was recoded into a binary variable with “0” being “straight” and “1” being “LGBTQ” (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transsexual, not sure right now, and other). A composite variable was created for the variable “institutional care”. Two questions from the data set were used to construct the variable which were “have you ever lived in foster home?” and “have you ever lived in group home?”. All those individuals that said yes to either were coded as “1”, and no to group OR foster home were coded as “0”. Level of education was recoded into a binary variable with “0” meaning no high school graduation (Grade 8, 9, 10, 11) and “1” meaning high school graduation or more (Grade 12, 13, GED, some College/University, College Degree/Diploma, Technical/Vocational School, University Degree, Other).

Situational strain included variables that pertained to one’s situational adversity while on the streets. These variables included living conditions on the streets, frequency of hunger and drug use. A composite variable was created from twelve different variables which asked the respondent where they lived in the past month. Based on the definition of homelessness, the new variable “living conditions” contained four ranks with “1” being unsheltered, “2” being emergency sheltered, “3” being provisionally accommodated, and “4” being at risk of

---

<sup>2</sup> Ethnicities included: Black (African/Caribbean), South Asian (Bengali, Punjabi, Singhalese, Tamil, Bangladeshi, East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankani), Arab/West Asian (Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Israeli, Kurdish, Turkish, West Asian) Southeast Asian (Chinese, Pilipino, Indo-Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Other Asian), Latin American, First Nation/Inuit/Metis/Other, and Other (specify).

<sup>3</sup> 16.85 was the mean age for all youth included in this research. The mean was used to create the age cut off so that half of the youth were in one category and half in the other category.



homelessness (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2012).<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of comparing those who were unsheltered to those who were sheltered, the variable was further recoded whereby “0” meant unsheltered and “1” meant sheltered. The frequency that youth went without food for a day was another important consideration for this analysis. This variable was recoded such that “0” meant that they never went without food for a day, and “1” meant that they have went without food for a day.

The variable “drug use” was created from questions in the dataset which asked if they frequently smoke marijuana; smoke cigarettes; drink alcohol; smoke crack; snort cocaine; use acid; shoot heroin; use OxyContin; or use crystal meth. The frequency of marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes were coded as follows: “0” for Never Used, “1” for Low Use, and “2” for High Use. On the other hand, smoke crack, snort cocaine, acid, shoot heroin, use OxyContin, use crystal methamphetamine were coded as either “0” for No or “1” for Yes. Both of the new variables were combined to make a composite variable that shows the amount of drugs that each respondent used. The minimum is "0" (those that do not use drugs) to a maximum of 12 (those that use a high frequency of drug use). For example, in the frequency chart for drug use, 12 respondents had a score of 12 on the drug scale which suggests that 12 people probably scored a 2 (high use for alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana) and then were involved in the use of 6 other drugs for a total of 12. For the purposes of the chi-square and logistic regression analyses, the drug use variable was further recoded into two categories which included 0-4 coded as “1” for little to no use, and 5-12 coded as “2” for medium use to high use.

---

<sup>4</sup> Unsheltered includes: squatting, and outdoors; Emergency Sheltered includes shelters; Provisionally Accommodated includes roaming house, prison, hospital, and group home; At-risk homelessness includes living with parents/caregivers, boyfriend/girlfriend, friends and living in their own apartment.

Finally, peer associations were considered. Based on past literature, many street youth serve as mentors for other street youth; therefore, it would be interesting to see if those who participated in deviant acts with friends were more likely to be in a street family. One question in the data set asked “what proportion of the people you hang out with use street drugs?” This question was transformed into a binary variable which included “0” meaning do not hang out with friends that use drugs, and “1” meaning that they have friends that use drugs.

Age and gender are the control variables used for this analysis. Age in 2009 was recoded into a binary variable which included ages 16 to 20 as “0”, and 21 and over as “1”. This variable was recoded in such a way that the ages were split into two groups based on the mean age of 21. The original variable “gender” was recoded where male was coded as “0”, female coded as “1”, and transgender was recoded as missing since there were only five respondents in this study that were transgendered. Therefore, there was insufficient data to adequately address transgendered individuals.

As previously mentioned, the variables chosen for this analysis will help to explain if youth in street families experience background and situational strain more so than homeless youth who are not in street families. Both gender and age will be used as control variables. Since all of the variables originated from a previously constructed dataset, most were recoded to be suitable for this analysis.

Table 1: Variable Definitions and Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<b><i>Dependent Variable: Involvement in Street Family</i></b>				
<b><i>Ever Been Involved in Street Family</i></b>	n= 207	Recoded into dichotomized variable Yes in street family = 1 Not in street family = 0 Not Sure = System Missing Choose Not to Answer = System Missing	.5314	.50022
<b><i>Main way to make money: legit vs. non-legit</i></b>	n= 176	Legitimate includes: welfare, family benefits, employment insurance, personal needs allowance, parents/care givers, paid work non temporary, temporary work, and student loans Illegitimate includes: panhandling, squeegeeing, prostitution, escort services/massage, pimping, theft (B&E), selling drugs, drug runner, selling stolen property, and scamming 0 = non legit 1=legit	.6136	.48830
<b><i>Background Strain</i></b>				
<b><i>Visible Minority Status</i></b>	n=214	Recoded into a binary variable; This variable is a self-assessment of minority status 0 = Non-Visible Minority 1 = Visible Minority	.5234	.50062
<b><i>Sexual Orientation</i></b>	n=229	Recoded into a binary variable 0 = Heterosexual 1 = LGBTQ which includes gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transsexual, not sure right now, and other.	.2314	.42268
<b><i>Age Homeless</i></b>	n=206	Recoded such that half of the respondents were under age 16.85 and half were above age 16.85 and over.	16.85	.50122

		Under 16.85 = 0 16.85 and over = 1		
<b><i>Institutional Care</i></b>	n=236	Recoded into binary variable Yes group/foster home = 1 No group/foster home = 0	.4110	.49306
<b><i>Level of Education</i></b>	n=233	Recoded into a binary variable 0 = No High School Graduation which includes less than grade 12. 1 = High School Graduation or More which includes Grade 12, 13, GED, Some College/University, College Degree/Diploma, Technical/Vocational School, University Degree, Other	.3433	.47585
<b><i>Situational Strain</i></b>				
<b><i>Living Conditions</i></b>	n=216	Originally recoded into four categories according to the definition of Homelessness: 4= At-Risk of Homelessness; 3 = Provisionally Accommodated; 2= Emergency Shelter; 1= Unsheltered. For purposes of creating a dichotomized variable, it was further recoded into two categories whereby unsheltered = 0, and temporarily/permanently sheltered = 1 (at-risk, provisional accommodation, and emergency shelter).	.9398	.23838
<b><i>Gone Without Food For a Day?</i></b>	n=213	Recoded into binary variable where 0 = no, and 1 = yes	.5164	.50091
<b><i>Drug Use</i></b>	n=242	1)Recoded into one variable from three separate variables: Frequency of marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes 0= Never Used 1= Low Use	4.5413 <sup>5</sup>	2.63088

<sup>5</sup> A mean of 4.5413 means that the average amount of drugs used per person was around 4. This could mean the average respondent might have reported low use for two soft drugs (alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana) and two harder drugs (See Output: Descriptive Statistics).

		<p>2=High Use</p> <p>2)Recoded into one variable from six separate variables: Smoke crack, snort cocaine, acid, shoot heroin, use OxyContin, use crystal meth</p> <p>0= No; 1 Yes</p> <p>Both of the new variables were combined to make a composite variable that shows the amount of drugs that each respondent used</p> <p>Numbers can range from 0-12; minimum is 0 (those that do not use drugs) and maximum is 12 (those that have a high frequency of drug use).</p>		
<b>Drug Use</b>	n=242	Further recoded into 2 categories instead of 12 for purposes of cross-tabulation analyses and logistic regression: 1= 0-4 (no use; low use), 2 = 5-12 (high use)	.6612	.47430
<b>Peer Associations</b>				
<b>Peer Association and Drug Use: Having Friends That Use Drugs</b>	n=215	Recoded into a binary variable 0 = Do Not Hang Out With Friends That Use Drugs 1 = Have Friends That Use Drugs	.1581	.36572
<b>Control Variables: Age and Gender</b>				
<b>Gender</b>	n=214	Recoded into binary variable: Male = 0; Female = 1; The category “transgendered” originally coded as 3, but the recoded variable indicates transgender as missing, (too few transgendered individuals in study)	.3271	.47026
<b>Age in 2009</b>	n=212	Age in 2009; includes ages 16-27 Recoded such that 16-20 = 0 and 21 and over is = 1. This cut off was made	.6085	.48924

		because the average age was 21.1792.		
--	--	--------------------------------------	--	--

*Analysis*

Statistical analyses will be completed using the variables in the above section to help address the research questions in this study. Are youth in street families more criminogenic than homeless youth not in street families? If so, this research will help to determine whether homeless youth are members of street families as a result of strain and deviant peers. This research will determine whether the backgrounds (e.g. education, experience with foster care, sexual orientation and ethnicity) and/or situational adversity (e.g., where they sleep, how often they go hungry, levels of drug use) and/or deviant peer associations of youth in street families differ compared to youth who are not in such families.

First, a cross-tabular analysis will be conducted which will determine whether youth in street families are more criminogenic compared to homeless youth who are not in such families. Next, numerous cross-tabulation analyses will be conducted to assess the effect that background strain, situational strain, and deviant peers have on street family involvement. The final statistical test will be a logistic regression which will measure the effect of all independent variables on street family involvement. This analysis is necessary for this research in order to ensure that all other variables in the model are held constant so that a closer understanding of the true effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable can be measured.

## *Chapter Four*

### **RESULTS**

This section will proceed by first conducting cross tabular analyses. The first analysis will assess whether youth in street families are more criminogenic than non-members. In this analysis, the dependent variable is money making strategies while the independent variable is street family involvement. The second part of the results section will consist of a number of cross tabulations that will help to determine whether there is a significant relationship between involvement in a street family and background strain, situational strain, as well as peer associations. Thus, the second dependent variable becomes involvement in a street family and the independent variables will now include all variables pertaining to background and situational strain and deviant peer associations.

The final statistical technique will be a logistic regression as the key dependent variable is binary. Since ordinary least squares regression only looks at continuous dependent variables, this type of technique is not sufficient for this research. Using variables related to strain and differential association, the probability of one being in a street family will be examined. The logistic regression model will incorporate all independent variables and control variables on street family involvement to get a comprehensive understanding of the impact of strain and deviant peers on street family involvement.

Table 2  
Money Making by Involvement in a Street Family

Main Way to Make Money	Ever Been in a Street Family	
	Yes	No
Non Legitimately	64.1%	35.9%
Legitimately	48.1%	51.9%
P = .043	N= 168	

\*Out of the 168 respondents that reported their money making strategies, 64 reported that they made money illegitimately and 104 reported that they had legitimate money making strategies.

The analysis begins by establishing that youth who are involved in street families are more likely to make money using non-legitimate means compared to street youth who are not in street families. Like previous studies found, youth in street families are more criminogenic. As illustrated in Table 2, it is clearly evident that youth whose main money making strategies are illegitimate are more likely to have had street family involvement than youth who reported to be uninvolved in street families. More specifically, 64.1 % of youth who said their main income generating activities were non-legitimate were in street families compared to 35.9 % who were not in street families. This relationship was statistically significant at  $p < .05$  or a 95% confidence level.

Table 2.1  
Money Making Strategies and Street Family Involvement by Age

Age in 09'			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Age 16-20	Money Making Strategies	Non-Legitimate	85.7%	14.3%
		Legitimate	47.1%	52.9%
Ages 21 and over	Money Making Strategies	Non-Legitimate	59%	41%
		Legitimate	51.7%	48.3%
P = .026			N= 154	



Table 2.2  
Money Making Strategies and Street Family Involvement by Gender

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Money Making Strategies	Non-Legitimate	65.1%	34.9%
		Legitimate	48.3%	51.7%
Females	Money Making Strategies	Non-Legitimate	70.6%	29.4%
		Legitimate	50%	50%
P = .031			N = 152	

As seen in Table 2.1 and 2.2, regardless of age and gender, youth in street families engage in illegal money making more so than youth who are not in street families. This relationship is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). In fact, 65.1% of males in street families engage in illegitimate money making strategies, while only 34.9% of males that are not in street families use illegitimate strategies to make money. Additionally, 70.6% of females in street families engage in illegitimate money making strategies while only 29.4% of females not in street families engage in non-legitimate strategies. For those youth in street families between the ages of 16-20, 85.7% engage in illegal money making and only 14.3% of youth not in street families engage in illegitimate money making. A similar pattern exists for youth that are 21 years and over. In fact, 59% of older youth in street families use illegitimate ways to make money, while 41% of older youth who are not in street families made money illegitimately.

### ***Background Strain***

To understand what draws some street youth to street families, this study will proceed by examining variables linked to background strain. This analysis will determine if background strain is associated with street family involvement by looking at a youth's visible minority status

(non-white), age that they first became homeless (young), sexual orientation (LGBTQ), level of education, and involvement with institutional care (foster and/or group home care).

**Table 3**  
**Visible Minority Status by Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Visible Minority Status	Non-Visible Minority	54.8%	45.2%
	Visible Minority	54.2%	45.8%
P = .926 or N.S		N= 189	

\*Out of the 189 respondents, 93 were considered a non-visible minority and 96 were considered a visible minority.

In Table 3, 54.8% of non- visible minorities reported involvement in a street family while 54.2% of visible minorities reported street family involvement (not significant). One’s visible minority status, therefore does not contribute to their involvement in a street family.

**Table 4**  
**Age First Homeless by Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Age Homeless *	16.84 and under	72.3%	27.7%
	16.85 and over	34.8%	65.2%
P = .000		N = 183	

\*The mean age of youth in this study was 16.85. The mean was used to create the age cut off so that half of the youth were in one category and half in the other category.

\*\*Out of the 178 respondents, 94 were homeless before they were 16 years old and 89 were homeless after 16 years old.

While visible minority status was not related to street family status, the age at which a young person took to the streets is a powerful predictor of street family involvement ( $p < .001$ ) as 72.3% of youth who left home before they were 16.85 were involved in street families compared to only 34.8% of youth who left home after they were 16.85 years old.

Table 4.1  
Age First Homeless and Street Family Involvement by Current Age

Age in 09'			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Age 16-20	Age Homeless	<16.85	68.3%	31.7%
		16.85+	36%	64%
Ages 21 and over	Age Homeless	<16.85	76.9%	23.1%
		16.85+	33.3%	66.7%
P = .000			N= 178	

When controlling for age in 2009, 68.3% of youth who left home at a young age reported street family involvement. Alternatively, only 31.7% of those youth left home after 16 were involved in street families. This relationship is maintained after controlling for reported age in 2009.

Table 4.2  
Age First Homeless and Street Family Involvement by Gender

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Age Homeless	<16.85	72.9%	27.1%
		16.85+	37.7%	62.3%
Females	Age Homeless	<16.85	69.7%	30.3%
		16.85+	28%	72%
P= .000			N= 178	

In addition, the relationship between the age at which a youth left home and their involvement in a street family was maintained after controlling for gender ( $p < .001$ ). In Table 4.2, both males and females are more likely to report involvement in a street family if they left home when they were 16 years old or younger.

**Table 5**  
**Sexual orientation by Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	50%	50%
	LGBQT	63%	37%
P = .119 or N.S.		N= 202	

\*Out of the 202 respondents, 156 were heterosexual and 46 were LGBQT.

As illustrated in Table 5, out of the 156 heterosexual youth, 50% reported involvement in a street family and 63% of the 46 LGBQT youth reported street family involvement. However, this relationship is not significant; therefore, one's sexual orientation does not influence their street family involvement.

**Table 6**  
**Institutional Care and Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Institutional Care	Yes	67.1%	32.9%
	No	43.4%	56.6%
P = .001		N = 207	

\*Out of the 207 respondents, 122 respondents did not have experience with institutional care and 85 had previously been in a foster home or group home.

The relationship between institutional care and street family involvement was significant at  $p < .001$ . For those that reported membership in a street family, 67.1% reported that they were in institutional care. Conversely, only 32.9% of those who did not report membership claimed that they experienced some sort of institutional care.

Table 6.1  
Institutional Care and Street Family Involvement by Gender

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Institutional Care	Yes	68.6%	31.4%
		No	44.6%	55.4%
Females	Institutional Care	Yes	70.8%	29.2%
		No	40.5%	59.5%
P = .000			N= 186	

Table 6.2  
Institutional Care and Street Family Involvement by Age

Age in 09			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Ages 16-20	Institutional Care	Yes	75%	25%
		No	42.9%	57.1%
Ages 21 and over	Institutional Care	Yes	67.3%	32.7%
		No	43.3%	56.7%
P = .000			N = 186	

As seen in Table 6.1, the relationship between street family involvement and whether they were kept in institutional care was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), even when controlling for their gender. Both males and females were more likely to be involved in a street family if they reported once being in a foster or group home (68.6% and 70.8% respectively). In addition, when controlling for age reported at the time of the study, one's experience with institutional care also had an influence on whether they were involved in a street family. As illustrated in Table 6.2, regardless of the street youth's age, institutional care had an impact on street family involvement.

Table 7  
Level of Education by Street Family Involvement

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Level of Education	No High School Grad	58.1%	41.9%
	High School Grad	45.3%	54.7%
P = .077 or N.S.		N= 204	

\*Out of the 204 respondents who reported their level of education, 129 reported no high school diploma and 75 reported that they received a high school diploma or more.

Youth with less than a high school diploma were more likely to report street family involvement. As shown in Table 7, 58.1% who reported no high school diploma were involved in a street family at some point, while 45.3% with more than a high school diploma were in a street family. This relationship was statistically significant at the 90% confidence level ( $p < .08$ ).

### ***Situational Strain***

Situational strain is another important aspect to consider when determining why youth in street families engage in illegal money making strategies compared to non-members. Is it possible that street youth who join street families have rougher living conditions (lack of shelter) than youth who do not join street families? To analyze situational strain on street family involvement, several variables were included, such as: a youth's living/housing conditions; frequency of hunger; and level of drug use on the street.

Table 8  
Living Conditions in the Past 30 Days by Street Family Involvement

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Living Conditions	Unsheltered	88.9%	11.1%
	Sheltered	52.5%	47.5%
P = .032		N = 190	

\*More research is required (larger sample size) to confirm these results. Only nine youth were unsheltered or "sleeping rough" in this analysis, compared to 174 who had emergency, temporary, or permanent housing situations.

**Table 8.1**  
**Living Conditions in the Past 30 Days by Street Family Involvement by Age**

Age in 09			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Ages 16-20	Living Conditions	Unsheltered	100%	0%
		Sheltered	54.5%	45.5%
Ages 21 and over	Living Conditions	Unsheltered	83.3%	16.7%
		Sheltered	51.9%	48.1%
P = .034			N = 183	

\*More research is required (larger sample size) to confirm these results. Only nine youth were unsheltered or “sleeping rough” in this analysis, compared to 174 who had emergency, temporary, or permanent housing situations.

**Table 8.2**  
**Living Conditions in the Past 30 Days by Street Family Involvement by Gender**

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Living Conditions	Unsheltered	75%	25%
		Sheltered	53.8%	46.2%
Females	Living Conditions	Unsheltered	100%	0%
		Sheltered	49.1%	50.9%
P = .051			N = 182	

\*More research is required (larger sample size) to confirm these results. Only eight youth were unsheltered or “sleeping rough” in this analysis, compared to 174 youth who had emergency, temporary, or permanent housing situations.

Regardless of one’s age, youth who were unsheltered were more likely to report street family involvement compared to youth who were in emergency shelter and provisional accommodations, as well as those who were at-risk of homelessness ( $p < .05$ ). As illustrated in Table 8.2, when controlling for gender, the relationship between one’s living conditions and their street family involvement was no longer significant at the 95% confidence level ( $p = .051$ ).

**Table 9**  
**Gone Without Food for a Day by Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Gone Without Food Daily	Yes	67.7%	32.3%
	No	40.7%	59.3%
P = .000		N= 190	

\*For those respondents that reported their frequency of hunger, 91 reported that they did not go without food on a daily basis and 99 reported that they have gone without food daily.

Table 9 illustrates the association between the frequency that youth go without food and their involvement in a street family. Youth who reported going without food on a daily basis were more likely to report involvement in a street family. In fact, 67.7% of those ever involved in a street family reported going without food daily. This association is significant ( $p < .001$ ).

**Table 9.1**  
**Gone Without Food for a Day and Street Family Involvement by Age**

Age in 09			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Ages 16-20	Gone Without Food Daily	Yes	73.2%	26.8%
		No	32.1%	67.9%
Ages 21 and over	Gone Without Food Daily	Yes	65.5%	34.5%
		No	43.1%	56.9%
P = .000			N = 182	

**Table 9.2**  
**Gone Without Food for a Day and Street Family Involvement by Gender**

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Gone Without Food Daily	Yes	68.9%	31.1%
		No	40.3%	59.7%
Females	Gone Without Food Daily	Yes	65.7%	34.3%
		No	36%	64%
P = .000			N = 183	



The association between involvement in a street family and frequency of hunger remained significant even after controlling for age and gender. As evident in Table 9.1, youth of all ages were more likely to report going hungry daily. For those youth involved in street families, between the ages of 16 to 20 years old, 73.2% reported going hungry daily. In addition, 65.5% of youth 21 years old and over, who were involved in a street family reported going hungry daily. In Table 9.2, for males involved in a street family, 68.9% reported going hungry daily, while 65.7% of females in street families reported going without food daily. Both associations are significant ( $p < .001$ ). However, it is unknown whether youth in street families experienced daily hunger before joining a street family or while in their street family.

**Table 10**  
**Levels of Drug Use by Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Levels of Drug Use *	Low	43.7%	56.3%
	High	58.1%	41.9%
P = .048		N= 207	

\*Low drug use (0-4 drugs); Moderate to high drug use (5-12 drugs).

\*Out of the 207 respondents, 71 reported low drug use and 136 reported high drug use.

As shown in Table 10, youth who reported street family involvement were more likely to have a high level of drug use. In fact, 58.1% of youth in street families reported using between four and twelve drugs in comparison to 41.9% of youth not in street families. This relationship was significant at  $p < .05$ ; therefore, one's level of drug use impacts whether they have been involved in a street family or not.

Table 10.1  
Levels of Drug Use and Street Family Involvement by Age

Age in 09			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Ages 16-20	Level of Drug Use	Low	46.4%	53.6%
		High	61.9%	38.1%
Ages 21 and over	Level of Drug Use	Low	48.4%	51.6%
		High	55.3%	44.7%
P = .202 or N.S.			N = 186	

Table 10.2  
Levels of Drug Use and Street Family Involvement by Gender

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Level of Drug Use	Low	45%	55%
		High	58.8%	41.2%
Females	Level of Drug Use	Low	47.6%	52.4%
		High	55%	45%
P = .148 or N.S.			N = 186	

Although there was a significant relationship between one's level of drug use and their involvement in a street family ( $p < .05$ ), this relationship was no longer significant when controlling for age and gender. This means that regardless of whether a youth is 16-20 years old or 21 and over, or whether one is male or female, drug use has no influence on their involvement in a street family.

***Deviant Peer Associations***

**Table 11**  
**Have Friends That Use Drugs by Street Family Involvement**

		Ever Been in a Street Family	
		Yes	No
Have Friends That Use Drugs	Yes	61%	39%
	No	14.3%	85.7%
P = .000		N = 192	

\*Out of the 192 respondents, 164 claimed they have friends that use drugs and 28 claimed that they do not have friends that use drugs.

As seen in Table 11, having friends that use drugs impacts one’s involvement in a street family. This relationship is significant at  $p < .001$ .

**Table 11.1**  
**Have Friends That Use Drugs and Street Family Involvement by Age**

Age in 09			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Ages 16-20	Have Friends That Use Drugs	Yes	64.4%	35.6%
		No	9.1%	90.9%
Ages 21 and over	Have Friends That Use Drugs	Yes	58%	42%
		No	21.4%	78.6%
P = .000			N = 184	

**Table 11.2**  
**Have friends That Use Drugs and Street Family Involvement by Gender**

Gender			Ever Been in a Street Family	
			Yes	No
Males	Have Friends That Use Drugs	Yes	59.1%	40.9%
		No	14.3%	85.7%
Females	Have Friends That Use Drugs	Yes	62.5%	37.5%
		No	16.7%	83.3%
P = .000			N= 186	

Youth who had friends that used drugs were more likely to report involvement in a street family, regardless of the youth’s age and gender. In fact, 64.4% of those between the ages of 16-

20 reported street family involvement and 58% of those 21 and over reported involvement in a street family when they had friends that used drugs. Conversely, 59.1% of males who had friends that used drugs reported being in a street family, and 62.5% of females who had friends that used drugs reported street family involvement.

This research has confirmed previous research that youth in street families are more criminogenic compared to those not in street families, regardless of their age and gender. Overall, there was some evidence to suggest that background and situational strain had an impact on street family involvement. When looking at background strain, the age that a youth left home and their experience with institutional care were significant factors when assessing membership in a street family. However, visible minority status, and sexual orientation did not have a significant impact on street family involvement and one's level of education was significant at  $p < .10$  (90% confidence level). Situational strain also had some impact on whether a youth joined a street family. The frequency that a youth went without food was a strong predictor of street family involvement, even when controlling for age and gender. Additionally, there was a relationship between one's living conditions (unsheltered or "rough sleeping") and street family involvement, but this relationship was only significant when controlling for age. When controlling for gender, this relationship disappeared. One's level of drug use on street family involvement was initially significant, but when controlling for age and gender, this relationship disappeared. Finally, for those youth who had their friends that use drugs, their involvement in a street family was statistically significant controlling for age and gender.

Although cross tabulations are useful for showing associations between two variables, it is difficult to control for more than one variable at a time. Multiple regression analysis is a more powerful tool than cross-tabular analyses and is therefore necessary to get a more comprehensive

understanding of the impact of all relevant variables on the dependent variable. In this case, a regression determines the effect of all relevant independent variables in predicting street family involvement. A logistic regression will be the main statistical technique used as the dependent variable is binary (street family: yes or no).

### ***Logistic Regression***

Twelve variables were included in the logistic regression analysis (the same variables used in the previous cross-tabular analyses). In this logistic regression model, the odds ratio of whether a street youth is more likely to be in a street family (based on background characteristics, situational characteristics and peer associations) is examined. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 Logistic Regression of Strain and Deviant Peer Relationships on Street Family Involvement n= 158				
Variables	B	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.
Visible Minority Status	.473	.385	1.605	N.S.
Sexual Orientation	-.079	.469	.924	N.S.
Level of Education	-.323	.430	.724	N.S.
Institutional Care	.643	.387	1.903	+
Age Left Home	-1.328	.388	.265	***
Sheltered vs. Unsheltered	-1.415	1.179	.243	N.S.
Frequency of Hunger	.746	.392	2.108	+
Drug Use	-.231	.411	.794	N.S.
Peer Groups and Drug Use	1.618	.683	5.042	*
Control: Gender	-.207	.435	.813	N.S.
Control: Age in 2009	.157	.446	1.170	N.S.
Constant	.160	1.480		

Log likelihood: 176.837

+ =p<.10      \* =p<.05      \*\* =p<.01      \*\*\*= p<.001

When looking at all variables that fall under background strain, only age left home is statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), followed by institutional care which was a weaker predictor ( $p < .10$ ). As seen in Table 12, one's background strain still had some effect on street family involvement, when controlling for all other variables. Youth who left home when they were over 16 years old have around a 20% chance (or 1/5) of being in a street family. However, youth who left home before the age of 16 have approximately an 80% chance (or 4/5) of being in a street family. In other words, the younger that a youth leaves home, the more likely it is that they will be a member of a street family. This is statistically significant at  $p = .001$  (or 99.9% confidence level).

Institutional care was a relevant variable when determining one's likelihood of being in a street family. The p-value for institutional care was .096 ( $p < .10$ ), which just misses the 95% confidence interval cut off. Nevertheless, there is a good reason to believe that those who experienced institutional care would be two times more likely to be in a street family compared to those who never experienced institutional care. Although institutional care was not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, it is very likely that a larger sample size would impact the significance level of this variable.

As already illustrated in the cross tabular analyses, a street youth's situational strain had some effect on whether they were involved in a street family. According to Table 12, street youth who go hungry on a daily basis are approximately two times more likely to be in a street family compared to those who do not go hungry every day. The impact of daily hunger on street family involvement had modest results ( $p < .10$ ). Again, this variable might have had more of a significant contribution on street family involvement if the sample size was larger.

Finally, the associations that street youth maintain on the street had some impact on street family involvement. As evident in Table 12, street youth who reported hanging out with friends that use drugs was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). For this variable, the odds ratio was 5.042 which suggests that those street youth who have friends that use drugs are approximately five times more likely to be in a street family than those who do not have friends that use drugs. Ultimately, a street youth's interaction with others contributes to their likelihood of being in a street family.

As already illustrated above, several factors related to a street youth's background, situational adversities, and peer associations can help to explain why a street youth would be more likely to be in a street family. One's background strain had some impact on their involvement in a street family. Visible minority status, sexual orientation, and level of education had no impact on street family involvement; however, the age that a youth left home and their experience with institutional care were both statistically significant when determining one's likelihood of street family involvement. Situational strain only has little impact on street family involvement. Whether a street youth is sheltered or unsheltered bears no impact on their involvement in a street family when other variables are considered. Further, one's level of drug use does not have a significant impact on street family involvement when adjusting for other factors. However, whether a street youth goes hungry on a daily basis may help to explain why a street youth is a member of a street family. Finally, peer associations have an impact on one's involvement in a street family. When youth hang out with other youth who use drugs, they have more of a likelihood of being in a street family, than those youth who do not form deviant relationships on the street. The regression analysis presented here gives some insight into the dynamics of street families. As such, it makes sense that street youth who had a difficult

upbringing, situational adversities and deviant associations on the street would be members of street families. Given these results, there is good reason to believe that street families serve as surrogate families to make up for their lack of familial relationships at home.

This research highlights several significant considerations that are worth mentioning. This research points to the problem of defining “family”. In this research, it is evident that street families are defined very differently compared to the traditional concept of the “family”. Therefore, the next section will explore the implications of using the term “street family” to define these groups. In addition, it was evident that both Strain and Differential Association theory could be used to explain why youth in street families are more criminogenic than non-members. Youth in street families experience far more strain, both developmentally and situationally, and they also engage in more risky activities with peers. Thus, the next section will highlight the importance of theoretical integration in explaining involvement in street families. Criminological theories should be used in conjunction with each other to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon. Adopting an interdisciplinary paradigm to research will ensure that there are extensive justifications to explain street youth crime and deviance. Finally, it is important to consider which one of the types of strain according to Agnew’s Strain Theory that was evident in this research.



## *Chapter Five*

### **DISCUSSION**

This research first examined whether youth in street families were more criminogenic than youth who are not in street families. Confirming previous research, this study showed that youth in street families are more likely to engage in illegal money making than youth who report no street family involvement. Background strains, situational strains and deviant peers were shown to have an impact on street family involvement, and hence involvement in some illegal activities. Given these results, this section of this thesis will discuss the role that street families play in the lives of marginalized youth. Why do these youth consider their street group a *family*? The meaning and significance of ‘street families’ (or fictive kin) is not well understood by the research community. The second part of the discussion will focus on the importance of theoretical integration when examining youth crime and deviance. Both Strain and Differential Association Theory were shown to be relevant for explaining why youth in street families are more criminogenic than youth not in such families. Illegal money making largely occurs as a result of past and current strains as well as peer associations where criminal behaviour is learned and positively recognized in a group environment. The last part of this section will discuss the type of strain that the findings of this research emphasized.

There continues to be uncertainty when trying to understand why street families define themselves as a *family*. In describing and explaining the characteristics of street families, it was apparent that the street youth’s concept of a ‘family’ was very different than the traditional definition of a family. Why do these groups of youth call themselves street families? To what extent do street families really resemble a typical family unit? The concept of the family is widely contested and different cultures and societies have their own idea of what a family is.

There is no single definition of a family. However, for the sake of this analysis, Little (2012: 439) defined a family as a recognized group that may be biologically related, joined by marriage, or adopted into the family where each member has an emotional connection and serves as an economic unit in society. A family may be defined in terms of structure where each family member takes on a role to allow for the family to function.

In recent years, the term family has become a very diverse term that incorporates many different groups. The concept of a 'family' has become very broad and includes more categories of people that would not have historically been considered a family, at least within a North American context (Little 2012) According to Statistics Canada, a family is “composed of a married or common-law couple, with or without children, or of a lone parent living with at least one child in the same dwelling. Couples can be of the opposite sex or of the same sex” (Statistics Canada 2012). The concept of a family often varies when significant historical changes occur (e.g., after World War II, or the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2005) (Little 2012). The criminogenic behaviour, violent nature, spontaneous and short-lived membership of street families do not resemble a traditional family unit, yet homeless youth form familial relationship on the street to make up for what was missing with their family of origin.

Similar to 'normal' families, street youth in street families appear to take on familial roles, and adopt the roles of a parent or a sibling for the purposes of keeping structure of the group (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002; Denfeld 2007; Smith 2008). However, perhaps, more importantly, street families form as a way to help mitigate the need to survive on the street (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan, & Martin 2002; Smith 2008). In most instances, the need for survival paved way for enhanced opportunities to commit crime. Street families can be violent in nature (Hagan & McCarthy 1998; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin

2002; Denfeld 2007; O'Sullivan-Oliveira 2009) and mentor each other to commit crime, and although street families generated social capital, like traditional families, their methods of attaining capital was often quasi-illegal or illegal.

Unlike traditional families, street family associations are very spontaneous and most groups form as a result of urgency (Smith 2008). As previously stated, many street group associations are dynamic and change when a member disobeys the group rules, disagrees with members or has new opportunities to leave the street (McCarthy, Hagan & Martin 2002). Street families mainly served as an emotional and physical support, which for the majority of these street youth, were missing at home (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). For the most part in typical families, family members do not abruptly change and they have emotional connections for longer periods of time. On the other hand, in street families, membership is short-lived and can change on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). As Miller (1986: 68) suggests, street group associations “change with the ebb and flow of economic crises and opportunities, changing lifestyles, and vacillating personal relationships”.

So why are street families considered a *family*? As the findings indicated, many homeless youth in street families experience institutional care and leave home at a young age because they do not have families to support them. Youth in street families also go hungry more often and learn how to commit crime from other deviant peers. In a sense, street families serve as a surrogate family to accommodate for their lack of familial connection at home. As suggested by O'Sullivan-Oliveira and Burke (2009), homeless youth feel as though their street family allowed them to “act like a kid” again and rediscover their lost childhood. Youth that join these groups did not receive the acceptance and love from their family while at home and feel that they need to compensate by joining street families who can protect and ensure they have the essential

necessities to survive. At the same time however, the structure and function of these groups seem to be exploitive in nature. As previously mentioned, many females who are in street families are protected, but this is only the case if they submit to sexual acts for some of the male members in the group. Although these youth are not biologically related, they find acceptance, trust, and some protection amongst other youth who have gone through similar experiences. More research is required to better understand these types of situations and the power relations that are involved in the exchanges that take place between group members.

There still continues to be some uncertainty when defining a street *family*, and therefore, more research on this topic clearly needs to be conducted. However, this research did in fact provide substantial evidence for the benefits of theoretical integration. Based on the findings of this thesis, there is good evidence to suggest that theoretical integration can be used to understand the criminogenic behaviour of youth in street families. Although Strain and Differential Association Theory have different assumptions, this research found support for both theories when explaining youth crime. Strain Theory, as discussed earlier, assumes that crime is committed as a result of strains or pressure that people experience. According to General Strain Theory, Agnew argues that economic and other strains, explain delinquent behaviour. He suggests, for example, that individuals who have negative experiences will then experience emotional responses (anger, depression, fear) which will lead them to commit crime (Agnew 1992). Sutherlands Differential Association, on the other hand, assumes that criminal behaviour is learned and takes place when individuals interact in group settings where criminal behaviour is endorsed (Sutherland 1947). Although each theory has very different assumptions about why crime is committed, support was found for both. More specifically, the logistic regression analysis showed that peer groups and their use of drugs, the age that a youth left home and their

frequency of hunger on the streets were all independent predictors of street family involvement. Given these results, it is evident that there are varying factors that encourage homeless youth to be involved in street families that relate to strain and peer interactions.

The issue of theoretical integration has been debated and discussed in the criminological literature since the 1970s (Kornhauser 1978; Elliott, Ageton, & Cantor 1979; Hirschi 1979; Short 1979), and in more recent years, the discussion still remains (Kubrin, Stucky, Krohn, 2009). According to Messner, Krohn and Liska (1989), theoretical integration is “the act of combining two or more sets of logically interrelated propositions into one larger set of interrelated propositions, in order to provide a more comprehensive explanation of a particular phenomenon” (p. 52). While some argue that theoretical integration is not possible (Hirschi 1979), other researchers suggest that several criminological theories can be integrated and the concepts and assumptions from two or more prior existing theories can be combined into a new comprehensive theory (Elliott, Ageton & Cantor 1979). In his attempt to prove that criminological theories cannot be integrated, Hirschi (1979) suggested that assumptions of strain, control, and differential association theories of delinquency are fundamentally incompatible. The central assumption of social control theory is that people are born as risk takers and crime is deflated when an individual attempts to maximize their own benefit. On the other hand, strain theory assumes that people are ‘born good’ and go through stressors in their life that make them vulnerable to committing crime. Finally, differential association theory assumes that criminal behaviour is learned and occurs in group settings where criminal behaviour is favoured. Given that each theory has far different assumptions, Hirschi asserts that if a theory is to be considered adequate, or “good”, it must have assumptions and an internal consistency, which in turn, makes them incompatible with other criminological principles (Hirschi 1979).

Hirschi (1979) suggested that if theories are integrated, then the growth of that theory would be inhibited, and therefore, criminological advancement would not be promising. He argues that crime theories on their own can fair reasonably well without the incorporating other criminological assumptions. As suggested by Hirschi in Messner, Krohn and Liska's (1989: 44) analysis on theoretical integration, researchers "should take individual theories as far as [they] can before [they] abandon them or try to save what is left of them by adding them to some integrated stew". In fact, the best way to respond against criticism of a theory is to put that theory into practice.

Although Hirschi has a persuasive influence in the field of criminology, his contributions should not conceal the efforts of other researchers who have focused on integrating criminological theories. Even with competing theories, commonalities can be distinguished, and therefore theoretical integration is possible. Researchers Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton (1985) claim that theoretical competition is largely non-existent. In fact, criminological theories incorporate a number of different theories to explain a phenomenon. Most theories can only explain between 10-20% of criminal behaviour (Elliott, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985). In one of the first attempts to integrate criminological theories, Elliott, Ageton and Cantor (1979) developed an "integrated theory" which incorporated strain, social control, and social learning theory to understand delinquency. They claimed that a single theory is not sufficient enough to adequately explain crime, and suggested that different theories need to be integrated in order to provide a comprehensive explanation to understand criminal behaviour (Elliott, Ageton & Cantor 1979). For example, social control theory focuses more on involvement in activities which helps youth to stay away from crime and puts less emphasis on delinquent friends. However, integrated theory incorporates both of these assumptions in sequential order.

According to Elliott, Ageton and Cantor (1979), there are two ways that lead to delinquency which include 1) weak bonds to conventional society (social control) which further leads to involvement in delinquent groups (differential association); and 2) strong bonds to conventional society (social control) which may lead to experiences that create pressure to commit crime (strain), which leads to exposure to delinquent groups (differential association). This specific examples shows that it is very possible that competing theories can be linked together to explain youth crime. The results of this research support the view that more than one theory is required to explain criminogenic behaviour of homeless youth in street families.

So what type of theoretical integration occurs in this research? There are three main ways to integrate criminological theories, which include side-by-side, end-to-end and up-and-down. Kubrin, Stucky & Krohn (2009: 253) defined side-by-side integration as the assumption that one component of crime can be explained by one theory while another component of a crime can be explain by another. In contrast, end-to-end integration is a type of theoretical integration that occurs in sequential order. As such, theories are integrated in causal order and the “independent variables from one or more theories (e.g., strain) are positioned causally prior to concepts from other theories (e.g., social control, social learning)” (Kubrin. Stucky & Krohn 2009: 253). Finally, up-and-down integration involves identifying general principles or assumptions that incorporate some parts of two or more theories within it. For instance, if “Theory A contains more abstract or general assumptions than Theory B, [then the] key parts of theory B can be incorporated within the structure of Theory A” (Kubrin, Stucky & Krohn 2009: 253).

The results of this research seem to support the possibility of side-by-side integration. While Strain Theory explains that added stressors experienced by homeless youth often lead them to membership in street families, Differential Association Theory helps to show that

deviant peers may also influence involvement in a street family. Although this research seems to fit in with side-by-side integration, it may also include end-to-end integration. It may be that homeless youth in street families experience strain first, and then form deviant peer associations on the street to supplement the support and acceptance that they were missing at home. Therefore, these two theories can be integrated based on sequential events that youth in street families experience, both before and while on the streets.

Lastly, the findings of this research most emphasized one of the types of strain evident in Agnew's General Strain Theory. As previously stated, Agnew's theory incorporates several different types of strain that may lead an individual to commit crime which include added stressors which cause frustration, anger and depression, economic strain, and the removal of positive stimuli (Agnew 1992: 50). It is evident that youth in street families often experience added stressors before they take to the streets. For example, the findings suggested that many youth who are members of street families experience institutional care. This shows that these youth are in the presence of negative stimuli since they had to be removed from their families of origin by the state. Further, once on the streets, these youth often experience many situational adversities that jeopardize their well-being and therefore, experience added stressors which lead them to commit criminal behaviour. For instance, youth in street families are far more likely to be hungry compared to youth not in street families; thus, they have additional stress when trying to attain the basic necessities to survive.



## **CONCLUSION**

While it is recognized that researchers like Hagan & McCarthy (1998; 2002) have made substantial contributions to the literature regarding street families, that research has mainly looked at the characteristics of these groups, why street youth join street families, and whether their criminogenic behaviours are more violent compared to homeless youth who do not choose to be involved in a street family. By utilizing Strain and Differential Association Theory, this research has attempted to understand whether a homeless youth's background, current adversities, or peer associations have an impact on street family involvement. The findings of this research study indicated that strain had an impact on street family involvement. The age a youth first became homeless, their experience with institutional care and frequency of hunger had some impact on street family involvement. Additionally, deviant peers impacted involvement in a street family. Youth in street families that hang out with other youth that use drugs had more of a likelihood of being involved in a street family.

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

There are several limitations in this study that are worth mentioning. This study contained a relatively small sample size. Since only 244 street youth were surveyed and interviewed, it is possible that many of the results reported in the cross-tabulations and regression analyses were not significant due to this low sample size, and not the inherent relationship between all independent variables on the dependent variable. More significant relationships may have existed if there was a larger sample size. However, when studying such a vulnerable and often hidden population like the homeless, a large sample size is not easy to achieve (O'Grady, Gaetz, & Bucciari 2011). In addition, researchers who study homeless youth are unable to use random sampling given the nature and vulnerability of this population.

Unfortunately, the dataset did not include any variables relating to mental health problems that street youth experience and this may have been a strong situational predictor when examining street family involvement. Perhaps youth with mental health problems are more likely drawn into street families than youth who are mentally stable. As we know from previous literature, many street youth experience concurrent mental health problems which only diminish their chances to exit the streets (Kidd 2004; Hulchanski et al. 2009). Many systematic factors and strains contribute to the likelihood that a street youth will have post-traumatic stress or commit suicide (Kidd 2004). In the future, it would be interesting to observe whether youth in street families have concurrent mental health problems more so than youth who are not members of street families.

The measures for this study were too limited given that they were derived from a secondary dataset with already established questions. Therefore, only one variable was included for deviant peer relationships. A second question was originally included, but there were not enough respondents that answered the question, so it was not sufficient for cross-tabular analyses. Future research should incorporate more questions to get a more comprehensive examination of deviant peer relationships and how they impact street family involvement. Questions such as “Have you committed theft/B&E with friends?”, “Have you committed vandalism while hanging with friends?” and “Have you been arrested when you were with a group of friends?” might be some suitable indicators to measure deviant peer relationships. Future research also needs to broaden in scope and explore whether criminal justice actors and service agencies are aware that street families exist. It is still unclear whether street families are recognized by those most likely to interact with them (e.g. homeless shelters etc.). Service

providers need to be educated about street families to understand why they might be resistant or reluctant to access services.

The frequency in which youth in street families interact with the police is also unknown even though it has been confirmed that youth in street families are more criminogenic compared to non-members. Therefore, future research should examine whether awareness of street families affects their treatment by the police. In answering this question, it will be interesting to observe whether their violent behaviour warrants differential treatment in comparison to homeless youth who are not a part of street families. Are street youth in street families being detained more often than other street youth? If there are differences in treatment, does this inhibit their ability to leave the streets?

A gendered analysis may also prove to be beneficial for future research. Previous research by Hagan and McCarthy (1998) determined that there were more females in street families than males, especially in Vancouver. Many of the females in street families who were expecting or those that were newly mothers often formed these groups to gain motherly support during and right after pregnancy (Hagan & McCarthy 1998). In this analysis, gender was used as a control variable, but it was not a significant predictor of street family involvement. Therefore, a separate regression analysis for males and females would be beneficial to understand whether they have different types of strain and deviant peer relationships which affect their membership in a street family. This could have been done if the sample had been larger.

### ***Policy Implications***

This research is important because it will provide a foundation in order for researchers to conduct further analyses pertaining to street families. Since the majority of studies on this topic

were conducted in the U.S (with the exception of Hagan and McCarthy's study), this study will also allow for subsequent analysis within a Canadian context. Youth in street families experience different strain and have deviant peer relationships more so than homeless youth who are not in street families, so it is obvious that some policies and interventions should be targeted at street youth who form these types of relationships.

Based on the results of this research, several preventative policies need to be directed towards youth in street families. As indicated, street youth who experience institutional care strongly influences whether or not they are members of street families. It would therefore be beneficial for governments to include support systems for youth who transition out of the foster care system. Since youth in street families experience harsher situational adversities while on the streets, policies need to be implemented to help these youth exit the streets. Services need to help these youth transition into independent and permanent housing by focusing on providing additional supports and services related to mental health, education, and employment. Additionally, attention needs to be raised documenting the exploitation and victimization that females experience while involved in these groups.

Youth in street families are in a vulnerable state and heavily rely on their peers; therefore, it is difficult to expect one to want to leave the street if their street family involvement gives them more opportunities to remain on the street (Smith 2008). Interventions must then focus on "involving members of one's street family [which] might result in more positive outcomes than individual interventions" (Smith 2008: 770). Therefore, it would be beneficial to include current or former homeless youth in the intervention process which would better inform agencies on how to work with street families (Smith 2008: 770).

Additionally, shelters and other service providers need to be aware of how their services affect youth in street families. Youth in street families may not be accessing services if they are not allowed to stay with their group. Therefore, service providers should have services targeted at these groups and should develop policies that will help these groups exit off of the streets. If youth in street families are generating enough social capital, they may be reluctant to exit the streets. The results of this study will hopefully impact public policy and will create awareness on an issue that has not yet been analyzed in depth in Canada.

## References

- Agnew, Robert. 1985. "A Revised Strain Theory of Delinquency." *Social Forces* 64: 151-167.
- Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency". *Criminology* 30: 47-87.
- Barker, Justin. 2012. "Social capital, homeless young people and the family." *Institute of Child Protection Studies* 15(6): 730-743.
- Baron, Stephen. 2001. "Street Youth Labour Market Experiences and Crime". *Canadian Review of Sociology* 38(2): 189-215.
- Baron, Stephen. 2003. "Street youth violence and victimization". *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 4(1): 22-44.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1985. "The social space and the genesis of groups." *Theory and Society*, 12(6): 723-744.
- Bryfonski, Dedria. 2012. *Street Teens*. Detroit: Greenhaven Press.
- Butler, Udi and Irene Rizzini. 2003. "Young People Living and Working on the Streets of Brazil: Revisiting the Literature." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1).
- Campbell, Anne. 1991. *The Girls in the Gang*. Boston: Basil Blackwell Inc.
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. 2003. Current issues in addictions and mental health. Toronto, Ontario. Retrieved July 26th, 2015, ([http://www.camh.net/Public\\_policy/Public\\_policy\\_papers/current\\_issues\\_paper03.pdf.pdf](http://www.camh.net/Public_policy/Public_policy_papers/current_issues_paper03.pdf.pdf)).
- Cohen, Albert. 1955. *Delinquent Boys*. New York: Free Press.
- Covenant House Toronto. 2013. Facts and Stats. Retrieved July 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, (<http://www.covenanthousetoronto.ca/homeless-youth/facts-and-stats>).

- Cunningham, Mary, Michael Pergamit, Nan Astone, and Jessica Luna. 2014. "Homeless LGBTQ Youth". *Urban Institute*. Retrieved July 14<sup>th</sup> 2015, (<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413209-Homeless-LGBTQ-Youth.pdf>).
- Denfeld, Rene. 2007. *All God's Children: Inside the Dark and violent World of Street Families*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Elliott, Delbert., Suzanne Ageton and Rachelle Cantor. 1979. "An Integrated Theoretical Perspective n Delinquent Behaviour". *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. 16: 3-27.
- Elliott, Delbert., David Huizinga, and Suzanne Ageton. 1985. *Explaining Delinquency and Drug Use*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Evenson, Jeff. 2009. "Youth Homelessness in Canada: The Road to Solutions." Raising the Roof. Retrieved July 17<sup>th</sup> 2015, ([http://raisingtheroof.org/RaisingTheRoof/media/RaisingTheRoofMedia/Documents/RoadtoSolutions\\_fullrept\\_english.pdf](http://raisingtheroof.org/RaisingTheRoof/media/RaisingTheRoofMedia/Documents/RoadtoSolutions_fullrept_english.pdf)).
- Gaetz, Stephen. 2000. Homeless and perceptions of safety in Toronto. City of Toronto: Community and Neighbourhood Services.
- Gaetz, Stephen. 2004a. "Safe streets for whom? Street youth, social exclusion and criminal victimization." *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 46(4): 423-455.
- Gaetz, Stephen. 2004b. "Understanding research on homelessness in Toronto: A literature review". York University: Faculty of Education.
- Gaetz, Stephen and Bill O'Grady. 2002. "Making Money: Exploring the economy of young homeless workers". *Work, Employment, and Society* 16(3): 433-456.

- Gaetz, Stephen, Jesse Donaldson, Tim Richter, and Tanya Gulliver. 2013. *The State of Homelessness in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Government of Canada. 2013. Organized Crime Research Brief no. 12 - Defining Street Gangs. *Public Safety Canada*. Retrieved April 15<sup>th</sup> 2015, (<http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rgnzd-crm-brf-12/index-eng.aspx>).
- Hagan, John and Bill McCarthy. 1998. *Mean Streets: Youth Crime and Homelessness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirschi, Travis. 1979. "Separate and Unequal Is Better." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 16:34-38.
- Hulchanski, David., Phillipia Campsie, Shirley Chau, Stephen Hwang, & Emily Paradis. 2009. Finding Home: Policy for Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada. *Centre for Urban and Community Studies*. Retrieved July 17<sup>th</sup> 2015, ([http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/FindingHome\\_Full.pdf](http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/FindingHome_Full.pdf)).
- Hwang, Stephen.2001. "Homelessness and Health". *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 164(2): 229-233.
- Kidd, Sean. 2004. "The walls were closing in, and we were trapped: A qualitative analysis of street youth suicide." *Youth & Society*, 36(1): 30–55.
- Kornhauser, Ruth. 1978. *Social Sources of Delinquency: An Appraisal of Analytic Models*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kubrin, Charis., Thomas Stucky and Marvin Krohn. 2009. *Researching Theories of Crime and Delinquency*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Little, William. 2012. *Introduction to Sociology – 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Edition*. Houston Texas: OpenStax College, Rice University. Retrieved July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 ([https://www.openstaxcollege.org/files/textbook\\_version/low\\_res\\_pdf/10/col11407-lr.pdf](https://www.openstaxcollege.org/files/textbook_version/low_res_pdf/10/col11407-lr.pdf)).
- McCarthy, Bill, John Hagan and Monica Martin. 2002. “In and out of harm’s way: violent victimization and the social capital of fictive street families.” *Criminology* 40(4): 831-865.
- Merton, Robert. 1957. *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed. New York: Free Press.
- Messner, Steven., Marvin Krohn, and Allen Liska. 1989. *Theoretical Integration in the Study of Deviance and Crime: Problems and Prospects*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press.
- Miller, Eleanor. 1986. *Street Woman*. Philadelphia, Penn: Temple University Press.
- National Coalition for the Homeless. 2009. LGBTQ Homeless. Retrieved July 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, (<http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/nw2ebqjk.pdf>).
- O’Grady, Bill, Stephen Gaetz and Kristy Buccieri. 2011. “Can I See Your ID? The Policing of Youth Homelessness in Toronto.” Toronto: JFCY & Homeless Hub: 1-93.
- O’Grady, Bill, Stephen Gaetz, and Bryan Vaillancourt. 1999. “Making Money”. The Shout Clinic report on youth homelessness and employment. Toronto, ON: Central Toronto Community Health Centres.
- O’Sullivan Oliveira, Joanne, and Pamela J. Burke (2009). “Lost in the shuffle: culture of homeless adolescents.” *Pediatric Nursing* 35(3):154-161.
- Plympton, Tia Jean. 1997. *Homeless Youth Creating Their Own Street Families*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

- Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology".  
*Annual Review of Sociology* 24, 1-24.
- Short, James. 1979. "On the Etiology of Delinquent Behaviour" *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 16: 28-33.
- Simons, Ronald and Les Whitbeck. 1991. "Life on the Street – The Victimization of runaway and Homeless Adolescents." *Youth and Society* 22:108-25.
- Smith, Hilary. 2008. "Searching for Kinship: The Creation of Street Families Among Homeless Youth." *American Behavioral Scientist* 51(6): 756-771.
- Stack, Carol. 1974. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Statistics Canada. 2012. *Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada: Families, households and marital status, 2011 Census of Population*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011001. Retrieved July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-312-x/98-312-x2011001-eng.pdf>).
- Sutherland, Edwin. 1947. *Principles of Criminology*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott.
- Whitbeck, L. B., Hoyt, D. R., & Ackley, K. A. (1997). "Abusive family backgrounds and later victimization among runaway and homeless adolescents." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 7: 375-392.
- Zimmerman, Shirley. 1988. *Families as Social Systems: Implications for Family Policy*. Newberry Park: Sage.