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# The Impact of Parent and Peer Socialization on Juvenile Delinquency

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THE IMPACT OF PARENT AND PEER SOCIALIZATION ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

by

Ebony I. Pender  
B.S. May 2019, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
May 2021

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## ABSTRACT

### THE IMPACT OF PARENT AND PEER SOCIALIZATION ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Ebony I. Pender  
Old Dominion University, 2021  
Director: Dr. Ruth A. Triplett

Juveniles often make decisions based on socialization and behaviors that are taught at a young age. Socialization experiences which can either protect or lead to adverse outcomes such as juvenile delinquency. It is extremely important to examine the role of socialization in delinquency due to the large number of youths currently involved in criminal acts. There are many violent and nonviolent crimes that are committed by youth under the ages of 18. For example, in 2018, there were 728,280 arrests of youths under the age of 18. A significant number of those, 46,410, were for violent index crimes with 141,500 for property index crimes (Puzzanchera, 2020). Though arrest rates for many violent crimes and property crimes were at new lows in 2018 (Puzzanchera, 2020), there is still reason for concern. This research examines the influence of both parental supervision and peer impact, on juvenile delinquency. This research explores the effects of socialization by parents and peers on juvenile delinquents using data from part 1 of the Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) Program in the United States. Multiple regression as well as a logit regression was used in this study. Key findings are that both parental supervision and peer impact have significant effects on juvenile delinquency individually and together.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

And so, we see the paradox that evolution has handed us. If man is the only animal whose consciousness of self gives him an unusual dignity in the animal kingdom, he also pays a tragic price for it. The fact that the child must identify -first- means that his very first identity is a social product. His habitation of his own body is built from the outside in; not from the inside out. He doesn't unfold into the world; the world unfolds into him. As the child responds to the vocal symbols learned from his object, he often gives the pathetic impression of being a true social puppet, jerked by alien symbols and sounds. What sensitive parent does not have his satisfaction tinged with sadness as the child repeats with such vital earnestness the little symbols that have taught him? (Becker, 2008).

Juveniles often make decisions based on socialization and behaviors that are taught at a young age. Socialization experiences can either protect from or lead to adverse outcomes such as juvenile delinquency. There are many violent and nonviolent crimes that are committed by youth under the ages of 18. For example, in 2018, there were 728,280 arrests of youths under the age of 18. A significant number of those, 46,410, were for violent index crimes with 141,500 for property index crimes (Puzzanchera, 2020). Though arrest rates for many violent crimes and property crimes were at new low in 2018 (Puzzanchera, 2020), there is still reason for concern.

#### THE PROBLEM

One reason for concern is the number of mental health problems among juvenile offenders. According to the National Conference for State Legislators (no date) approximately 65-70% of youth arrested each year in the US have some form of mental health disorder. Mental health issues can impact juveniles prior to committing crimes especially when combined with other adverse factors. One example would be if a juvenile had mental health issues growing up if the problems were not properly treated. Some of these mental health issues may come from family members' negative influences. For some juveniles, once they are in the criminal justice

system, they find themselves dealing with mental health issues that could affect them in their adult life if not properly treated. Additionally, once a juvenile enters the criminal justice system, they are more likely to be influenced by peers which can result in the continuance of delinquency.

According to *The Development of Delinquency* (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2001), research over the past few decades on normal child development and on development of delinquent behavior has shown individual, social, and community conditions as influences for delinquency as well as other adverse behaviors (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2001). There is general agreement that antisocial and delinquent behaviors result from the interplay of individual biological/ genetic factors as well as environmental factors, that begin during fetal development and continuing throughout life (Denno, Bock and Goode, 1996).

Understanding the reason juveniles are involved in the criminal justice system is the first step in addressing juvenile delinquency. Of the set of factors theorists and researchers have explored in their search for the cause of juvenile delinquency, socialization has long been an important focus. Socialization is best understood as learned behaviors that are accepted by society, while negative socialization is learned behaviors that are outside of what are considered societal norms (Child, 1954). Positive socialization is associated with decreases in problematic behaviors such as delinquency, while negative socialization is associated with delinquency among children and can often lead to poor educational attainment and, as an adult, crime and a cycle of poverty (Harris, 1948). Adolescence is a particularly important period for socialization. Adolescents are often taught how to act or treat others from those closest to them such as family members, particularly parents and siblings, peers, and even those in the educational setting.

Juveniles that continue to go down the path of breaking societal norms increase their chances of involvement in delinquent activities. This happens when juveniles are influenced by peers involved in delinquent acts themselves. It can also result from unfortunate situations, such as homes where crime is normal, there is a lack of parenting, and there are siblings who are involved in crime.

Literature discussed in this study analyzes the effect of socialization experiences specifically parental supervision, parental absence due to divorce and incarceration, parental stress, and peer delinquency on juvenile delinquency. The connections between family and peer influence on problems such as juvenile delinquency have been systematically studied over centuries. These studies started when clinicians began to describe in detail home conditions that added to delinquency (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). In addition, involvement with the child, marital status, and the socioeconomic status of the family are also addressed in the literature.

## THEORETICAL FORMULATIONS

The theory used in this study is Social Learning Theory by Akers (Simpson and Akers, 2000). In general, social learning theories link criminal behavior with mental states or conditions, antisocial personality traits and early psychological and moral development (Merlo, Benekos, and Champion, 2019). Akers' Social Learning Theory was developed by Akers to explain criminal behavior. In this application, social learning stresses the importance of learning through modeling others who are criminal, thus criminal behavior is a function of copying or learning criminal conduct from others (Merlo, Benekos, and Champion, 2019). In criminology, Akers' Social Learning Theory adds to the work of Sutherland by developing this theory around the theoretical concepts of differential association and the principles of behavioral science. Akers



began work on this theory with Burgess (Simpson and Akers, 2000) and viewed their theory of differential association-reinforcement as an expansion of Sutherland's theory of Differential Association.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of socialization by parents and peers on juvenile delinquency. This study will examine whether parental supervision and peer influence have significant effects on individual involvement in juvenile delinquency. In addressing these issues, the study asks two research questions:

1. What is the effect of socialization by parents and peers on the likelihood of involvement in juvenile delinquency?
2. Does socialization by parents impact the likelihood of juvenile delinquency because of its effect on the likelihood of having peers who are involved in juvenile delinquency?

This research will explore the effects of socialization by parents and peers on juvenile delinquency using data from the Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) Program in the United States. This data set was developed to allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the GREAT program by surveying five different groups: students in a cross-sectional design (Part 1), law enforcement officers (Part 2), educators (Part 3), parents (Part 4), and students in a longitudinal design (Part 5). Middle school students in the cross-sectional design were surveyed to examine GREAT's short- and long-term effects, and to assess the quality and effectiveness of officer training (Esbensen 2015). This particular study will only utilize data from the cross-sectional student survey portion (Part 1).

The next chapter will review literature examining the impact of measures of socialization by parents and peers on juvenile delinquency. In addition, chapter 2 will provide a review of the

theoretical framework for this study, Akers' Social Learning Theory. After a review of the theory underlying this research, chapter 3 begins with a discussion of the research questions and hypotheses. It then will discuss the methods that will be used to conduct this study. The thesis concludes outlining the results of the analysis in chapter 4, followed by a discussion of the findings and conclusion in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To get a deeper perspective as to why juveniles turn to delinquency, we can start by considering socialization and the people with whom juveniles spend most of their time. Socialization by families and peers both have an influence on delinquency. The literature below describes research that indicates how family, and peers affect delinquency both directly and indirectly. These studies highlight the effect of socialization experiences by parents and peers on juvenile delinquency. The chapter concludes with a review of Ronald Akers' Social Structure and Social Learning (SSSL) (2000), the criminological theory which best helps us understand the role that socialization plays in delinquency.

#### PARENTAL INFLUENCE

A great deal of research has been done examining the connection between family, particularly parents, and delinquency. Within this section, research will be reviewed that indicates several factors connected to families that may increase involvement in delinquency. These factors fall into three categories. First are those factors related to parental supervision or monitoring and parent-child involvement. Second are those that examine parental absence such as that caused by incarceration and the effects it has on the juvenile's delinquency. Finally, there are a variety of factors that describe characteristics of a parent that follow under the category of parental stress, particularly loss of income or economic hardship.

#### PARENTAL SUPERVISION

Through research, it has been found that some of the most important family factors that affect the likelihood of delinquency include those that deal with parental supervision or

monitoring as well as parent-child involvement. The research finds that the greater the level of supervision and/or involvement, the lower the likelihood of delinquency. For example, Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) report that juvenile conduct problems have been systematically studied over centuries when clinicians began to describe in detail home conditions that accompanied delinquency. Within this study, the researchers found that parental neglect and lack of involvement with the children generally have a stronger relation to delinquency. This relationship varied for they found that there was a higher percentage of delinquent children among working fathers compared to working mothers. In addition, parental lack of interest in their son's primary school education was significantly related to later delinquency (Loeber and Stouthamer- Loeber, 1986). Loeber and Stouthamer- Loeber (1986) also found that the effect seems to be the same for both boys and girls.

In a similar study, Chung and Steinberg (2006) found that parents who show a combination of strong supervision and positive involvement help protect their children against delinquent outcomes like violent offending. Chung and Steinberg (2006) found that adolescents who experience low emotional involvement and inconsistent discipline from parents reported having higher levels of delinquent behaviors both violent and nonviolent (Chung and Steinberg, 2006). In comparison, Des Los Reyes et al. (2010) found that when mothers consistently report higher levels of monitoring compared to what their children report, the adolescent's likelihood of delinquency and substance abuse increases. Markowitz and Ryan (2016) examine this issue as well, but they focused on the father. These researchers looked at the effects the absent father has on adolescent depression and delinquency from a sibling-to-sibling comparison (Markowitz and Ryan, 2016). The question asked in this particular study is, "if the lack of supervision is related to delinquency, does this also imply that different levels of delinquency are related to different

levels of supervision?”. Their analysis discovered that weak neighborhood social organization indirectly impacts delinquency, with its effects through the behavior of parents as well as peer deviance. Markowitz and Ryan (2016) showed that focusing on just one of these factors can lead to oversimplified representation of risk for juvenile delinquency. In addition, in 1985 Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber found that 21 percent of the non-delinquents they studied were poorly monitored by parents, compared to 50 and 73 percent for the one to two-time offenders and multiple offenders. Finally, Loeber and Schmalting (1985) found that children who both stole and fought were significantly less supervised than children who either stole or fought.

In a final study, two researchers point to the effects of monitoring and support. This research also examines the effects of parental monitoring and peer deviance on substance abuse and delinquency. Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell and Dintcheff (2006) look at a theoretical model which depicts the central importance of parental and peer influences that are considered when predicting delinquency. Their study found that more caring and cohesive family environments were associated with adolescents who had lower scores on the addiction-prone personality scales and parental socialization influences personality. Empirical support was included for combined effects of parental support and monitoring in protecting adolescents from negative effects of association with deviant peers in adolescence and reducing the risk of alcohol misuse and other substance use. Close parent-child attachment in early adolescence was related to the development of conventional behavior as well as the association with non-deviant peers which in turn was related to lower drug use (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell and Dintcheff, 2006). They conclude that much of the existing research focuses on the single aspect of parenting: support or monitoring. It is important to examine the interaction of parental

monitoring and peer deviance to determine if parental monitoring is an effective cause of a child's delinquency.

## PARENTAL ABSENCE

Within the family socialization literature, parental absence, has also been examined for its effects on the likelihood of delinquency. While examining parental absence, Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell and Dintech (2006) found that parents who are divorced have a higher chance of the children displaying behavioral problems, greater internalizing symptoms, and greater substance abuse. A study by Markowitz and Ryan (2016) illustrates the difficulties of exploring the relationship between parental absence and delinquency. They argued that parents who display instability risk their children copying traits of instability and internalizing and delinquent behaviors (Markowitz and Ryan, 2016). The researchers address in this study how the observed associations between father absence and adolescent behavior, indicated by depressive symptoms and delinquency, are plausibly caused and what mechanisms may explain the connection. In addition, they test whether links between father absence and adolescent behavior vary by gender (Markowitz and Ryan, 2016). They compared associations with adolescent outcomes by timing of the father's departure (Markowitz and Ryan, 2016). Markowitz and Ryan (2016) found that earlier departures or absences result in the longest periods of disrupted socialization. Special attention is paid to differences in associations by the gender of the child, but results showed no significant difference with gender. In their conclusion, they argued that additional environmental factors such as low income or neighborhood disadvantage are associated with the absence of fathers. Markowitz and Ryan (2016) argued that we need to explore the possibility that unmeasured environmental factors still confound the relationship between an absent father and the child's delinquency.

In addition, research has found that parental incarceration is important for predicting childhood delinquency in children. Research also indicates that parental incarceration comes along with multiple other risk factors. For example, research shows that youth with incarcerated parents are more likely than those without an incarcerated parent to be a member of an ethnic minority group, to be exposed to parent's illegal drug abuse, and live-in extreme poverty (Aaron and Dallaire, 2010). In one important study Aaron and Dallaire (2010) argue that studies that look at parental incarceration examine an important point but do not typically account for the impact of other experiences that may be important for understanding the child's delinquent behavior. Observing all the experiences a child may encounter, helps them to conclude that there are multiple risk factors that make an impact, only one of which is parental incarceration. Aaron and Dallaire (2010) examine three hypotheses involving whether incarcerated parents influence a child's delinquency. The researchers looked at schools in distressed neighborhoods within five cities as well as children in at-risk programs such as neighborhood intervention programs for preventing drug abuse, delinquency and other problem behaviors in high-risk youth. Their results showed that children's delinquent behavior was in fact predicted by history of parental incarceration, family victimization, and sibling delinquency (Aaron and Dallaire, 2010). Family victimization and sibling delinquency influence children's adjustments beyond effects of parental incarceration, suggesting multiple aspects of family life contribute more to children's adjustment than the single factor of having a parent incarcerated. It seems that the research should be broadened to examine the effect of parental incarceration. The effects may be examined best by looking at it from a family systems perspective, where impacts of all family members are examined for what influences children's delinquency.

## PARENTAL STRESS

A final area which research has found important touches on the role that stressors on parents can have on children and the likelihood that they become involved in juvenile delinquency. The effect is likely to come through the strained relationship between the parent and child. An important area is loss of income. Socio-economic issues can have a negative impact on our behavior and how we communicate with others as it becomes a stressor. For example, McLoyd (1989) found that the most impact of socio-economic issues was seen on the father's behavior which led to deviant behavior of the child. The child was said to mock the father's behavior which influenced their relationship. In addition, socio economic stressors could increase the father's temper, affects the father's relationship with the mother, and change the degree of contact between father and child (McLoyd, 1989). In fact, they found that economic hardship became more of an issue within households, the father became more irritable, tense, and explosive. McLoyd found that father intervention of economic hardship through harsh discipline was conditioned by the child's temperament. In addition, McLoyd found that children in families experiencing financial loss compared to families with stable homes report performing more socially disapproved acts and violating rules within the academic setting. Economic hardship led to more delinquency drug- use by increasing non-consistent punitive discipline by parents (McLoyd, 1998). Finally, it was found that the amount of psychological distress experienced by unemployed fathers and the extent to which this distress adversely affects the father's treatment of the child depend on several cognitive, personality, and environmental factors (McLoyd, 1989). Overall, negative fathering behavior related to socio-economic stress increases the child's risk of socioeconomic problems, deviant behaviors, and reduced aspirations and expectations.



## PEER IMPACT

Peer association is another factor that contributes to the delinquency of children as they learn various behaviors and habits from those around them. In this section of the paper, research will be reviewed that indicates several factors are connected to peers that increase involvement in delinquency.

## PEER NETWORKS AND PEER INFLUENCE

According to social learning theory, peers have an exceptional influence on a child's behavior and are recognized as essential in understanding adolescent deviance. It has been found that peer associations are most often formed around interest, friendships, and such circumstances as neighborhood proximity, family similarities, values, beliefs, age, school attended, grade school, and mutually attractive behavior patterns that have little to do directly with co-involvement or similarity in specifically law-violating or serious deviant behavior (Simpson and Akers, 2000). Whatever the reason for the association's children have, research finds that peer influence becomes increasingly important to the growing child (Lo, Kim, Allen, Allen, Minugh, and Lomuto, 2010).

In a study reviewing connections between delinquent behavior in a child's social network, Andrews, Hanish, and Santos (2017) explore the effects of middle school aged children and their social networks and how they play a part in delinquency. The theoretical model within this study is the popularity-socialization model that considers a youth's social standing within their peer group and the effects it has on their involvement in delinquent behavior. Popular youth were found to be impacted by their peer group in ways of both support and or approval (Andrews, Hanish, and Santos, 2017). Their research expanded upon previous theoretical and empirical work by simultaneously assessing associations between delinquency and social

network positions over time. To do this, a cross-lag panel and multi-group modeling in middle school sample was used with social network prestige being the influence and social network centrality being the connection (Andrews, Hanish, and Santos, 2017). A key idea for their research was derived from McLoyd (1989) who argued that material losses along with embarrassment from peers caused by the family's economic situation, undermined the child's mental health and could lead them to withdraw from peers. Children who experience this economic loss have additional mental health problems such as more depression, loneliness, and emotional sensitivity with low self-esteem (McLoyd, 1989). To test this, they examined the social nature of delinquency using two social network-based measures of social standing. They found that socially prominent youth attempt to conform to group norms and behaviors more so than youth with lower social standing. A secondary goal of the study was to determine whether longitudinal patterns relating delinquency and social standing differ by gender (Andrews, Hanish, and Santos, 2017). It was found that males are more likely to engage in delinquency than females (Andrews, Hanish and Santos, 2017). For boys, delinquency is found to be more acceptable than for a female.

When looking at the influence of parental attachment in comparison to peer influence, Thornberry (1987) says that parental attachment was found as a cause for delinquency in early adolescence, but they place a higher emphasis on peers during middle and later adolescence. Additionally, Chung and Steinburg (2006) examined the relationship between family interactions, peer relationships and antisocial behavior among 246 boys in inner-city neighborhoods in Chicago. Through a sample using 14-18-year-old boys, it was found that neighborhood structural and social characteristics have been linked to processes in the family and peer group (Chung and Steinberg, 2006). The results show that weak neighborhood social

organization is indirectly related to delinquency through its associations with parenting behavior and peer deviance and that a focus on just one of these microsystems can lead to oversimplified models of risk for juvenile offending (Chung and Steinberg, 2006). The authors also find that community social ties may confer both pro- and antisocial influences on youth, and advocate for a broad conceptualization of neighborhood social processes as these relate to developmental risk for youth living in disadvantaged communities.

#### PEER AND PARTNER DELINQUENCY

Learned behaviors from peers can impact a child both negatively and positively. Peer involvement in delinquent behavior has been found to be an important predictor of juvenile offending. A study by Haynie and Osgood (2005) explored measures of friend's participation in delinquency based on friend's actual responses rather than the usual approach of relying on respondent perceptions of friend's behavior. According to the article, adolescents in dense friendship networks or in very central positions within their networks exhibit stronger peer-delinquency associations (Haynie and Osgood, 2005). The study uses improved methods to evaluate the strength of normative influences to assess the role of peer delinquency in mediating the effects of other factors on delinquency and to determine whether normative influence is contingent on the nature of peer relations. They argued that in most social psychological accounts, normative influence or socialization from close associates is the key process by which individuals come to conform to the norms of the group. Sutherland's differential association theory and Aker's extension to differential reinforcement theory are devoted to this normative influence process (Haynie and Osgood, 2005).

Haynie and Osgood found that peer delinquency accounts for association of delinquency with other major correlates including age, attachment to parents, measures of normlessness, and

strain. There are several concerns however with concluding that peer delinquency is central to understanding delinquency according to Haynie and Osgood (2005). One concern is the determination of whether methodology shortcomings have led to the overestimation of the importance of normative influence of peers on delinquency (Haynie and Osgood, 2005). For example, they note that theories by Elliot and Thornberry imply that delinquent peer groups and normative influence are reciprocally related, and there is empirical evidence that both work. Secondly, the standard approach to measuring peer delinquency contains same- source bias that substantially inflates similarity between peers (Haynie and Osgood, 2005). Previous studies have apparently overestimated the contribution of peer delinquency socialization to delinquency.

Romantic partners are also included within a delinquent's peers. Research on delinquency has focused on the influence exerted by friends, and parents. In fact, until recently, researchers have largely ignored the romantic partner as a source of social influence or treated these relationships as an indistinct subset of the peer group (Lonardo, Giordano, Longmore, and Manning, 2009). Currently, the criminological literature focuses on romantic partners primarily as an influence on factors when it comes to adult's desistance and in female delinquency investigations (Lonardo, Giordano, Longmore, and Manning, 2009). Haynie and Osgood (2005) found that romantic partner behavior explained a significant portion of variance in adolescent delinquency even after the association with delinquent peers was considered and was significant in both males and females (Haynie and Osgood, 2005). The researchers hypothesized that youth whose networks are characterized by a greater number of deviant domains will be more delinquent than their counterparts with few domains. When it comes to levels of enmeshment, they hypothesized that self-reported delinquency involvement will be greatest under conditions

of complete enmeshment which is where peers and romantic partners are above average in terms of their deviant behavior.

## SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

Various themes emerged in the research presented in this chapter that discussed how different aspects of socialization can increase the likelihood of juvenile involvement in delinquent behaviors. The literature discussed in this review addressed how family, and peers can affect the likelihood of juvenile's delinquent behaviors. Specifically, factors such as parental supervision, parental absence, parental stress, and peer delinquency can influence delinquency displayed by youths.

We see from the literature that parental supervision has effects on juvenile delinquency, as well as parental stress. Parental incarceration or history with the judicial system indicate at risk behavior for learning mechanisms displayed in the child. Additionally, research also addressed how peer association has a direct link to delinquent behavior and is essential in adolescent deviance. Research literature on peers addressed how behaviors of deviance from peers can be found within shared interest, friendships, beliefs, as well within the school. Socioeconomic changes within the home can cause embarrassment from peers and can lead to criminal activity as a way of retrieving losses. It was found that the more the child looks for friends, the more likely they are to become a part of a delinquent peer group and socially prominent youth are more likely to be influenced by peers. Youth with romantic partners are likely to be influenced into deviant behaviors due to them wanting to maintain their relationships or "impress" their partner.

Despite the progress made in the literature on this topic, there were a few evident limitations that were found within the literature. First, even though it was found that parental

incarceration, and parental neglect as well as low parental supervision are all factors that can contribute to delinquent behavior in the child, the literature does not specify when these actions take place within the child's development as well as the cause of the incarceration. This is important because it could reflect one of the concepts of social learning and differential association theory, imitation, which would be displayed through the delinquency of the juvenile. Additionally, limitations to some of the studies - in particular the study done by McLoyd - shows that the data should be expanded to include African- American and Hispanic families due to the risk of economic distress levels being higher (McLoyd, 1989). In addition, research on peer socialization is frequently criticized for its inability to determine the temporal order of estimated effects. Peer effects are also found using different methods of obtaining information concerning peer behaviors, although direct measures often produce associations of lower magnitude.

While there are several limitations to the research, two are addressed in the current study. First much of the research in this area examines the effects of measures of parent and peer socialization on a general measure of delinquency. Having shown the importance for a general measure, it is important to see if the effects differ when specific measures of delinquent involvement are used. Second, much of the research examines either the influence of parents or peers. The effects of each relative to the other needs to be examined as well as their relationship.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research has found a strong connection between family, peers, and delinquency. In criminology, perhaps the best theory for understanding socialization and its role in delinquency is Akers' theory of Social Structure and Social Learning (SSSL). Social Learning Theory is a very well-known and frequently researched theory within the discipline of criminology. Social Learning Theory began in the work of Sutherland, with differential association. Sutherland's

Theory of Differential Association explained that crime results from the definitions one learns through interactions with close associates. Adding to Sutherland's work, American criminologist Ronald Akers developed Social Learning Theory around the theoretical concepts of differential association and the principles of behavioral science. Akers began work on this theory with Burgess (Simpson and Akers, 2000) and viewed their theory of differential association-reinforcement as an expansion of Sutherland's theory of Differential Association. This section reviews Sutherland's theory of differential association and Akers' SSSL with a focus on social learning (Simpson and Akers, 2000).

Differential Association Theory, as developed by Sutherland, is the proposal that through interaction with others, we learn values, attitudes, techniques, and motivations for criminal behavior. This theory includes nine propositions that summarize the principles of the theory. The first proposition is that all criminal behavior is learned. Second, Sutherland states that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with others via the process of communication. The argument then becomes that most learning about criminal behavior happens in intimate personal groups and relationships (Simpson and Akers, 2000). Differential association also focuses on what we learn where Sutherland argues that the process of learning criminal behavior can include learning techniques that display behaviors as well as motives and reasoning's that would justify criminal activity and the attitudes necessary to draw an individual to that activity (Simpson and Akers, 2000). The direction of motives and drives towards criminal behavior is learned by interpreting legal codes in a geographical area as favorable or unfavorable. Sutherland writes that when the number of favorable interpretations that support violating the law outweigh the unfavorable interpretations that don't, an individual will choose to become a criminal. Differential association also tells us that all differential associations are not equal and can vary in

frequency, intensity, priority, and duration. Sutherland then summarizes his theory by stating that the process of learning criminal behaviors through interactions with others relies on the same mechanisms that are used in learning about other behaviors. Finally, it is concluded that criminal behavior could be an expression of generalized needs and values, but do not explain the behavior because non- criminal behavior expresses the same needs and values (Simpson and Akers, 2000).

As an expansion of differential association, Akers' SSSL assumes that social learning is the primary process that connects social structure and individual behavior (Simpson and Akers, 2000). It believes that the same learning process, existing in the same class of social structure, interaction, and situation, produces both conforming and deviant behavior. Its main proposition is that variations in the social structure, culture, and locations of individuals and groups in the social system explain differences in crime rates, mainly through their influence on differences of individuals on the social learning major concepts which are differential association, differential reinforcement, imitation, and definitions approving and disapproving and other discriminative incentives for crime (Simpson and Akers, 2000). The social structure variables tell us the primary macro- level and meso- level factors that cause crime, while the social learning variables represent the primary proximate causes of criminal behavior by individuals that mediate the relationship between social structure and crime rates.

According to Akers, deviance-producing environments influence individual conduct through the process of learning mechanisms. The general philosophy and structure of society and the particular communities, groups, and other contexts of social interaction provide learning environments in which the norms define what is approved and disapproved, behavioral models are present, and the reactions of other people, and the existence of other encouragements attach different reinforcing or punishing consequences to an individual's behavior. According to



Akers, social structure can be understood as a positioning of sets and schedules of reinforcement contingencies and other social behavior variables. Aspects such as family, peers, schools, churches and other groups give us more immediate contexts that promote or discourage the criminal or conforming behavior of the individual. Differences in various societies or groups rates of criminal behavior are a purpose of the measure that cultural traditions, norms, social organizations, and social control systems provide socialization, learning environments, reinforcement, opportunities, and immediate situations conducive to conformity or deviance. Theories of criminal behavior are neither purely structural nor processual. Nevertheless, structural variables are clearly separable from social psychological variables, regardless of how they are folded into a theory. Akers argues that social learning theory is complementary to, not in competition with, any of the empirically valued structural theories. When social learning is used to specify the process by which some conceptually defined structural conditions, such as social disorganization, central to a particular theory, affects crime, then we have a clear-cut instance of cross-level theoretical integration (Simpson and Akers, 2000).

According to Akers, the social learning part of his theory is a theory that merges the concepts of differential association and definitions from Sutherland's theory, modified and clarified, with differential reinforcement and imitation to explain the acquisition, continuation, and cessation of behavior. The different concepts are differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation.

Differential association refers to the proposal that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives of criminal behavior. Definitions refers to one's personal meanings or attitudes that are attached to a given behavior (Simpson and Akers, 2000). It is what orients a person to rationalize or define an act as right or wrong, morally

speaking. Through differential reinforcement, they learn how to reap rewards and avoid punishment in reference to the actual or anticipated consequences of given behavior. The extent to which behaviors are imitated is determined in large part by the “characteristics of the models, the behavior observed, and the observed consequences of the behavior” (Simpson and Akers, 2000).

Akers argues that conforming and deviant behavior is learned by all the mechanisms in this process, but the theory proposes that the principal mechanisms are in that part of the process in which differential reinforcement and imitation produce both overt behavior and cognitive definitions that function as discriminative encouragements for the behavior. The likelihood that conforming or norm-violative behavior is learned and performed, and the frequency with which it is committed, are a function of the past, present and expected differential reinforcement for the behavior and the deviant or non-deviant direction of the learned definitions and other discriminative stimuli present in a given situation (Simpson and Akers, 2000). Social learning embraces variables that operate to both motivate and control delinquent and criminal behavior, to both promote and undermine conformity. It answers the questions of why people do and do not violate norms (Simpson and Akers, 2000). SSSL recognizes peer association as very important in adolescent delinquency. This same theory also hypothesizes that the family is a very important primary group in the differential association process as well as the education.

In this chapter, we saw research that finds that parental supervision and peer influence as well as other factors such as parental incarceration, socioeconomic status, and absence of parents, all have effects on juvenile delinquency. The next chapter will discuss the methodology to be used in this study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology that guided this study. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research design. Following, the data source itself will be discussed, and then the variables in the study. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the data analysis plan.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

This section presents the research questions for the current study which examines the impact of parental supervision and peer influence on juvenile delinquency:

1. What is the effect of socialization by parents and peers on the likelihood of involvement in juvenile delinquency?
2. Does socialization by parents impact the likelihood of juvenile delinquency because of its effect on the likelihood of having peers who are involved in juvenile delinquency?

The review of the research literature and the theoretical framework suggest three hypotheses to address these questions:

1. Parental supervision will significantly decrease substance abuse and gang membership.
2. Peer influence will significantly increase substance abuse and gang membership.

Drawing on Akers' Social Learning Theory an additional hypothesis is:

3. Parental supervision's effect on substance abuse and gang membership will be mediated by peer involvement in substance abuse and peer gang membership.

## DATA SOURCE

The data this study will be using is from a study which evaluates the effectiveness of the GREAT program by surveying students from eleven sites in a cross-sectional design (Part 1), law enforcement officers (Part 2), educators (Part 3), parents (Part 4), and students from six sites, who participated in four years of follow-up interviews (Part 5) (Esbensen 2015). Students in middle school were surveyed to examine GREAT's short- and long-term effects, and to assess the quality and effectiveness of officer training. Law enforcement officers were surveyed to determine whether their perceptions and expectations of the GREAT program varied depending on sex, race, rank, age, level of education, and length of time working in policing. Data was collected from middle school personnel (administrators, counselors, and teachers) to assess educators' attitudes and perceptions of the effectiveness of the GREAT program, including the curriculum's appropriateness for middle school students and its effectiveness in delinquency and gang prevention, both in the school and in the community (Esbensen 2015). Parents were surveyed to assess their attitudes toward crime and gangs in their community, school prevention programs, the role of the school in prevention programming, the role of police in the school, and their satisfaction with and perceptions of the effectiveness of the GREAT program. The middle school students participating in the longitudinal aspect of this study were surveyed to examine the change in attitudes and behavior toward gangs and gang-related activities over time (Esbensen, 2015).

## SAMPLE COLLECTION

In Part 1 of the study, cities were selected based on geographic location, population characteristics, and population size. Eleven cities meeting the selection criteria were chosen. The cities selected were Phoenix, Arizona, Torrance, California, Orlando, Florida, Pocatello, Idaho,

Will County, Illinois, Kansas City, Missouri, Omaha, Nebraska, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Providence, Rhode Island, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At the selected sites, schools that had administered the GREAT program during the 1993-1994 school year were chosen. In 1995, questionnaires were administered to all 8th-graders in attendance on the specified day at the selected schools from the 11 selected sites.

For this study, only data from part 1, cross-sectional student survey, of the study is utilized. The final sample comprised 5,935 8th-grade students from 315 classrooms in 42 schools (Esbensen, 2015). Less than 2% of cases were missing information for any of the variables used.

## DISCUSSION OF VARIABLES

### DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable (see Table 1) is juvenile delinquency. In this study, juvenile delinquency is operationalized in two ways. First is *gang membership* which indicates whether the juvenile was in a gang at the time of the study. For this measure, 1 indicates the respondent was not in a gang at the time, 2 indicates they were in a gang. Second is *substance abuse*. To measure substance abuse, students were asked how often they use illegal drugs. This is a frequency measure with 0 being none, 10 being more than 10 times, and everything in between indicating a continuous count.

Table 1: Operationalization and Coding for Dependent Variable

Dependent Variable	Operationalization	Coding
Juvenile Delinquency	Substance Abuse (how often used)  In a gang now	0-10  1- No 2- Yes

### INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The independent variables (see Table 2) in this study capture three important elements of socialization by parents and peers. First socialization by parents is operationalized by a measure of parental knowledge and supervision, *parental supervision*. Students were asked their level of agreement with the statement “Parents know where I am”. The second measure is a measure of peer delinquency where students were asked if their peers were in a gang, *close friends in a gang*. This was also a frequency measure with 1 being no peers being in a gang, 10 being all of friends in a gang, and each number in between representing the number of peers in the gang. Finally, a second measure of peer delinquency, *friends use illegal drugs*, asked students if their friends used illegal drugs.

Table 2: Operationalization and Coding for Independent Variable

Independent Variable (Socialization)	Operationalization	Coding
Parental Supervision	Parents know where I am	1- strongly disagree 2- disagree 3- neither agree nor disagree 4- agree 5- strongly agree
Peer influence	Close friends in gang  Friends use illegal drugs	1-10  1- None 2- Few 3- Half 4- Most 5- All 9- no answer

### CONTROL VARIABLES

*Race, age and sex* are common control variables in research examining juvenile delinquency. Within this study, all three will be used (see Table 3, below). *Race* was measured by white being 0, and non-white being 1. *Sex* is operationalized as male (1) and female (0). *Age* is a truncated frequency measure where 11 and 18 are the lower and upper bounds. Ages 12-17 are listed separately.

These control variables are used because the research literature indicates that various forms of delinquency are related to a juvenile's race, age and sex. Race, age and sex are all strong correlates of delinquency behavior. Non-whites are at a higher risk for delinquency; older

juveniles are at higher risk as well; and males are much more likely to be involved than females. In addition, research suggests that race, age and sex are related to the key independent variables. For example, females are more closely supervised than males. Using these control variables will give the study great insight into these relationships as it explores what role race, age, and sex play in levels of gang membership, substance abuse, parental supervision and peer influence.

Table 3: Operationalization and Coding for Control Variable

Race	0- White 1- Non- white
Sex	0- Female 1- Male
Age	11 or younger 18 or older

#### ANALYTIC STRATEGY

The first step in the analysis was to construct the measures of the dependent, independent, and control variables. This required an examination of the coding of each variable and an examination of the frequencies to see the variation in the measures. In addition, a correlation matrix was created and examined to ensure that the measures are not too highly correlated. The next step in the analysis is to test the hypotheses. For the dependent variable, *substance abuse*, multiple regression is used. A multiple regression is an extension of simple linear



regression. It is used when we want to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables and the dependent variable is a frequency. Stepwise regression test was used to examine the effect of each independent variable. Stepwise regression is the step-by-step iterative construction of a regression model that involves the selection of independent variables to be used in a final model. It involves adding or removing potential explanatory variables in succession and testing for statistical significance after each iteration (Hayes, 2021).

For the dependent variable, *gang membership*, which is a dichotomous variable, logit regression is use. Logit regression is used for an analysis when a dependent variable is dichotomous (binary). With the dependent variable, *gang membership*, stepwise regression is also used to examine the effect of each independent variable.

As a standard for a specific prediction, the p- value for this study will remain at .05.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Within this chapter, results for the analysis are reported. The chapter starts with the correlation matrix, and then turns to a discussion of both the multiple and logit regression analyses. Readers will see the significance parental supervision and peer influence have on juvenile delinquency both together and independently.

#### CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS

To begin, a correlation table was created to examine the relationships between all the variables. The correlation table (Table 4, shown below) shows us that all the variables are correlated as expected. Importantly, the independent variables, *parental supervision*, *peer substance abuse* and *close friends in gang* are all significantly related to the dependent variables. For example, with the dependent variable, *substance abuse*, greater supervision by parents decreased the likelihood of substance abuse. In addition, *friends using illegal drugs* was positively and significantly correlated with *substance abuse*. *Sex*, *race* and *age* are all significantly correlated with substance abuse. *Race* is negatively correlated indicating that whites are less likely to be involved in substance abuse. For the dependent variable, *gang membership*, *parental supervision* is significantly and negatively related. This indicates that the greater the supervision, the less likely the respondent was to be in a gang. *Close friends in gang*, it is also significantly and positively related to *gang membership*. Thus, the greater the involvement of friends in gangs, the greater the likelihood of involvement in gangs. *Race*, *sex* and *age* are all significantly correlated to membership in a gang as well. Here though *race* is negatively

correlated. It is also notable that *parental supervision* is significantly related to *race*, *age*, and *sex*, with nonwhites, older youths, and males getting less supervision.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for Dependent, Independent and Control Variable

	PARENTAL SUPER, SUPERVISION	FRIENDS USE ILLEGAL DRUGS	CLOSE FRIEND IN GANG	SUBST. ABUSE	IN A GANG NOW	SEX	RACE	AGE
PARENTAL SUPERVISION	1.00							
FRIENDS USE ILLEGAL DRUGS	-.207**	1.00						
CLOSE FRIENDS IN GANG	-.187**	.266**	1.00					
SUBSTANCE ABUSE	-.154**	.432**	.137**	1.00				
IN A GANG NOW	-.187**	.251**	.377**	.251**	1.00			
SEX	-.157**	-.006	.105**	.029*	.098**	1.00		
RACE	-.099**	.001	.153**	-.043**	.106**	-.021	1.00	
AGE	-.118**	.071**	.144**	.051**	.154**	.110**	.088**	1.00

## REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The next step in the analysis uses multiple regression to examine the effect of the independent variables on *substance abuse*. In the first regression model, shown in Table 5, model 1, the independent variable *parental supervision* and the control variables of *race*, *sex* and *age* were included. In model 1, *parental supervision* has a significant negative effect on *substance abuse* indicating that the greater the level of *parental supervision*, the less the likelihood of *substance abuse*. In addition, two control variables, *age* and *race*, are also significant. The greater the youth's age the more likely *substance abuse*. Non-whites are significantly more likely to be involved in *substance abuse* than whites. Finally, the R-Square shows the amount of variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables included in the model. In model 1 the independent and control variables explain 2.9% of the variance in *substance abuse*.

Table 5: Linear Regression – Substance Abuse

<b>Linear Regressions</b>	Model 1	Model 2
Supervision	-0.20(0.17)*	-0.11(.016)*
Friends Use Illegal Drugs		0.73(.022)*
Age	0.09(.030)*	0.05(.028)
Sex	-0.01(.038)	0.05(.036)
Race	-0.17(.039)*	-0.17(.036)*
R Square	.029	.196

Table 5, model 2, the independent variable, *friends use illegal drugs* was added to the model. The findings show that *friends use of illegal drugs* has a significant positive effect on *substance abuse* of the youth. The more friends who use illegal drugs, the more likely the youth was to abuse drugs as well. In addition, it is notable that *parental supervision* is still significant.

The greater the level of supervision, the greater the involvement in *substance abuse*. Now only one of the control variables is significant. Non-whites are more likely to abuse drugs. For model 2, with the addition of *friends use illegal drugs*, the independent and control variables now explain 19.6% of the variation in the variable *substance abuse*.

Next a Logistic regression was used to examine the effects of the independent variables on the dichotomous dependent variable – *gang membership* (See Table 6). Similar to the linear regression, the analysis starts with an exploration of *parental supervision* with demographic variables against the *gang membership* variable.

Table 6: LOGIT Regression – Gang Membership

<i>LOGIT Regression</i>	Model 1		Model 2	
	<b>B (SE)</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>	<b>B (SE)</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
Supervision	-.426(0.41)*	0.653	-.335(0.44)*	.715
Close Friends in Gang			244(0.12)*	1.276
Age	.592(0.072)*	1.815	.469(.077)*	1.598
Sex	.478(0.101)*	1.613	.327(.108)*	1.387
Race	.672(0.111)*	1.959	.452(.118)*	1.572
R Square		.056	.125	

In Table 6, model 1, the findings indicate that juveniles with *parental supervision* significantly decreases the likelihood of being in a gang when controlling for *Race*, *Sex*, and *Age*. In addition, males have a significantly increased likelihood of being in a gang over females, as do non-whites. Additionally, older juveniles have a significantly higher likelihood of being in a

gang. In model 1, the independent and control variables explain 5.6% of the variance in gang membership.

When adding the variable of *close friends in gang* (model 2), the analysis shows that juveniles with friends in gangs had a higher risk of being a part of a gang themselves. Importantly, *parental supervision* remains significant. Additionally, older juvenile males, and non-whites have an increased likelihood of being in a gang when having close friends who were in a gang. In model 2, the independent and control variables explain 12.5% of the variance for gang membership.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION/FINDINGS

With this study, the goal was to examine whether parental supervision and peer influence had an impact on juvenile delinquency, specifically substance abuse and gang membership. In addition, the study also examined whether the effect of parental supervision was modified through peer involvement in delinquency. Drawing from the research literature and Akers' Social Learning Theory, the hypotheses for this study were that parental supervision would significantly decrease substance abuse and gang membership, peer influence, specifically peer involvement in gangs and substance abuse, would significantly increase substance abuse and gang membership, and parental supervision's effect on substance abuse and gang membership would be mediated by peer influence. As we see from the results, these are largely supported.

The findings for both gang membership and substance abuse indicate that parental supervision and peer influence have significant effects on juveniles engaging in substance abuse and gangs, supporting the first hypothesis and answering the first research question. When there was higher parental supervision, there were lower levels of delinquency involvement for the juvenile. Regarding the second research question, the findings indicate that the socialization by the parents, parental supervision, significantly and positively affects the likelihood of the juvenile having delinquency involvement when considering peer influence. The findings also indicate that the influence of parental supervision is significant also in support of the first hypothesis. High levels of parental supervision decrease substance abuse and gang membership. Additionally, the higher the level of peer involvement, the higher the likelihood of involvement in substance abuse and gangs, confirming the second hypothesis. These findings are consistent



with the literature reviewed in chapter two. For example, similar to findings here, are those by researchers such as Chung and Steinberg (2006). They found that parents who show a combination of strong supervision and positive involvement help protect their children against delinquent outcomes like violent offending. This confirms parental supervision's influence on substance abuse and gang membership. Also, the study supports that by Thornberry (1987) which looked at the influence of parental attachment in comparison to peer influence. The findings told us that parental attachment was found as a cause for delinquency in early adolescence, but peers were more important during middle and later adolescence. This finding it shows that peers are an important influence in juvenile's and the decisions they make during this period in development. Additionally, Chung and Steinberg (2006) found that neighborhood structural and social characteristics were linked to processes in the peer group. The results show that weak neighborhood social organization is indirectly related to delinquency through its associations with parenting behavior and peer deviance and that a focus on just one of these microsystems can lead to oversimplified models of risk for juvenile offending (Chung and Steinberg, 2006).

The third hypothesis, however, which predicted that the effect of parental supervision was mediated through peer involvement is not supported by the findings. For both gang involvement and substance abuse, the effect of parental supervision remained significant even when peer involvement was included in the analysis. Based on Social Learning Theory, the expectation for this hypothesis was that parental supervision would not remain significant once the variable of peer influence was added. This is because parental influence would come before peer influence for a youth, perhaps shaping the friends the juvenile has. Since parental supervision did in fact remain significant, it shows us that even though peers can be a major

influence on our behaviors and the decisions we make, when there is substantial parental supervision, it makes a significant impact on our decisions and behaviors. These results show us the significance in parents being involved with their child and supervising them properly. Knowing where your child is and whom they are with can have major influence in whether they are involved in the delinquent activities their friends may be involved in.

It is also important to discuss other unexpected findings though they were not the focus of the study. A good example of this is the findings that age and sex were not significantly related to substance abuse, when parental supervision and friends use of illegal drugs was in the model. This was interesting, considering before friends use of illegal drugs was added, where parental supervision was high, race and age were significant. This may have been because there is no major difference in substance abuse amongst males and females when parents are supervising and friends are using illegal drugs as well.

This research does support research found within the literature. Peer influence and parental supervision both have an impact on juvenile delinquency. In comparison, the results from this study show parental supervision during this time in development is just as important and can prevent the juvenile from being influenced from their peers as much as they would without that parental guidance. Overall, this study shows us that the impact of parental supervision and peer influence are significant when examining juvenile delinquency. These findings are important when considering influences of juvenile delinquency because it shows the significance of parental influence and peer impact both separately and combined. When juveniles are not supervised by their parents, there is no reinforcement for why delinquency is not acceptable. Low levels of supervision combined with high levels of peer influence open doors for juveniles following peers whether that is negative or positive and can lead to delinquency

especially when those peers are involved in those delinquency factors. When a parent is more involved with their child and shows high levels for supervision, it lowers the risk of them being influenced by their peers.

#### RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Despite findings that are in line with much of the existing research, there were several limitations in this study. While exploring the codebook, it became clear that some questions were vaguely worded, which made it difficult to decide which variables would be best to use in the analysis. It is also important to note, this study had limited measures of socialization. For parental supervision, the only measures in this data was the student's perception of supervision. In addition, both of the measures of peer involvement in delinquency were the perceptions of the student. Besides measures of parental supervision and peer involvement, the research literature suggests that other measures would have been important. For example, influences such as siblings, parental crime involvement, and parental stress may well play an important role. Additionally, education can play a major role in delinquency being that juveniles spend substantial amounts of time in school being influenced by other adults and peers. Measures of those influences, as well as the assessment of resources the school may have, and delinquency levels in the school, are important as well but were missing from this study.

#### PRIMARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

This study adds to current literature by examining both the effects of parental supervision and peer influence instead of one or the other. By looking at both aspects of socialization, we can see that parental supervision does influence whether the juvenile is involved in delinquency, peer influence has an effect as well, neither has more than the other, and together they have a significant influence. Additionally, this study adds to current literature by showing the

importance of parental supervision and the influence it can have on a juvenile's decisions, even when peers are involved. For future research, I recommend more studies like this looking at both parental and peer socialization, and how dependent they may be on one another. Looking at multiple factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency is important to get a true scope of the cause and to develop policy and solutions. Finally, though the existing literature as well as the results from this study do not indicate that the factors that predict delinquency vary across types of delinquent behaviors, there is a need to continue studying measures of specific delinquency for difference in the type of influence. Though some findings may be the same for different forms of delinquency, it is important to consider the influence of a variety of factors when looking at the measure in order to understand how to address the issue specifically.

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS FROM THIS STUDY

This section will discuss policy implications for future research and practice based on prior literature and this study. This study is important not only for its contribution to the research literature, but also for the implications of the findings for policy. After conducting this study, several suggestions for programs and resources can be made based on the findings. The findings that parental supervision is important has several implications. The implementation of more after school programs and activities should be created. It seems that our society has pushed back on the creation of particular programs which supervise and monitor adolescents once being released from school until their parents return from work. These programs are essential in ensuring adolescents are not left unsupervised. As discussed earlier, when left unsupervised and given too much free time, opportunity is made for adolescents to look for guidance and supervision elsewhere.

In addition, to what these programs can do, it is highly suggested that parents take more time with their children. Getting to know the child, their interest, any new things they may be learning, as well as who they may be associating themselves with are important to know as a parent. These factors will allow the parent to become more aware of their child's whereabouts and who their peers are to know what type of things their child may be involved in when they are not in their care.

Greater supervision by adults can have an important effect on delinquency in a variety of ways, one important way being its influence on the friends a child has. The findings that peer involvement in crime is very important in predicting a youth's involvement in delinquency itself has policy implications. Programs where youth can gain information on gangs and substance abuse would be beneficial. The lack of knowledge one has on something can increase their urge to want to explore it. If an individual is not taught about the consequences of gang activity and substance abuse from parents, they will learn about it from their peers who may be involved with them. The literature tells us that popular youth were found to be impacted by their peer group in ways of both support and or approval (Andrews, Hanish, and Santos, 2017). Juvenile's wanting to fit into their peer group and not having positive influences, can also affect having delinquent friends and being influenced to follow them.

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