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A Qualitative Examination of Single-Parent Matriarchal Homes' Influence on Gang Membership

Darryl Edwards
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Darryl Edwards

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

A Qualitative Examination of Single-Parent Matriarchal Homes' Influence on Gang

Membership

by

Darryl Edwards

MPHIL, Walden University, 2020

MA, Calumet College of St. Joseph, 2013

BS, Northeast Missouri State University, 1986

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

PPPA- Specialization in Terrorism Mediation and Peace

Walden University

August 2022

Abstract

There is a problem in the city of Chicago. Gangs are responsible for a substantial percentage of violent crimes in most jurisdictions. This study examined how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households influenced African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago. This study's theoretical foundations were matriarchal theory and critical race theory. This qualitative study's research design is heuristic phenomenology design. An in-depth interview method was employed using purposeful and snowball sampling of 20 participants; in-depth interviews were conducted using telephone technology. This study, which investigated the connection between being raised in a single-parent matriarchal household and the likelihood of joining a gang, was accomplished by analyzing data from the study's participants using the inductive coding method and sentiment grading. The conclusion and recommendations were that all participants indicated that the single-parent matriarchal influence played a significant role in their decision-making. However, the data also revealed that several other variables including marginalization, family structure, economics, male role models, and outside relationships played a significant role in the decision-making process as well. Thus, a more diverse and expansive study of the multitude of identified issues must be conducted to assess the multiple influences comprehensively and accurately on this phenomenon. Positive social change can be influenced by identifying potential intervention points that could change individuals' behavior regarding joining these organizations.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends, who have inspired and motivated me to endure and complete this monumental endeavor. Guys, without the grace of God and your loving support, “WE” could not have dreamed of this day.

THANK YOU!

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my instructors and cohorts for their support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my committee members, Chair Dr. Olivia Yu, Dr. Charlette Baringer-Brown, and Dr. Lori Demeter.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The problem of gangs and their negative effect on society and individual communities is so prolific that there is a concerted effort to classify certain gang offenses as acts of terrorism (Harnsgate, 2016). Some research argues that a potential contributing factor to this problem could be single-parent matriarchal homes. Barrett and Turner (2005) suggested a correlation between growing up in single-mother households and youth maladjustment. A study investigating the connection between being raised in a single-parent matriarchal home and the likelihood of joining a gang could provide information critical to solving this undesirable international phenomenon and significantly affect positive social change by addressing it.

This chapter focuses on several critical components examined to conduct and document a scientifically approved and socially significant research study project. These components consist of background, problem statement, purpose of study, research question, theoretical framework, nature of the study, limitations, and significance.

Background of the Study

Societies internationally are affected by gangs. The entity of gangs has existed for centuries. As early as 1873, Pike speculated that bands of highway robbers in England might have existed before the 12th and 14th centuries (Howell & Moore, 2010). Howell and Moore (2010) asserted that street gangs' emergence began on the East Coast in the United States around 1783 as the American Revolution ended. The best available evidence suggests that the more ruthless street gangs did not emerge until the early part

of the 19th century (Sante, 1991). In the United States, this issue has become so profound that there are legislative efforts nationwide to classify gangs' offenses as a form of terrorism (Harnsgate, 2016). Numerous variables, such as economics, education, employment, and family structure, appeared in several studies as influencing factors in joining and participating in gangs (Kittle, 2017).

To that extent, focusing on one of the family's status variables, such as matriarchal influence, addressed this topic's literature gap. The literature reviewed revealed multiple issues that constitute the influencing factors of the single-parent matriarchal household. The elements are dissected into several pertinent focus points to analyze the single-parent matriarchal influence effectively. The first point of focus of the single-parent matriarchal power is realizing how the single mother influences the family's economy thus affecting Black men. The single-parent matriarchal influence is as complex as the phenomenon of gangs itself. Studies have indicated that single mothers are much more likely to provide for the family than single fathers or families with dual incomes. Lu et al. (2019) asserted that the weighted population's demographic characteristics showed that taxable income, total income, and poverty status were higher for single fathers than single mothers, while non-work income was higher for single mothers than single fathers.

Some research argues that a potential contributing factor to this problem manifested through single-parent matriarchal homes is the metacommunication patterns developed between the single mother and her son. Henderson (2016) asserted that meta communication was the dominant form of communication in the African American

family construct and directly affected the parenting style. African American mothers adapted an authoritative or helicopter parenting style to control and protect their sons from racism, becoming victims of crime and violence, and being arrested or incarcerated (Henderson, 2016). Analyzing and focusing on how the single-parent matriarchal home affects African American men between 18 and 25 on the city of Chicago's Westside is a significant starting point of focus. One could date the scholarly examination of matriarchal influence on African American men as far back as 1965. The first time anyone brought this issue to national attention was a sociologist and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1965). He conducted a study and authored a report titled *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. In this report, Senator Moynihan assessed that the relative absence of nuclear families (e.g., families having both a mother and father present) in Black America would greatly hinder further Black socio-economic progress. This position stood as one of the central assertions upon which public policy concerning the subject of African Americans and the African American family was built and continued to influence long after its documented failure.

Several scholars and researchers have written dissents to the Moynihan (1965) report. One of these dissenting reports written by Klug (2016) who asserted that *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* had a concise life as policy. However, it was hailed within the Johnson Administration before it became public in July 1965. Criticism from civil rights leaders led the president to disown the report within months of its release. Klug stated that the Watts Rebellion in August forever altered the report's context, as liberals and conservatives grasped at possible explanations for the newly

visible militancy in urban Black communities. Despite its early death as policy, the Moynihan report had a long afterlife as a controversy. Moynihan's description of the Black family as a "tangle of pathology" derived from his loosely defined, poorly supported claim that the "matriarchy" in Black households—the rise in Black single mothers— generated a cycle of poverty independent of the effects of White racism and economic deprivation (Klug, 2016).

A second and different opinion of Moynihan's (1965) report was McLanahan and Jencks (2015), *Was Moynihan Right?* The authors argued that even though Moynihan's information was correct in stating that growing up without biological parents is associated with worse than average outcomes for children than growing up with them, specifically, children growing up with a single-parent are exposed to more family instability and complexity. They have more behavior problems, and they are less likely to finish high school or attend college than children raised by both parents. These authors asserted that researchers had begun to use "quasi-experimental" approaches to estimate the causal impact of growing up apart from one's biological father in recent years. There is no substantial evidence that single motherhood has different effects on Black children than on White children or that the products are the same. A few studies find weaker results for Black people, and other studies find no significant racial difference (McLanahan & Jencks, 2015).

These two quite different assertions about single mother-headed Black families continue to muster support on both sides of their polarizing arguments, thus giving credence and credibility to the need for further research on this topic. Many previous

studies focus on the disagreement between the two positions as the foundation of this research project.

Researchers have identified variables such as economics, education, employment, and family structure as influencing factors on subjects joining and participating in gangs (Kittle, 2017). Focusing on how the single-parent matriarchal homes affect African American men between the ages of 18 and 25 on the city's Westside is an important starting point.

Statement of the Problem

There is a problem in the city of Chicago. Gangs are responsible for an average of 48% of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90% in several others, according to National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) analysis (U.S. Department of Justice [FBI], 2016), the most current study on this issue by the FBI available. In May 2017, Chicago Police Superintendent Johnson discussed the evolution of gang activity and gang violence in detail. U.S. Department of Justice (FBI) (2017) produced a gang violence video in which Johnson asserted that much of our gun violence is precipitated by individuals using social media (U.S. Department of Justice [FBI], 2017). Despite legislation and law enforcement efforts, Chicago registers many more murders than other cities of comparable size, such as Los Angeles, California, Houston, Texas, and even more than New York, which has a population three times Chicago's size (Papachristos & Kirk, 2015). The city of Chicago proved to be exceptionally violent in January 2016 when there were 292 shooting victims – 51 of which resulted in murder (D'Onofrio & Schulte, 2016).

In contrast to January 2015 produced 136 people shot, of which 29 resulted in murder, that increase was more than double the number of people shot and a 75% increase in the number of people murdered (D'Onofrio & Schulte, 2016). According to the Chicago Police Superintendent Escalante, most of these homicides are gang- and narcotics-related (D'Onofrio & Schulte, 2016). Given that gangs have been identified as one of the main thoroughfares responsible for the uptick in violence in Chicago, a deep dive into gangs' rudimentary causes is a necessary starting point for this study. Barrett and Turner (2005) suggested a correlation between growing up in single-mother households and youth maladjustment. According to Madyun and Lee (2010), with the high number of female-headed families, Black male adolescents might have fewer chances to learn from adult role models how to navigate and use the opportunities and structures necessary to become men consistent with the content of their character.

The problem of gangs and gang activities has negatively impacted Chicago and communities' citizens like it has nationwide. One negative impact that gangs and gang activities has had on Chicago is the migration of more economically advantaged citizens. According to Banerjee et al. (2015), high-income households' migration decisions (and those with children) are more responsive to crime changes than other issues. A second effect identified was that crime-related mobility imposes costs on those who choose to remain in the city through declining property values and a shrinking tax base (Banerjee et al., 2015). Very few gaps in the research literature on gangs and their origins have been the subject of previously studied over the past few centuries. Starting with its rudimentary formation to its societal impact, many aspects of this phenomenon have been examined,

analyzed, and acted upon by scholars, governments, academics, sociologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists over time, as mentioned above. Moreover, very few studies have concentrated on the possible effects of being raised in a single-parent matriarchal household on the individuals that constitute gangs' fundamental foundation: its members.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study aimed to increase understanding of how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago.

African American men represent a disproportionate number of members of Chicago street gangs. According to NGIC (2011), African Americans represented more than 39% of gang membership. African American men represented more than 92% of that total, while African American women constituted 8% of total Black gang membership in Chicago.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (2015), the death rates from homicides for African American men 18 to 25 were between 65 to 75 deaths per 100,000 residents in Chicago. According to Chicago Police Superintendent Escalante, most of these homicides are gang- and narcotics-related (D'Onofrio & Schulte, 2016).

One of the influencing factors identified in the literature review was the possible effects of single-parent matriarchal influences on Black men and their propensity to join and participate in gangs.

This study contributes to the literature because very few research studies have been conducted on this influencing factor using critical race theory (CRT) (2013) and matriarchal theory (1995) as theoretical lenses. The development of this rich and insightful research study provided a unique perspective and yields critical knowledge to address the gang phenomenon. Examining this subject using these theories provides a deep and rich introspective examination of the plethora of unique and socially significant issues that comprise the matriarchal influence on African American men between 18 and 25 and their decisions to join gangs in Chicago. Furthermore, this research allows practical application by identifying a potential focus and intervention point that could ultimately change an individual's behavior when joining gangs. Identification of early intervention possibilities at the rudimentary level is potentially a potent tool that can focus intervention programs, educational research, and funding to reduce and eventually eliminate this negative international entity known as gangs. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening understanding may pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017).

Research Question

How and to what extent could single-parent matriarchal households influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago?

Theoretical Framework

When conducting any study as a researcher, preconceived morals, beliefs, reality, values, goals, and individual experiences will profoundly affect the research project. According to Yin (2016), qualitative research allows me to conduct in-depth studies

about several topics, including their favorites, in plain and simple terms. Maxwell (2012) asserted that a conceptual framework helps make a case for the research problem using a combination of theories, concepts, and assumptions that explain the reasoning behind the phenomenon under study. Maxwell also asserted that usually depicted in a graphical or a narrative form, a conceptual framework is built from components made from past research, personal experience, and thought experiments.

The problem of gang membership, a major driving force and the cause of violence in Chicago, was examined in this study. This qualitative study aimed to investigate to what extent a single-parent matriarchal home could influence African American men between the ages of 18 and 25 to join a gang on the Westside of Chicago. In a similar study conducted by Barrett and Turner (2005), matriarchal-headed households examined suggested in their findings a correlation between growing up in single-mother-headed families and youth maladjustment.

CRT (2013) and matriarchal theory (1995) were the chosen theories for this study. Examining this subject using these theories provided a deep and rich introspective examination of the plethora of unique and socially significant issues that comprise the matriarchal influence on Black men between the ages of 18 and 25 and their decision to join gangs in the city of Chicago.

Matriarchal theory (1995) is grounded in the idea that many societies were initially influenced and sustained by the matriarchal system. Matriarchal theory asserts that many of these societies experienced a change to the patriarchal system through societal and political manipulation to eliminate female dominance.

CRT (2013) examines and focuses intensely on the social and political causes and issues that contribute to the African American experience in the United States of America. CRT asserts that the African American community should not be judged or evaluated by a non-inclusive (White) society that never provides equity or equality for minorities. Using these two diverse and introspective theories as the lenses for examination in this study identified and illuminated issues that could explain and educate the numerous resolution possibilities to this complex and critical phenomenon.

These two theories accomplish this much-needed examination by focusing on critical issues, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2013), in-depth critiques of liberalism; revisionist interpretations of history; crime; the intersection of race, sex, and class; the Black-White binary; intergroup relations; legal institutions, critical pedagogy, and minorities in the law; gay and lesbian issues; cultural nationalism and separatism; criticism and self-awareness; and critical White studies, among others. CRT (2013) is an appropriate theoretical lens for this study. It examines geopolitical factors such as White racism as a hegemonic, socially, and historically constructed cultural force in American society.

According to matriarchal theory (1995), researchers traced the matriarchal situations permeating the African American community as far back as slavery. One of the components of slavery was to separate the Black man from the nuclear family, forcing many of these families into an involuntary matriarchal family system. When examining if and to what extent single-parent matriarchal homes influence African American men between the ages of 18 and 25 on joining gangs, one must begin with the rudimentary

causes of single-parent matriarchal families to examine if they genuinely harm the children raised in that environment. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2013), one of the prevalent causes of modern African American single-parent matriarchal homes is race and racism.

CRT (2013) arose when individual legal scholars, most notably the late Derrick Bell (an African American) and Alan Freeman (a White American) expressed frustration with the glacial pace of racial reform in the mid-1970s. Delgado and Stefancic (2013) asserted that CRT is a theoretical and interpretive mode that examines race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression. Further, Delgado and Stefancic stated that by adopting this approach, CRT scholars attempt to understand how victims of systemic racism are affected by cultural perceptions of race and how they can represent themselves to counter prejudice. According to Delgado and Stefancic, CRT points to oppression's multidimensionality and recognizes that race alone cannot account for disempowerment. One of CRT's fundamental principles asks whether meritocracy is fallacious. Whether discrimination is intentional or unintentional is immaterial in a society in which wealth, education, and power are distributed and affirmed by the workings of a hierarchy of White over Black. The significance of the matriarchal household's appropriateness or effectiveness is squarely grounded in the premise of a functional family based on a White majority viewpoint in American society. CRT requires consideration that the perspective of a family's composition by the majority not necessarily be the measuring stick nor the standard by which society measures African American families.

Matriarchal theory (1995) provides a unique perspective regarding the historical prevalence of matriarchal influence on family and society. Matriarchal theory examines the historical perspective that the female impact has had on family and community. This viewpoint and the theoretical lens were critical for this study mainly because matriarchal theory has many components. This theory's components assert that the matriarchal system was before the patriarchal system and tribalism with no permanent marriage institution. When a woman had more than one husband, because of the uncertainty of male parentage, proponents assert that kinship reckons through a woman from mother to daughter. Thus, the assumption that matriarchal upbringing is the primary negative influencing factor that affects the phenomenon of gangs and gang membership has little to no historical support. Examining single-parent matriarchal homes' influence on Black men's propensity to join gangs using the two lenses of CRT (2013) and matriarchal theory provides a unique opportunity to gather a fresh perspective. A unique and multifaceted perspective based on a focused examination of many social issues that collectively create the matriarchal households provided much-needed insightful information that could provide a more comprehensive and empirically sustainable explanation.

Further, examining the phenomenon of gangs through the lens of matriarchal theory (1995) provided much-needed insight into this phenomenon. Also, the matriarchal theory argues that historically societies benefited from matriarchal influence and asserts the rejection of the proposition that the patriarchal family was the earliest form of civilization. This position is an essential perspective of society and social development

because it supports the idea that matriarchal influence historically has not been negative. The matriarchal system is one of the earliest positive effects on modern society. Understanding that matriarchal theory has been affected by the same geopolitical factors as CRT (2013) is a poignant point that aligns with the research question.

Gangs, the violence they perpetrate, and the factors that influence Black men between 18 and 25 to join gangs were the primary focus of this study. The contributing aspect of matriarchal parenting and its effect on Black men between 18 and 25 on joining gangs was the primary issue examined through this multifaceted theoretical study. This theoretical framework aligns with the research question and defines the research design and method.

Nature of Study

The nature of this study was qualitative and phenomenological. The phenomenological study design is ideal for exploring individual perceptions of a phenomenon based on their lived experiences and the context in which they occur (Patton 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This method and system examined the subjects' lived experiences and how these lived experiences may have influenced the individuals' decision to join gangs. In their findings, Bergen-Cico et al. (2013) asserted that developing a new framework to address criminal activity and gang membership was needed, especially in deprived neighborhoods. Special attention that was paid to the participants' narratives consistently revealed an attraction to the adrenaline-fueled excitement of street life and criminal activity.

Method

The qualitative research method was the chosen method for this study. Qualitative research focuses on the data obtained from firsthand observation, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, participant-observation, recordings made in natural settings, documents, and artifacts (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The in-depth interview method gave the most significant opportunity to glean the most authentic and interpersonal information and data from the study participants. A survey with 10 open-ended interview questions was developed with subject matter expert (SME) input to ensure subject matter accuracy and ethical standards were met and followed. Open-ended questions also enabled both the participants and I to have flexibility in altering any aspect of the interview questions and to seek clarifications that enhanced the interview and research (Yin, 2016).

Design

The heuristic phenomenological research design, meaning “to discover or find” (Rudestam & Newton, 2015), was chosen for this study. This process focused on and gleaned information from the study participants to reveal actual influences on this study question. One of the most critical questions that this phenomenology addressed is the meaning, structure, and essence of this phenomenon’s actual experience for this person or group of people (Patton, 2014). This study’s heuristic phenomenological inquiry method and framework originated in Germany and was conceptualized by Edmund Husserl (1997) and Martin Heidegger (1927). Husserl and Heidegger asserted that reality consists of objects and events (“phenomena”) as they are perceived or understood in the human

consciousness and not of anything independent of human consciousness (Patton, 2014).

This study examined the perceptions, values, and lived experiences of growing up in a single-parent matriarchal home.

Approach

The approach of this study was phenomenology, field study based. According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), field research can be considered either a broad approach to qualitative research or a method of getting qualitative data. The in-depth interview process employed for this study incorporated the essence of the field interview observation phenomenon. It allowed me to observe the participants during the interview process, which added to the richness of the information gleaned.

Population

The study population is Black men between 18 and 25 who are active in a re-acclimation program sponsored by the community-based stakeholder specializing in rehabilitative programming for current and ex-gang members. Subjects' selection was contingent upon availability from the community-based organization that has agreed to partner in this endeavor. This population was the targeted population for this study because it encompassed individuals who met all the needed attributes of gang membership experience and had achieved the legal age of at least 18, which allowed them to participate as an adult.

Sample

Sampling consisted of a minimum of 20, a maximum of 25 subjects chosen using purposeful and snowball sampling to procure the best set of appropriate participants.

Saturation helped determine the maximum number of participants needed.

The data collection instrument source was researcher-produced interview questions. The SME actively helped develop the interview questions that constituted the interview content. Interviews were held virtually by internet phone calls and lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes each. The interviews were transcribed and coded using the inductive coding method. Vogt et al. (2014) asserted that the inductive coding method is used when I know little about the research subject and conduct heuristic or exploratory research. A code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or “translates” data (Vogt et al., 2014). Thus, attributes interpreted meaning to each datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory building, and other analytic processes. The information was then coded, organized, managed, analyzed, and evaluated using NVivo data analysis software. NVivo is a software program designed for diagnosing unstructured text, audio, and video interviews.

Definitions of Terms

Gangs: The U.S. Department of Justice (2015) defines *gangs* as: (1) an association of three or more individuals; (2) whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity which they used to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical markings; style or color of

clothing, hairstyle, hand signs or graffiti; (3) the association's purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity and the association uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives; (4) its members engage in illegal activity or acts of juvenile delinquency that if committed by an adult would be crimes; (5) with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation or economic resources; (6) the association may also possess some of the following characteristics (a) the members employ rules for joining and operating within the association; (b) the members meet on a recurring basis; (c) the association provides physical protection of its members from the other criminals and gangs; (d) the association seeks to exercise control over a particular location or region, or it may only defend its perceived interests against rivals; or (e) the association has an identifiable structure. This definition should not include traditional organized crime groups. One such group, La Cosa Nostra, falls within the Department's definition of international organized crime, drug trafficking organizations, or terrorist organizations (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015, p.16).

Heuristic Phenomenology: To discover or to find; bringing to fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Matriarchy: By standard definition, a matriarchy is a family, group, or state governed by a matriarch (a woman who is head of a family or tribe). Anthropologists and feminists have since created more specific classifications for female societies, including the matrilineal system (Garrison, 2017).

Matrilineality: Refers to tracing one's lineage through maternal ancestry, but it can also refer to a civil system in which one inherits property through the female line (Garrison, 2017).

Matriarchal Household: A household in which a woman is the dominant person responsible for the management and decision-making, even if a father or male figure is present (Garrison, 2017).

Purposeful Sampling: Purposeful sampling is one of the most common sampling strategies. The goal or purpose for selecting this specific study unit is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given the study topic (Yin, 2016).

Snowball Sampling: Selecting new data collection units as an offshoot of existing ones can be acceptable if the snowballing is purposeful, not done out of convenience (Yin, 2016).

Assumptions

The basis of this study was grounded on two fundamental assumptions. The first assumption was that female-headed households influenced Black men between 18 and 25. This study attempted to identify and focus on whether and what that influence was.

The second assumption was that using the heuristic phenomenological method would be the most productive method for this study. The heuristic phenomenological inquiry method, meaning "to discover or to find" (Rudestam & Newton, 2015), was used to focus on and glean information from the study participants to reveal actual influences on this study question. Using this process and method emphasized how phenomenology

covered contextual conditions and the social, institutional, and environmental conditions in which people's lives occurred (Yin, 2016).

Participants chosen for this study were gang members or past gang members. The participants' lived experiences were examined in this study through structured, in-depth interviews as their lived experiences related to their decision-making process for joining gangs. These assumptions were necessary for this qualitative study since they could increase understanding of how and to what extent a single-parent matriarchal household could influence African American men between 18 and 25 on joining gangs. This chosen process provided a unique opportunity to develop and implement new public policies that can address and reduce the phenomenon of gangs' negative impact on communities worldwide. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening understanding may pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017).

The assumptions were necessary for this study because research has identified family structure as a possible contributing factor to youth development. The premise of how and to what extent the single matriarchal homes influence Black men is pertinent because of the disproportionate number of single-mother homes in the chosen study participants' community.

Scope and Delimitations

Scholarly acceptable standards for studies fell within predetermined parameters, which were the study's delimitations. This process, in turn, constituted the scope of the project. The content of this study required a narrowing process that produced the study

question. This process was completed to make it possible for this study to be conducted within a reasonable time, under unique conditions, and to make an original contribution to the body of knowledge on the gang phenomenon.

One of the influencing factors identified in the literature review has been the possible influence of the single-parent matriarchal impacts on Black male gang members. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening understanding may pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017).

This study's boundaries were Chicago's Westside and Black men between 18 and 25. These subjects employed current admitted gang members and ex-gang members. The analysis excluded gang members from any other Chicago area except the westside of Chicago and gang members or ex-gang members under 18 and 25.

Black men between 18 and 25 established one of the study's logistical boundaries. This age group represented most gang membership and the most populous age group comprising many criminal offenders associated with gang activities. Excluded from this study were current or former gang members younger than 18 due to legal and ethical ramifications. A significant theory and conceptual framework related to this research area, but not investigated, was the connection between poverty in the Black community family structure and its deterioration. This conceptualization was the primary theoretical foundation of the 1965 report by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The Moynihan study's potential transferability to this research project was significant because economics was one of the ancillary issues that affected single-parent matriarchal households and could have influenced the study's participants' propensity to join gangs.

Limitations

Phenomenology was the chosen research design for this study, which subjected this study to this choice's inherent weaknesses and limitations. Dudovskiy (2011) asserted that a standard liability in phenomenology research is its lower level of validity and reliability, and it requires more time and other resources for data collection. Dudovskiy asserted that phenomenology's limitation is the question of what has been recent, making it hard for policymakers to infer what actions to take in the future.

A final limitation identified is that a reader can complicate my analysis and interpretation of the data. These limitations directly affect both transferability and dependability. This study was limited to a minimum of 20 current or ex-gang members who self-identified, but because by its nature, qualitative results are not generalizable (Yin, 2016). Several measures addressed this potential influence with a clear understanding of how difficult eliminating my bias was. As a Black man raised in a single-parent matriarchal household on the Westside of Chicago, I could have been biased and potentially influenced the study outcomes. This potential bias was addressed by strict adherence to ethical guidelines for qualitative research and assurance that I remained objective and impartial. A second measure to limit bias was using multiple sources to code the research participants' gathered data. A third and final step to address the potential for bias was to employ peers to review the study's findings.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because there have been limited studies on the influencing factor of single-parent matriarchal influence on Black men between 18 and

25 and their propensity to join gangs. CRT (2013) and matriarchal theory's (1995) use as the theoretical lenses for the study provided rich and insightful research that offered a unique perspective on this phenomenon. The enhanced insightfulness concerning this phenomenon yields critical knowledge that could help to develop unique and innovative public policies and programs that could positively affect and address the plethora of unique and socially significant issues that comprise the subject of matriarchal influence on this research population. Further, this research allowed practical application by identifying a potential focus and intervention point that could ultimately change an individual's behaviors when joining gangs.

Identifying early intervention possibilities at the rudimentary level was potentially a potent tool that can focus intervention programs, educational research, and appropriate funding allocation to reduce and eventually eliminate this negative international entity known as gangs. The transferability and ability to replicate this study allows future researchers to copy the research and provide much-needed positive options to address gangs. Combining these efforts can afford many unique opportunities to affect positive social change anywhere the phenomenon of gangs exists. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening understanding may pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017).

Summary

In this chapter, the background section provided the historical significance of gangs that date back to 1873, which empirically substantiated this phenomenon's resiliency and complexity. The problem statement and purpose of the study collaborated

in identifying the necessity for this study. The research question, theoretical and conceptual framework, nature of the study, and significance combined to provide a solid foundation that served as the basis for this study.

Chapter 2 provides a historical literature foundation based on previous studies and peer-reviewed iterations that helped form and direct the emphasis and significance of this research study. It also provides an apparent gap in the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study topic was gangs and how being raised in a single-parent matriarchal home could affect Black men between 18 and 25 joining them. Gangs were responsible for an average of 48% of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90% in several others, according to NGIC analysis (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011), the most current analysis by the FBI available. Despite legislation and law enforcement efforts, Chicago registered a more substantial number of murders than other cities of comparable size (e.g., Los Angeles, California, Houston, Texas) and even more than New York (Papachristos & Kirk, 2015).

This qualitative study aimed to increase the understanding of how being raised in a single-parent matriarchal household could influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs. The African American man represented a disproportionate number of members of Chicago street gangs. According to NGIC (2011), African Americans represented more than 39% of gang membership. African American men represented more than 92% of that total, while African American women constituted 8% of Black gang membership in Chicago. According to CDC (2015), the death rates from homicides for African American men between 18 to 25 were between 65 and 75 deaths per 100,000 residents in Chicago. According to Chicago Police Superintendent Escalante, most of these homicides were gang- and narcotics-related (D'Onofrio & Schulte, 2016).

This study's literature review incorporated research on scholarly peer-reviewed studies gathered from diverse disciplines such as health and social behavior, addiction

research and theory, social sciences citation index, transnational law, trauma nursing, urban education, community psychology, forensic psychiatry and psychology, and criminology and public policy. The issues highlighted in the following articles have examined the true diversity of the gang phenomenon and how membership related to the family's and community's functioning. This study showed how being raised in single-parent matriarchal homes influenced African American men between 18 and 25 and their decisions to join gangs.

Finally, it identified early intervention and other possibilities at the rudimentary level, such as individual relationships, that influenced gang membership decisions. Examining these relationships could potentially provide a tool to develop and focus intervention programs, educational research, and funding to reduce and eventually eliminate this negative international entity known as gangs. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening understanding may pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017). This literature review comprised several significant components. The first component examined in this literature review was the history of gangs. The phenomenon of gangs traced back to the early 12th and 14th centuries (Howell & Moore, 2010). Howell and Moore (2010) asserted that serious street gangs did not emerge until the early part of the 19th century. This literature review component included a diverse examination of the plethora of societal and political elements and issues contributing to gangs. A second major component examined in this literature review was the concept of matriarchy and matriarchal influences on the African American family's various elements. A third and

final component considered the prevalence and effect of societal norms and their impact, used the CRT (2013) and matriarchal theory (1995) as the optical prisms for examination. The chapter summarized the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, conceptual framework, literature key variables, and summary.

Literature Search Strategy

A thorough and efficient examination of many books, peer-reviewed journals, and articles was required to gather the poignant information pertinent to the subject. A scholarly review of this topic was conducted by researching through the SAGE Walden library, Pro-Quest Central, EBSCO database, Google Scholar, and several United States federal government agencies' websites and databases. The information was procured by searching these multiple disciplinary databases focusing on prevalent peer-reviewed articles and journals using the following keywords for the research process: *gangs*, *single-parent*, *matriarchal influence on Black men*, *the structure of the Black family*, *the effect of fatherless households on the Black family*, *gangs and broken homes*, *lack of resources and education and the impact on the Black family*, *matriarchal theory*, and *critical race theory*. This literature review endeavor produced over 300 articles concerning the menagerie of topics prevalent in this study.

Theoretical Foundation

CRT (2013) originated when individual legal scholars, most notably the late Derrick Bell (an African American) and Alan Freeman (a White American), expressed frustration with the glacial pace of racial reform in the mid-1970s. Delgado and Stefancic (2013) asserted that CRT was a theoretical and interpretive mode that examined the

appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression. CRT focused intensely on the social and political causes of the African American experience and issues that contribute to the African American experience and situation in the United States of America. CRT asserted that the African American community should not be judged or evaluated by a non-inclusive standard developed by and for a (White) society that does not provide equity or equality for minorities.

Matriarchal theory (1995) is grounded in the idea that many societies were initially influenced by and sustained by the matriarchal system. Matriarchal theory's origin goes back to the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, the Swiss anthropologist J. J. Bachofen, and German philosopher Friedrich Engle. Matriarchal theory asserts that many societies experienced a change to the patriarchal system through societal and political manipulation to eliminate female dominance.

Matriarchal theory (1995) has been widely interpreted and scrutinized since its inception. However, recent application and usage of the matriarchal theory by scholars such as Goettner-Abendroth (2018) in her article "Re-thinking matriarchy in modern matriarchal studies using two examples: the Khasi and the Mosuo" in *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* provides an appropriate similar application of this theory to this study.

CRT (2013) has been similarly applied in reviews and published articles, such as Reynolds's (2010) "They think you're lazy," and other messages Black parents send their Black sons: An exploration of CRT in the examination of educational outcomes for Black males.

Examining the research question using these theories provided deep and rich introspective examination of the plethora of unique and socially significant issues that comprise matriarchal theory (1995) and CRT (2013) contents. Using these two diverse and reflective theories as the lenses for examination in this study fulfilled my desire to identify and illuminate issues that could explain and educate concerning the numerous possibilities of resolution to this complex but critical phenomenon.

The use of these two theories relates to this study by focusing on critical issues, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2013), such as in-depth critiques of liberalism; revisionist interpretations of history; crime; the intersection of race, sex, and class; the Black-White binary; intergroup relations; legal institutions, critical pedagogy, and minorities in the law; gay and lesbian issues; cultural nationalism and separatism; criticism and self-awareness; and critical White studies, among others. CRT (2013) was an appropriate theoretical lens for this study. It examined geopolitical factors such as White racism as a hegemonic, socially, and historically constructed cultural force in American society.

Matriarchal theory (1995) was appropriate for the study because it asserts that many societies experienced a change to the patriarchal system through societal and political manipulation to eliminate female dominance and influence. Therefore, this research question built on these theories by applying the critical issues of both approaches and studying the results to affect positive social change when understanding and addressing the phenomenon known as gangs.

Conceptual Framework

The entity of gangs has existed for centuries. In early 1873, Pike asserted and speculated through documentation that gangs of highway robbers in England might have existed before the 12th and 14th centuries (Howell & Moore, 2010). Howell and Moore (2010) asserted that street gangs' emergence began on the East Coast in the United States around 1783 as the American Revolution ended. Further, the best available evidence suggested that the more ruthless street gangs likely did not emerge until the early part of the 19th century (Sante, 1991). In the United States, this issue has become so profound that there are legislative efforts nationwide to classify gangs' offenses as a form of terrorism (Harnsgate, 2016). The U.S. Department of Justice (2015) defines *gangs* as: (1) an association of three or more individuals; (2) whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity which they used to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical markings, style or color of clothing, hairstyle, hand signs or graffiti; (3) the association's purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity and the association uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives; (4) its members engage in illegal activity or acts of juvenile delinquency that if committed by an adult would be crimes; (5) with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation or economic resources; (6) the association may also possess some of the following characteristics: (a) the members employ rules for joining and operating within the association; (b) the members meet on a recurring basis; (c) the association provides physical protection of its members from the other criminals

and gangs; (d) the association seeks to exercise control over a particular location or region, or it may only defend its perceived interests against rivals; or (e) the association has an identifiable structure. This definition does not include traditional organized crime groups such as La Cosa Nostra which is one group that falls within the Department's definition of international organized crime, drug trafficking organizations, or terrorist organizations (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015).

Gangs have been the subject and the focus of seminal researchers, theorists, and philosophers for over 130 years. Luke Pike (1873), a well-known British reporter, provided the first written account of active gangs in Western civilization. *The Gang*, a book written by Thrasher (1927), was an early documented academic study on the gang phenomenon. This publication was one of the first documented academic studies on this phenomenon. Thrasher provided a detailed observation of urban geography's influence and how urban life and geography shaped gangs. One of the assertions that Thrasher made in his study was that instability in neighborhoods had a likelihood of producing gangs. In his research, Thrasher assimilated gangs' behaviors to the feudal and medieval power systems and linked tribal ethos in other societies to the code of honor and glory found in American gangs.

Internationally, gangs continued to evolve and change as a negative social phenomenon. Raby et al. (2016) conducted a systematic review to identify predictive risk factors for male street gang affiliation in the United Kingdom since gangs and gang violence have become pertinent issues. According to Raby et al., emergent gang-affiliated men have experienced developmental trauma and were drawn to street gangs to fulfill

their fundamental need to belong, be protected, and achieve socio-economic stability. The authors surmised that the evidence supporting this meta-narrative validated early intervention (including safeguarding, family work, and targeted mental health support).

In the United States, this issue has become so profound that there are legislative efforts nationwide to classify gangs' offenses as a form of terrorism (Harnsgate, 2016). Barrett and Turner (2005) suggested a correlation between growing up in single-mother households and youth maladjustment. A study investigating the connection between being raised in a single-parent matriarchal home and the likelihood of joining a gang could provide information critical to solving this undesirable international phenomenon and address a gap in the literature. Kittle (2017) studied and compiled the most contemporary literature related to gang and gang violence that included many topics, contributing influences, prevention, intervention, experimental reflection, and gang violence. Bergen-Cico et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative analysis using the in-depth interview method performed with men who have histories of gang affiliation and street crime. Using the lens of addiction, they examined how gang members and street crime related. The study's findings suggested developing a new framework to address criminal activity and gang membership, especially in deprived neighborhoods. The authors paid particular attention to the participants' narratives that consistently revealed an attraction to the adrenaline-fueled excitement of street life and criminal activity. These studies collectively provided definitions inherent in the framework and articulate how this study benefits from it.

History of Gangs

The prevalence of gangs is not unique to Chicago, nor is it indigenous to the United States. Gangs have been a global issue that affects many countries. They also have a long and storied history between the 12th and 14th centuries. According to Howell and Moore (2010), Pike (1873) speculated that gangs of highway robbers in England might have existed as early as the 12th and 14th centuries. The emergence of street gangs was first documented in 1873 by Pike. This emergence began on the East Coast around 1783 as the American Revolution ended; the best available evidence suggests that the more ruthless street gangs likely did not emerge until the early part of the 19th century (Howell & Moore, 2010; Sante, 1991).

Research has confirmed the worldwide existence of gangs in the United Kingdom. Tonks et al. (2018) provided a systematic review of the factors contributing to gangs' disengagement. The authors asserted that understanding this area is of paramount importance to developing policy and guiding practitioners working with this population, given the impact this lifestyle has on gang members and society. The authors focused on seven academic databases, relevant publications, online search engines, and government databases to identify relevant studies. Inclusion and exclusion criteria and quality assessment methods were employed. This study's findings suggested no definitive reason for gang exit but rather that multiple factors contributed. There was variability found in the quality scores. They aimed to ascertain whether researchers could find disengaging factors for street gang members synthesized from the literature. Seven studies met the inclusion and exclusion criteria and scored more significant than 60% on the quality

assessment forms. According to Tonks et al. (2018), the review illustrates how all the studies found that while gang membership continued to be a unique and complex phenomenon, individuals who have distanced themselves from gang life have done so because it no longer serves their needs, values, or priorities. Therefore, they must desire to leave their gang and cause a life-changing event or a shift in circumstances. Former gang members then require an alternative path to follow, such as employment and advanced education, to maintain this process of separating from the gangs.

The Gang a book written by Thrasher (1927) as referenced by Dimitriadis (2006), was one of the first documented academic studies on the phenomenon of gangs. Dimitriadis examined Thrasher's research and in-depth analysis of hundreds of street gangs that flourished in Chicago's earliest part of the 20th century. Thrasher, as discussed by Dimitriadis, provided a detailed observation of the influence of urban geography and how it has shaped gangs. One of Thrasher's assertions referenced by Dimitriadis' study was that neighborhood instability produced gangs. Thrasher, as referenced by Dimitriadis, assimilated the behaviors of gangs to the feudal and medieval power systems and linked tribal ethos in other societies to the code of honor and glory found in American gangs. Internationally, gangs have emerged as a social issue as well. Raby et al. (2016) conducted a systematic review to identify predictive risk factors for male street gang affiliation in the United Kingdom since gang violence had become a pertinent issue. In the United States, this issue had become so profound that there were legislative efforts nationwide to classify gangs' offenses as a form of terrorism (Harnsgate, 2016).

Gangs in the United States have become progressively more violent and a significant issue in many cities and suburbs. Pyrooz, D.C. et al. (2020) studied gang membership associated with several risk factors and behaviors overlooked as sources of mortality among young Black men. This study reviewed Saint Louis, Missouri gang members listed in a law enforcement gang database to mortality records in the National Death Index as the statistical foundation for this study. Three analytical samples were composed of Black men ages 15 to 35 and created merging cases of the GM-LMFs with the National Vital Statistics System and Census Data from 1993 to 2016. This study identified a key source of excess mortality amongst young Black Americans: Black male gang membership in Saint Louis increases the mortality risk for all causes of death and homicides in the research studies population. This study and its findings support the assertion of transferability and reliability of this present study.

National Gang Center (NGC) (2016) is a national youth gang analysis that began to track gangs' annual estimates starting 2003 to 2012. NGC published the report's final form in 2016. It asserted that the yearly assessment of the number of gangs is approximately 30,000 gangs in the United States. According to NGC, an estimated 350,000 members comprise gangs nationally, with an estimated 13% of the homicides related to gang violence. The report's findings were significant since there are an estimated 850,000 individual gang members internationally. The study asserted that an estimated 13% of homicides were related to gang violence (NGC, 2016). The impact of this varies significantly by area. For example, in Chicago's and Los Angeles's so-called gang capitals, approximately half of homicides are gang-related (NGC, 2016).

Economics Influence

The influence of economics on the gang phenomenon has been identified and studied in numerous research projects worldwide over the past century. These studies provided enough information to conclude that economics can and, in many cases, did influence gangs and their membership. Many of these studies' findings stopped short of identifying economics as the sole cause of this phenomenon. However, many of them identified economics as a driving issue that continuously contributed to the gangs' phenomenon.

Banerjee, S. et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study based on Cullen, J.B. and Levitt, S.D. (1996) research on crime, urban flight, and the consequences for cities. The authors asserted that the scaling exponent for net crime in a city resulted from competing dynamics between criminals and law enforcement, each with different scaling exponents, and where criminals win in the numbers game. They propose a simple dynamic model to accommodate these empirical observations and the potential multiple scaling regimes that emerged from the competitive dynamics between crime and law enforcement (Banerjee, S. et al., 2015). The authors also asserted that the model developed from the study was general enough to correctly account for crime in universities, where university crime did not scale super-linearly but linearly with enrolment size (Banerjee, S. et al., 2015).

In its final constitution of the research data, Higgins et al. (2018) asserted that the cultural context affected group identity and discourses in the limited physical space. Cooper (n.d.) stated that these low-income areas were typically home to low-income

members of society. He mentioned that this demographic's main reason was attractive for the gang to recruit due to the inter-generational disillusionment in the population.

Lu et al. (2019) conducted a study to explore the disparities in single-parent families based on several issues, such as total household income and whole poverty level. The authors asserted in their findings that taxable income, real income, and poverty status were higher for single fathers within the studied population than single mothers. They also stated that single mothers were much more likely to be in the crisis category than single fathers (Lu et al., 2019).

Urbank M. M. (2018) authored an article that conducted over 140 interviews and nine months of ethnographic fieldwork in a historical Canadian social housing establishment. The project gave a detailed description and analysis of the evolving nature of the environment gangs existed in and their makeup because of regentrification. This author showed why competing gangs' emergences did not incite violence as history has indicated. The article's findings asserted that lived realities such as poverty, stigmatization, gang violence, and strong neighborhood loyalty mirror the experiences of those living in marginalized neighborhoods across Canada and the United States.

Further, numerous research studies have revealed a common theme of economics influencing gangs. Some of these studies identified economic impact from a distinct perspective. They asserted that gangs have evolved from a poverty-driven phenomenon and a positive, financially driven operation.

One such research study was conducted in England by Whittaker et al. (2020). As shown in the London borough of Waltham Forest, it focused on gang-related issues and

the effect that gangs had on youth affected by or who were members of gangs. Whittaker et al. asserted that local gangs had evolved into more organized and profit-oriented entities. The findings contended that “the more business-oriented ethos had changed the meaning of both territory and violence.” While gang members in the original research described an emotional connection with their postcode, the territory is increasingly regarded as a marketplace to be protected (Whittaker et al., 2020).

History of Family Structure

This study reviewed the African American family’s structure and focused on the essential components and suspected influences on joining and participating in gangs. Numerous variables, such as economics, education, employment, and family structure, have been identified as contributing factors to individuals’ motivations to join gangs (Kittle, 2017). The author concluded that efforts to increase understanding of gangs and gang violence are needed to drill down more precise root causes. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening clarity may pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017).

Bacchiniet et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating the role of self-serving cognitive distortion and parental rejection, and community violence witnessed in youth gang membership. The study’s findings revealed a direct relationship between parental rejection and antisocial behaviors (ASB). It also found a significant interaction between parental rejection and youth gang membership (YGM). Finally, the study integrated distorted moral cognition and witnessing violence within the community represented a fertile ground for gang involvement. According to Bacchiniet et al. (2020), I should

consider individual and contextual factors to implement interventions to reduce adolescents' risk of joining a gang. This study was conducted in southern Italy, which bears witness that the issues associated with the gang phenomenon are international, transferable, and dependable.

Barrett and Turner (2005) asserted that family structure and mental health, mediating effects of socioeconomic status, family process, and social stress affected the gang phenomenon. The authors suggested a correlation between growing up in single-mother households and youth maladjustment.

Bergen-Cico et al. (2014) proposed a theoretical model for understanding the draw of street life and gang activity and examined the gang phenomenon. The purpose of the research was to understand better how researchers could study gang affiliation behaviors and street crimes through addiction. The study's findings suggested developing a new framework to address criminal activity and gang membership, especially in deprived neighborhoods. Bergen-Cico et al. (2014) paid particular attention to the participants' narratives that consistently revealed an attraction to the adrenaline-fueled excitement of street life and criminal activity.

Casey (2020), in its KIDS COUNT Data Book, addressed trends in child well-being and provided statistical breakdowns of children in single-parent matriarchal households by state and numerous categories, such as race and year. This study used U.S. Census data from the last 10 years to comprise a detailed statistical view of children raised in a single-parent household.

In Goodwill (2016), *A Critical Incident Technique Study of Gang Entry*

Facilitation: Perspectives of Indigenous Men Ex-Gang Members, the author studied the effects of several variables and their impact on gang membership entry amongst prospective Indigenous men. The study attempted to understand and describe incidents that may have facilitated gang entry of the subjects. It concluded that extended family members, economics, and community significantly influenced gang membership's risk and probability among the study subjects.

Glueck (1927), the gang phenomenon, examined the influence of family and its connection to the phenomenon of gangs. The author asserted that the American sociologists focused erroneously on the group regarding gangs. Glueck contended that overemphasizing culture influences delinquency's primary causes of gang membership. The author was a proponent of the importance of family, affection, relationships, and disciplinary practices as critically significant factors influencing the phenomenon of gangs. Glueck asserted that neighborhood influences are not important later in life: but he felt that basic personality and character structures develop in society's first agency, the family.

Henderson (2016) focused his study, decoding metacommunication patterns from African American single mothers to sons, on the single mother-son dyad to identify metacommunicative signals delivered from mother to son. The author's findings and conclusions were that mothers adapted an authoritarian or helicopter parenting style to control and protect their sons from racism, becoming victims of crime and violence, and being arrested or incarcerated. The author's most poignant issue was that this was a

negative metacommunication. It is associated with insecure attachment, avoidance, and risky behaviors, which could be detrimental to the young African American men's development.

Kramer (2020) reviewed the new Pew Research Center research study of 130 countries and territories, which shows that the United States has the world's highest rate of children living in single-parent households. This statistical trend is even higher in the African American community. This review also revealed that almost a quarter of United States children under 18 live with one parent and no other adults (23%), more than three times the share of children worldwide who do so (7%). The study, which analyzed how people's living arrangements differ by religion, also found that United States children from Christian and religiously unaffiliated families are equally likely to live in this structure. The study and review illuminated how the United States had the highest number of children raised in single-parent households worldwide.

Klug (2016), who published a dissent of the Moynihan Report of 1965, asserted that *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* had a concise life as policy. Though it was hailed within the Johnson Administration before it became public in July 1965, criticism from civil rights leaders led the president to disown the report within months of its release. Klug stated that the Watts Rebellion in August forever altered the report's context, as liberals and conservatives grasped at explanations for the newly visible militancy in urban Black communities. Moynihan's description of the Black family as a "tangle of pathology" derived from his loosely defined, poorly supported claim that the "matriarchy" in Black households—the rise in Black single mothers—

generated a cycle of poverty independent of the effects of White racism and economic deprivation (Klug 2016).

McLanahan, S. and Jencks, C. (2015), *Was Moynihan right?* examines the Moynihan report from a contemporary perspective by measuring the consistency of the report's assertions. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's arguments highlighted the rising fraction of Black children growing up in households headed by unmarried mothers. He attributed the increase to Black men's precarious economic position, many of whom could no longer play their traditional role as their family's primary breadwinner. Moynihan argued that growing up in homes without a male breadwinner reduced Black children's chances of climbing out of poverty. The spread of such families would make it hard for Black people to take advantage of the legal and institutional changes flowing from the civil rights revolution. The authors outlined some of the most pertinent issues and provided accurate empirical data to support their findings. According to McLanahan and Jencks (2015), more than half of American children are likely to live with a single mother before they reach the age of 18. McLanahan and Jencks (2015) asserted that growing up with only one biological parent reduces a child's chances of graduating from high school by about 40%; the effects on aggression, rule-breaking, and delinquency are more considerable for boys than for girls.

In Moynihan's (1965) *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, the author studied the "Negro family" social condition and provided projections of the potential adverse effect of the nuclear family structure's erosion on the "Negro community." Moynihan asserted that the lack of nuclear families (those having both a

father and mother present) in Black America would greatly hinder Black socioeconomic progress.

Wilson et al. (2016) conducted a phenomenological study of absent fathers and asserted that it was a common occurrence in today's homes and that this phenomenon appeared to be escalating. The study pointed out that this phenomenon was more prevalent in Black households. The authors also examined single mothers' experiences who raised successful Black men under this condition.

This study's findings asserted a need for more research examining the parent-child relationship and how the lack of this relationship affected the youth's outcomes. The authors declared that future studies are needed to explore the parent-child relationship and how parents and children are required to survive. Noted by the authors from the study's participants, strained relationships between absent fathers and their adult children may be inevitable under being raised in a fatherless home. The final assertion by the authors was the indication that Black men raised in absent-father homes can be successful and resilient. They alluded to the evidence of the single mothers' resiliency and perseverance who raised and influenced them.

Young and Silverstone (2018) expand on family and the effect gangs have on them. This study points out the economic influence on the concepts of gangs and family. Young and Silverstone asserted that the criminal outfit easily outstrips traditional and acceptable associations in families through its allure of material things and the pride of association so often denied to young men in discriminated ethnic minorities.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Researchers have approached the phenomenon of gangs from a multidimensional direction that has provided a unique and informative perspective. This diverse perspective has allowed future research to forge significant headway in the quest to address and reduce this negative social issue. The strengths of the recent studies' totality are that they collectively point out that gangs have a discernable multifaceted complexity that requires an open-minded and flexible plan to address the construct of gangs effectively and adequately. In like manner, these studies' weaknesses reflect their respective focus's uniqueness and how their focus's narrowness limits them. Replicability and transferability due to the essence of the studies' multidimensional specificity create weaknesses.

Han (2018) examined several factors that explain juvenile delinquency and the emergence and presence of juvenile gangs. These factors included a relationship with their family, friends, and other significant members, social status and the role of school and community environment. The study attempted to understand better the relationship between these factors and the subjects' joining gangs. The findings asserted a causal relationship between family relationships and adolescent gang affiliation. However, the authors suggested researchers examine this phenomenon by examining the role of many risk factors on delinquency and gang membership rather than investigating only single factors to have a more comprehensive understanding of the pattern of human behavior.

Raby and Jones (2016) conducted a systematic review to identify predictive risk factors for male street gang affiliation. The researchers found a deficiency in United

Kingdom-centered peer reviewed research on male street gang affiliations. Therefore, it was necessary to widen the search to include international sources on male street gang affiliations. The author surmised that the evidence supporting this meta-narrative validated early intervention (including safeguarding, family work, and targeted mental health support).

Goodwill (2016) studied the effects of several different variables and their impact on gang membership entry amongst prospective Indigenous men. I attempted to understand and describe incidences that may have facilitated gang entry of the subjects. The findings concluded that extended family members, economics, and community significantly influenced gang membership's risk and probability among the study subjects (Goodwill, 2016).

Kittle (2017) studied and compiled contemporary literature related to gangs and gang violence, including many contributing influences, prevention, intervention, and experimental reflection. He included qualitative and quantitative reviews. The study examined twenty-three articles and nine studies for inclusion in this review of returned results. In this review, the author aimed to explore and broaden knowledge of gangs' violence and encourage further research to promote more successful prevention and intervention efforts. The author concluded that an increased understanding of gangs and gang violence and specifically drilling down more precise root causes is needed. Determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening clarity could help pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence (Kittle, 2017).

Bergen-Cico et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative analysis using the in-depth interview method performed with men who have histories of gang affiliation and street crime. The purpose of the research was to understand how researchers could study gang affiliation and street crime behaviors using the lens of addiction. The study's findings suggest developing a new framework to address criminal activity and gang membership, especially in deprived neighborhoods. Bergen-Cico et al. gave special attention to the participant's narratives that consistently revealed an attraction to the adrenaline-fueled excitement of street life and criminal activity.

Gap in Literature

Scholars have studied the subject of gangs and their origins for centuries. From its rudimentary formation to its societal impact, many aspects of this phenomenon have been examined, analyzed, and acted upon by scholars, governments, academics, sociologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists. However, very few studies have concentrated on the possible effects of being raised in a single-parent matriarchal household on the individuals that constitute gangs' fundamental foundation: its members. This study examined this international phenomenon from its rudimentary foundation, its membership, and what influences individuals to participate in these complex and multifaceted organizations called gangs. The knowledge and expertise concerning gangs, their influencing factors, and societal impact are documented by scholars, beginning from their historical formation to contemporary times. Established and empirically accepted factors that influenced the gang's phenomenon have been explored through academic and intellectual studies or articles to create and develop the knowledge base for this unique

phenomenon. In like manner, the literature gap, not known in this discipline related to gangs phenomenon, is which of the identified individual factors or factors has the most significant potential to address and systemically eliminate this negative international phenomenon. Scholars and politicians have wrestled to no avail with the unique issues that comprised and affected the negative influence that gangs have had on society worldwide.

The present study filled at least one gap in the literature review by systematically identifying and concentrating on one of the discipline's empirically determined variables of family influence on the gang phenomenon. This research study filled the literature gap by examining one of the stated root causes: the single-parent matriarchal household gleaned from the multidimensional influences that determine this construct. This research study extended the knowledge of this discipline by exhaustively examining if and to what extent the single-parent matriarchal household influences the subject's decision-making prowess concerning the phenomenon of gangs and gang membership. Kittle (2017) asserted that determining a more accurate root cause and a deepening clarity could pave the way for more successful prevention of gang and gang/street violence.

Summary and Conclusions

This review gleaned several significant themes from the literature reviewed for this research study. One of the first themes found was a constant reference to economic influences on the phenomenon of gangs. Most studies scanned directly or indirectly referred to or directly implicated economics as an influential factor in gangs' development and activities. A second theme formulated from the literature review was

the influence of the family structure. A third common theme developed from the collective evaluation of the literature is the societal and communal influence on the individuals' perception and decision regarding gang membership. A final piece gathered from the comprehensive literature reviewed was the systemic need to evaluate the phenomenon of gangs from a multidimensional prism that will allow flexible and insightful consideration of the many influencing issues. The literature review's totality pointed to the need to address the gang phenomenon at its rudimentary level. It is well known and documented that gangs are an international issue permeating multidimensional societies and governments. Previous studies have established that gangs developed from multifaceted, socially driven problems, from economic deprivation to societal injustices and inequalities.

Researchers have examined the phenomenon of gangs through a multi-dimensional prism that has produced studies that addressed economic, societal, and governmental influences. None identified many other contributing factors as the actual causes of the phenomenon. This present study examined the phenomenon of gangs from a rudimentary level, which is gang membership as an influence identified and addressed to reduce and eliminate this negative influencing phenomenon.

Addressing this phenomenon from one of the identified gaps in the literature, which is gang membership at its rudimentary level, allowed me an opportunity to advance the literary knowledge on this illusive subject. Using the heuristic phenomenological method allowed further understanding based on this internationally significant construct.

The literature gap found on this topic was the lack of studies that examine the possible influence that single-parent matriarchal homes have on Black men between 18 and 25 and their decisions to join gangs. The most appropriate method was the qualitative phenomenological method and design to properly examine the phenomenon of gangs in this selected population. The process and technique examined the subjects' lived experiences and how these lived experiences have influenced the individuals' decision to join gangs. It has been used previously in similar studies such as Bergen-Cico et al. (2013) who asserted in their findings that developing a new framework to address criminal activity and gang membership was needed, especially in deprived neighborhoods.

This chapter encompassed an in-depth description of the literature research strategy chosen for this project and a comprehensive explanation of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted for this study. The literature review related to key variables and concepts has been examined and articulated in a complete summary. The literature gap on this topic was the lack of studies that examined the possible influence that single-parent matriarchal homes have on Black men between 18 and 25 and their decisions to join gangs. The qualitative heuristic phenomenology method was chosen to properly explore the gang phenomenon from the literature's identified gap and afford the most significant opportunity to gather diverse and rich data. Chapter 3 details specifics of the research methodology of this study. It further expounds on this discussion by including the introduction, research design and rationale, role of researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and summary.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative study's focus and purpose was to examine and articulate how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago. This chapter consists of a thorough examination of the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, methodology, participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, data collection, and analysis of trustworthiness. Qualitative research characterized a methodology designed to explore topics about which there is little knowledge, gain new insights into phenomena, and construct themes to explain the phenomena, fostering a deeper understanding of the situation (Smith et al., 2011).

Research Design and Rationale

Using the study's problem statement and construct as a template and guide to answer the research question: Does being raised in a single-parent matriarchal home influence an individual's decision to join gangs in the city of Chicago on its Westside? This research study's chosen central phenomenon was gangs, a documented international entity that has negatively affected countries and communities worldwide. A qualitative design with heuristic phenomenology was the methodological and research tradition to investigate and evaluate this chosen phenomenon. The rationale for selecting the qualitative and heuristic methodology focused on the lived experiences of the participants.

The goal was to develop a rich and insightful information source to examine this unique phenomenon. The heuristic phenomenological inquiry method, meaning “to discover” or “to find” (Rudestam & Newton, 2015), was used to focus and glean deeply rooted information from the study participants to reveal fundamental influences on this study question. One of the essential items that phenomenology addressed was the meaning, structure, and essence of this phenomenon’s lived experiences for this person or group of people (Patton, 2014). This attribute was essential to the fundamental foundation of this study.

The connection between the qualitative research design and the research question: Does being raised in a single-parent matriarchal home influence an individual’s decision to join gangs in the city of Chicago on its Westside, was qualitative research that had a primary focus of exploratory inquiry. Bevan (2014) asserted that the qualitative analysis provides researchers with in-depth detail on the target population’s feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. One of the qualitative research project’s attributes is that it commonly gains knowledge and insight into rudimentary reasons, opinions, and motivations. The second attribute of qualitative research is that it provides introspective information into the problem or phenomenon that helps develop much-needed insight and knowledge. These attributes are essential to creating and gleaning much-needed reflective details concerning the research question.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, researchers diminished data, making them active learners and participants as they sought a more profound understanding of a particular

phenomenon, usually driven by personal interest (Moustakas, 1994). I must assist the qualitative research observer in identifying and understanding my role. One of the essential elements of this identifying process involved me clarifying whether my role is considered emic (inside) or etic (outside; Punch, 2005). Thus, my role as an observer in this research study was etic (out), mainly since I chose the heuristic phenomenology methodology, which focused on the study participants' lived experiences. The purpose was to develop a rich, functional, and insightful information source using the in-depth interview process. I had no professional or personal relationship with any of the participants. Using the purposeful sampling and snowball sampling techniques assured the participants chosen had highest probability of non-biased selection.

Methodology

Participants Selection Logic

The population was Black men between 18 and 25 who were current or ex-gang members residing on the Westside of Chicago. The participants were selected using purposeful and snowball sampling techniques. Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling allowed me to deliberately select settings, persons, or activities to get information obtained through other choices (Maxwell, 2005). The critical factor in qualitative sampling is to select participants who can provide me with in-depth information of crucial importance to the issues derived from the purpose of the study (Merriam, 2002).

Participants met the criteria established for eligibility for the study by being active participants in a program sponsored by a community-based partner. This community-

based organization focused on services for clients in the chosen age group. This community-based organization concentrated on these clients' re-acclimation by providing a variety of social service programs to assist troubled youth who were current or former gang members.

Twenty participants were selected for this study. The final number of participants in this research study was determined when the in-depth interviewing process reached saturation. The procedure for identifying, contacting, and recruiting the research study participants was as follows: The partnering agency agreed to allow flyers to be posted inviting individuals who met the prescribed criteria. Interested participants received an informed consent form to document their agreement to participate in this study. The consent forms were collected, processed, and securely stored. Document copies were made available upon request.

The relationship between saturation and sample size was that the minimum number of 20 was acceptable for this qualitative phenomenological study. Research standards established that saturation is when the data collected becomes repetitive.

Instrumentation

This research study's data collection instrument was in-depth interviews. They were conducted and audio-recorded using telephone technology, allowing accurate audio documentation. Using this technology to conduct these interviews ensured a secure and reliable research experience for participants and research staff. The data collection instrument source was researcher-produced interview questions developed with input from an SME in gangs and gang violence. This SME had over 30 years of

multidimensional experience in gang-related issues. The data collection instrument's sufficiency was established through a vetting process that included the submission and editing of a series of potential interview questions reviewed and revised by the SME. This process continued until an acceptable and appropriate set of interview questions was produced (see Appendix A).

Recruitment

The participants were chosen using snowball and purposeful sampling. The study flyer was posted at the partner organization service locations. Consent forms were privately issued and collected from all the study's participants.

Participation

The population recruited for and chosen to participate in this study were Black men between 18 and 25. All participants were current or ex-gang members residing on the Westside of Chicago. These individuals participated in a re-acclimation program designed and managed by the community stakeholder that agreed to partner in this research project.

Data Collection

The chosen participants participated in an in-depth interview. There was a member checking procedure done on interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. The data collection process consisted of 20 individuals who participated in in-depth interviews conducted using telephone technology, lasting 30 minutes maximum. The audio recording ensured each interview's clarity and accuracy. The exiting process included participation in a voluntary 3- to 5-minute question-and-answer session to address any

questions or concerns. This study can be replicated and completed by forging an agreement with a community stakeholder who specializes in servicing individuals that possess the specific attributes driven by the research question. Access to the internet and telephone programming is also a critical component of a successfully replicated study.

Data Analysis Plan

The connection of the derived data to the research question of: Does being raised in a single-parent matriarchal home influence an individual's decision to join gangs in the city of Chicago on its Westside, was to enhance and expand on knowledge concerning the phenomenon of gangs, its rudimentary causes, and its complex tributaries. This research study also connected the data and research questions through the in-depth interview, giving the most significant opportunity to glean deeply personal and much-needed information from the study participants. The inductive coding method was used because of its effective application when too little is known about the research subject to conduct heuristic or exploratory research. A code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or "translates" data (Vogt et al., 2014). Thus, attributes interpreted meaning to each datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory building, and other analytic processes. The coded data were then analyzed and evaluated using NVivo data analysis software. NVivo is a software program designed to diagnose unstructured text, audio, and video interviews. It was used to organize and manage the transcribed data. Once the discussions had been coded, researched, and transcribed using NVivo, the recorded interviews were securely stored. This information is protected and will be kept for 5 years in my office to ensure

the study participants' anonymity and privacy. Discrepant interviewees were allowed to withdraw from the study if their discrepancy could not be addressed or resolved.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Dialogue and exchange were essential to the empirical work's trustworthiness and were strongly encouraged in research approaches that were dialogical and relational (Ravitch, 2016). The study included all the required aspects of reliability articulated in detail. The four trustworthiness elements that establish good qualitative research are credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Carter, 2014).

Credibility

Credibility was established through extended conversation and focused observation of participants. The accurate transcription of the in-depth interviews and data triangulation helped achieve an acceptable level of unity in the results. Member checking, saturation, and peer review were also employed to increase credibility.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research required me to account for context changes. The methodology employed in this research study to address reliability was the meticulous recording and detailing of each step used so that future researchers can duplicate this study. A second and essential element of dependability was to accentuate the validity of the appropriate research practices followed in this study, which were foundational aspects of this research study. Audit trails and triangulation were employed to elevate the probability of dependability.

Transferability

Transferability was a necessary element of this and any other research study. Because the gang phenomenon is an identified international issue, transferability is an essential element that heightens universal application probability. Thick description was used to establish transferability. It involved writing detailed narratives or ‘vignettes’ explaining situations and their background ‘context’ (Drew, 2020). Thick description built up a clear picture of the individuals and groups in the context of their culture and the settings in which they live. A thick description can be contrasted with a thin description, a superficial account, and does not explore cultural members’ underlying meanings (Holloway, 1997). Thick description is the descriptive interpretation of complex cultural situations. Thus, it was appropriate to establish transferability in this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is when a researcher can verify that the qualitative research predictions and findings can be duplicated. According to Urban et al. (2018), I should be aware of, monitor, and ensure that biases do not affect the research process and findings. The strategy employed to assure confirmability was the detailed documentation of the data collection and continuous checking of the data manually and through the NVivo software platform. Audit trails technique and intercoder reliability were also employed to achieve confirmability. Audit trails are the most popular technique to establish confirmability because it is beneficial when writing up the results chapter. An audit trail ensures confirmability when a qualitative researcher details the data collection process, analysis, and interpretation. According to Urban et al. (2018), one of the best ways to

accomplish this is to use memos to write down thoughts, insights, or potential codes during the analysis process.

Ethical Procedures

The community-based organization, located on the Westside of Chicago that serviced clients in the chosen demographics and age group, is the community partner that agreed to allow access to the needed number of participants for this study (see Appendix B). This community-based organization focused on these clients' re-acclimation by providing a variety of social service programs to assist troubled youth who were current or former gang members. The community-based partner's recruitment effort included posting invitations to participate in the counselors' offices, hallways, and common areas of the facilities.

The human participants' treatment in this study followed the guidelines set forth by Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB approval number is 08-17-21-0664615. The primary responsibility required by Walden University's IRB is the safety and security of the study participants.

The ethical concerns related to recruitment materials and processes were addressed through a collaborative effort with the community partner stakeholder to assure that the recruitment process was fair, equitable, and safe. Ethical issues prominent in research studies include dishonesty, failure to obtain proper consent, failure to ensure privacy, and failure to account for participants' possible psychological harm. These issues were addressed by strictly adhering to the IRB guidelines outlined in the Walden University IRB process and guideline requirements of the APA. The participants were

provided informed consent forms by providing availability at the various recruitment or direct email service locations.

Data collection, the in-depth interview process chosen for this study, had a unique set of ethical concerns. According to Allmark et al. (2020), researchers engaged in ongoing reflectivity while responding sensitively to participants' needs. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring participants were treated the same in the community-based partner programs whether or not they participated in this study. The participants were informed they could change their minds and reserved the ability to stop at any time. This language was congruent with information in the consent document that each participant was required to sign.

Data treatment was also a significant issue that was addressed. The data and information collected was confidential and required adherence to strict storage, dissemination, and access guidelines. This issue was detailed in the consent form's privacy section that all participants read and signed. The details of that requirement were as follows:

I am required to protect participants' privacy. Participants' identities will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. I can only share identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect participants' privacy). I will not use participants' personal information outside of this research project. I will not include names or identities in the study reports. If I was to share this data set with another researcher in the future, I must remove all names and identifying details before sharing; this would not involve another round of obtaining

informed consent. Data is secured using codes in place of words, storing names (when necessary) separately from the data, discarding characters (when possible). Data is kept for at least 5 years as the university requires.

Finally, an ethical issue unique to this study and primarily driven by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic affected how current academic studies are conducted and has affected life as we know it worldwide. Due to the current pandemic, the interviews were conducted using telephone technology during the in-depth interview process. This computer-based program allowed discussions of these interviews in a non-contact environment requiring communication. The CDC recommended that non-contact methods be employed and adopted worldwide to reduce the probability of COVID-19 transmission between participants and researchers.

Summary

This chapter included a detailed summary and descriptive accounts for the research design and rationale, encompassing this study's chosen central phenomenon consisting of detailed information on the chosen methodology and data collection instrument methodology. It meticulously detailed the data collection methodology and data analysis procedures. Finally, it included a detailed explanation of the ethical guidelines and issues pertinent to this research project.

The detailed content of these comprehensive summaries set a solid foundation for Chapter 4 of this study. Chapter 4 contains information and procedures for the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and summary.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative study aimed to increase the understanding of how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago. Research literature has found that the absence of a father figure in single-parent families increases the likelihood of Black men joining gangs. The central research question is: How and to what extent could single-parent matriarchal households influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago? This project encompassed a set of sub-questions instrumental in the study's development and guidance. These sub-questions assisted in the creation of the codes and categories:

Sub question 1: What were the influencing factors in your environment when you were a youth?

Sub question 2: Were there individuals other than your parents that influenced you when you were a youth?

Sub question 3: What advice would you give to other young people raised in a similar environment as you were?

This chapter discusses the procedures used to conduct the in-depth interviews, collection, and analysis of the data, setting, and participant demographics.

Setting

I contacted a willing community partner in the city of Chicago who serviced African American men that fit the demographics of my study. The community partner

posted and distributed recruitment flyers for this research project. I recruited the participants for the study using purposeful sampling and snowball sampling strategies.

Personal and organizational conditions that influenced participants and their experience in this study were abundant. The data collection took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the world and changed the way we all live and conduct everyday life tasks. The partnering community agency allowed me to post flyers in their facility, inviting individuals to participate in the study with privacy and anonymity. I conducted this process under stringent adherence to the CDC and the city of Chicago Health Department's COVID-19 guidelines and requirements. I recruited the potential subjects by providing them with telephone and email information and asked them to indicate privately their willingness to participate in the study. Twenty individuals responded and provided consent forms emailed to all interested participants agreeing to participate in the research study project. I informed the participants of their right to decline or terminate their participation during the interview process.

Demographics

The study participants were Black men between 18 and 25 who were active in a re-acclimation program sponsored by community-based stakeholders specializing in rehabilitative programming for current and ex-gang members. Participant selection was contingent upon availability from the community-based organization that had agreed to partner in this endeavor. The targeted population was chosen because it encompasses individuals who meet all the needed attributes of gang membership experience and have

achieved the legal age of at least 18, allowing them to participate as an adult (see Table

1).

Table 1

Demographic Description

Participant	Parental involvement	Level of education	Head of household (Decision maker)
P1	Mother/Father deceased	High school dropout	Mother
P2	Mother/Father abandoned the family	High school dropout	Mother
P3	Mother and father	High school dropout	Mother
P4	Mother and stepfather abandoned by biological father	High school graduate	Mother
P5	Mother/Father not around	GED	Mother
P6	Mother and father	High school graduate	Mother
P7	Mother/Father traveled	High school graduate	Mother
P8	Mother/Father was in and out of prison	High school dropout	Mother
P9	Mother/Father abandoned the family	GED	Mother
P10	Mother/Father not active in life	High school graduate	Mother
P11	Mother/Father in life; separated from mother	High school graduate	Mother
P12	Mother/Father not in the same house	High school dropout	Mother
P13	Mother/Father not in the home; provided some support	High school graduate	Mother
P14	Mother/Father support family in-out of jail	High school dropout	Mother
P15	Mother/Father supported	High school dropout	Mother
P16	Mother/No father support	High school graduate	Mother
P17	Father	High school graduate	Father
P18	Father	High school dropout	Father
P19	Aunt/Father in-out of prison	GED	Aunt
P20	Mother/Father in-out of prison	GED	Mother

Note: (n=20) Education and family parental structure of the participants. All 20

participants resided on the Westside of Chicago.

Data Collection

The 20 participants from whom the data was collected were Black men between 18 and 25. They were active in a re-acclimation program sponsored by community-based stakeholders specializing in rehabilitative programming for current and ex-gang members. The interviews were conducted using telephone technology. The data collection consisted of 20 participants in in-depth interviews, lasting 30 minutes maximum. The participants agreed to participate from a location of their choosing. This method assured anonymity and safety for all involved in this project. The interviews were electronically recorded to ensure clarity and accuracy for data analysis. The participants exited the study by participating in a voluntary 5-minute feedback session to raise their questions or concerns. The data collection did not encounter significant deviations from the proposed method and process outlined in Chapter 3. The only addition was limited access to the participants and masking and distancing requirements. The interviews were transcribed using the NVivo transcription service and edited twice to assure accuracy and clarity. The NVivo platform-was also valuable in data coding and sentiment grading. As stated in the setting section of this chapter, the unusual circumstances encountered in data collection was the emergence of two robust variances of COVID-19, which changed lives locally and globally.

Data Analysis

According to (Wong, 2008), qualitative data analysis is a systematic search of the interview transcripts, observation notes, or other non-textual materials that the researcher accumulates to find meanings and insights. Data analysis refers to cleansing, inspecting,

transforming, and modeling data to know crucial information, make conclusions, and enable decision making (Bernard et al., 2016). Data analysis has various dimensions and approaches that involve multiple tools under many names, including sub-classifying the whole data into different parts for examination. It consists of gathering raw data and changing it into information used to make decisions. The intent and purpose of data analysis are to answer the research questions (Bernard et al., 2016).

In this study, data analysis was performed by conducting a detailed process and organizing of the data gathered from the in-depth interviews. This was accomplished by transcribing the recorded interviews into text using NVivo transcription. Then, the following strategies were employed to clean the data, including issues of incomplete information errors and duplications. Data cleaning included several processes: the determination of accuracies in the transcripts, record matching, and ensuring accurate translation. The method used to move data inductively from coding units to categories and themes was the employment of the NVivo software program to process interviews text into codes based on several topics such as text search, word frequency, and matrix query with sentiment grading. Then the NVivo platform was used to develop and construct coded frequency charts to create a comprehensive visual representation of the interview data. The codes and categories that emerged from the data were as follows: influences present, biggest childhood influences, a person admired most, emotional response, view of the parental unit, view of the biological mother, view of the birth father, most memorable experience with biological father, additional male or female

influences. These codes were consolidated and clustered to form the four themes (see

Table 2.)

Table 2

Description of Themes

Priori codes ¹	Open codes ²	Sentiment grading ³	Categories perception ⁴	Themes/ Participants ⁵
Environment	Environmental influences	Negative Mod neg Very neg Positive Mod pos Very pos	Influences on participant	Parental and other personal influences P1, P10, P12, P11, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P20 (<i>n</i> =10)
Family status	Family structure, roles of individuals in the home, and the effect on participant	Sentiment of bio father/Sentiment of bio mother	Parental effect	Most admired persons P12, P10, P14, P16, P11, P13, P15, P17, P2, P20 (<i>n</i> =10)
Direction and motivation	Effect on outlook and recommendation	Sentiment on matriarchal influence	Dominant influencing factor	Parental and other personal negative interactions P12, P1, P10, P11, P17, P13 (<i>n</i> =7)
Recommendation and advice to others	The total effect of codes, experiences, and outcomes	Sentiment on person admired Negative interactions View of bio mother/father	Additional male/female influences	Development of personal outlook and values P12, P1, P10, P11, P13, P15, P16, P17 (<i>n</i> =8)

¹Codes developed before examining the current data

²Open codes were generated during the examination of existing data

³Sentiments identified during the analysis of existing data

⁴Categories developed during examination and combining codes and sentiment

⁵Themes created by combining codes, categories, and sentiment

Theme 1: Parental and Other Personal Influences

The in-depth interview process produced a unanimous consensus among participants that they experienced the effect of varying levels from the individuals who resided in their homes and other individuals who were an active part of the environment. The data revealed that all 20 participants shared personal stories of how assorted individuals, from parental figures to other adults such as relatives, coaches, mentors, and friends, influenced their development and decisions. They shared the unique intricacies of their parental status or lack thereof and its impact on their thinking and life choices. Overall, the information provided by the participants provided an excellent synopsis of the poignant factors that were instrumental in their development. The following excerpts are examples of the participants' iterations:

P16 said:

My mom was the head of the house; she took care of all the bills and all that stuff; even though my mom didn't work, she managed to take care of everything we needed; she was who pushed me. She's a great woman, super strong, very independent, and always found a way to make it work, even when there was no way.

P17 shared, "I live with my dad and sister; they ensured that everything was good in the house. My mom did an excellent job with her involvement in my life; she helped me develop into the man I am today."

These participants shared stories of how adverse situations influenced their experiences and affected their choices. Their accounts exemplify how influences can be and frequently are affected by negative occurrences.

P20 stated, “My father was around for the first 8 years of my life. He was the head of the house, but after 8 years, he got caught up in the penal system leaving my mother to fend for us.”

P4 said:

I didn’t know what to say about my father because I didn’t understand why he was gone for so long, and I didn’t know why he never tried to reach out to me. I never wanted to ask him for clarification, but sometimes I think about it though not daily. Now I have a son, and I don’t want to be like my father.

Theme 2: Most Admired Persons

Participants in the study acknowledged the prevalence and importance of the most admired person’s involvement in their upbringing. An analysis of the data found the perception of the most admired person and participation by said person or persons helped formulate this theme.

P12 shared, “The person that I admire most is my mother because of how much she was on me when I was young. I did not always do good, but she was always the person who put me back on track.”

P14 asserted, “I would have to say, my mama. She made a lot of sacrifices, and she still does to this day.”

P15 stated, “My mom is the most admired person in my life; she is a stand-up woman; she made sure all of us were straight.”

Theme 3: Parental and Other Personal Negative Interaction

The theme of parental and other personal negative interactions surfaced in the data analysis. The detailed evaluation of the data revealed that 90% of the study’s participants indicated that some negative interaction in their lives affected their decision-making. These influences were spread across the matrix from negative to highly negative. They were establishing and defining a single-parent household as fatherless, and it contentiously surfaced and was perceived to be a negative situation. Another prevailing perception was that no other adult shared the leadership and responsibilities except the mother or mother figure in single-parent households. This issue is significant to establish for clarity purposes as one of the perceived points of negativity.

This important finding is significant because understanding the spectrum of matriarchal influence is paramount for appropriately addressing the research question: How and to what extent do single-parent matriarchal households influence African American men between the ages of 18 and 25 on joining gangs in Chicago?

P14 said:

Even though my mom and I bumped heads often when I was growing up, I learned to appreciate just how much her leadership meant to me. I feel like I have more of my mother in me. She was always the protective parent; she ensured I was on point in everything. Making the stuff right and timely was her emphasis; she kept me on my game.

P2 shared:

The persons I had the most negative interactions with that affected me the most were my uncles. My father was never active in my life; the only male role models I had were my uncles. They were into the street life and never around when I needed them.

P4 stated:

The persons I remember having the most negative interaction with were my aunts. They seem like they got great joy in getting me in trouble for the pettiest things. None of them could keep a man, and I see why.

P7 said:

The two people who had the most negative interactions in my life that affected me most were both my mom and pops. They were both full of negative energy; it's not that they were not good people; they just were not good parents or role models.

Theme 4: Development of Personal Outlook and Values

Development of personal outlook and values emerged as a theme when clustering and thematizing several codes and categories occurred. Those codes and categories combined several principles that allowed the development of categories that the study's participants considered their personal experiences and their ability to give advice based on their knowledge and individual outcomes. This process allowed the participants to reflect on their journey's totality and provide heartfelt advice to others. The study's participants summarized their direction in the following excerpts:

P10 said, “Try to establish a connection with your parents; they play an important role in your development. You can learn what not to do from them and what to do. Try and learn from their mistakes.”

P11 shared, “Always listen to your parents’ opinions; they can sometimes see what you don’t see.”

P13 stated, “Always go with your own decisions no matter what others tell you. In reality, you will be held responsible for your actions.”

P15 said, “My best advice is always to open your mouth when you have something to say. If you don’t express your feelings, no one would know them or care about them.”

The data revealed several discrepant cases. Three interviews showed that participants were raised and influenced in a household with a mother and father. These discrepant situations revealed in the data proved to be unique. Several participants indicated that despite the existence of a father, the matriarchal influence was identified as a significant driving force for those participants. These discrepant situations were factored into the analysis by accounting for the matriarchal influence by understanding parental singularity (absence of a father) did not have to exist for the matriarchal influence to be a significant factor in the participants’ lives and decision-making. It is paramount to recognize and identify this essential element because it allows flexibility and the accurate evaluation of the matriarchal influence while accounting for dual parenthood.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Reliability and validity of the data analysis were addressed in this study by assuring credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. A detailed and precise data analysis process was provided disclosing the methods and details to show the trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility

To ensure credibility in this study, the extended conversations with the study participants were closely observed. Additional credibility was established by further analyzing the transcript of each interview using the NVivo software program. Within the platform, an examination of the completed transcripts was performed visibly and audibly by conducting several pass-throughs of the data. This process allowed the identification of unique trends and occurrences in the resulting data. A greater level of credibility was accomplished by rigorously scrutinizing the data through several observations to ensure accuracy and clarity. Theory triangulation was used, employing matriarchal theory (1995) and CRT (2013), to achieve even higher levels of credibility. Finally, member checking was used during the in-depth interviewing process to reiterate the participants' responses to assure accuracy and clarity.

The coding process discovered the need to employ a method to capture the breadth and null responses. During the interviews, one trend that emerged was uncomfortable questions drawing an emotional response. Additionally, sentiments were compiled before assembling the overarching themes in the final pass-through. Sentiment grading was used to capture this element. The main finding is that human coding still

carries the day for sentiment coding. According to (Wouter et al., 2021), only trained students and crowd coding achieve levels of agreement with the gold standard accepted as valid measurements. Grading sentiment adds additional context to the responses.

Transferability

The phenomenon of gangs is an identified international issue and transferability is an essential element that heightens universal application. Transferability is a detailed and concise description of the study's context, research, and foundation to judge the merits and alignment of the study based on their experiences (Cope, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). A thick description is used in this study to establish transferability. Several codes provided appropriate topics for thick description. Thick description involves writing detailed narratives or 'vignettes' explaining situations and their background 'context' (Drew, 2020). The following is a small sample of how thick descriptions were utilized to build a clear picture and transferability of the study participants' situations.

Adult influences:

P9 said, "It was my mother. I did not have too much of my father in my life. My mother was both parents."

Biggest childhood influence:

P14 shared, "I would have to say my mother because when my mom and dad split, my father went on to do his own thing, and my mother was left to care for and support us."

Matriarchal influence:

P20 stated, “The first 8 years my father was around, he spent most of his time in and out of prison, leaving my mother as the sole provider.”

Walden University’s IRB guidelines were also used to establish transferability for this research project.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the expectation of providing enough information so that other researchers can replicate each step when attempting to enhance this study, look at it from a different framework, or when forming alternative theories (Houghton et al., 2013).

Confirmability was established by meticulously documenting the process of collecting and analyzing the data derived in this research project. Detailed information, interpretation, methods, theories, and logic were provided to show how my findings and conclusions were formulated.

Dependability

According to Shenton (2004), dependability addresses the issue of reliability; the researcher employs techniques to show that, if the study were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, it would achieve comparable results. An employed methodology which achieved dependability was the meticulously recorded and documented process that was used to select the participants, the process used in the gathering of the data, the methods and tools used to transcribe and code the data so that future researchers can duplicate this study. Careful measures were also employed to ensure conceptualization, theoretical application, and interpretation of the results and findings could be replicated.

Confirmability

The audit trails technique was also used to establish confirmability. The beneficial aspect of its use is when writing up the results chapter. To ensure confirmability, a qualitative researcher details the data collection process, analysis, and interpretation. According to Urban et al. (2018), one of the best ways to accomplish this is to use memos to write down thoughts, insights, or potential codes during the analysis process. Sentiment grading was also used as an audit trail technique. Grading sentiment adds additional context to the responses given by the interviewees. Each passage content was evaluated and assigned to a sentiment node representing a range on a scale (of emotion); this process was conducted using the NVivo platform.

After completing sentiment grading, findings from the relationships between codes were documented. The positive sentiment expressed for a member of the parental unit tended to echo values regarding the interviewees' outlook and understanding (i.e., what advice would you give a young person raised like you about their relationship with their parents). Participants indicated positive sentiment and expressed it in earlier questions about the parental unit. The opposing view expressed by participants regarding one or more parental figures appeared to be an indicator of an urgent desire for more self-reliance vs. receiving and acting on the parental direction.

Results

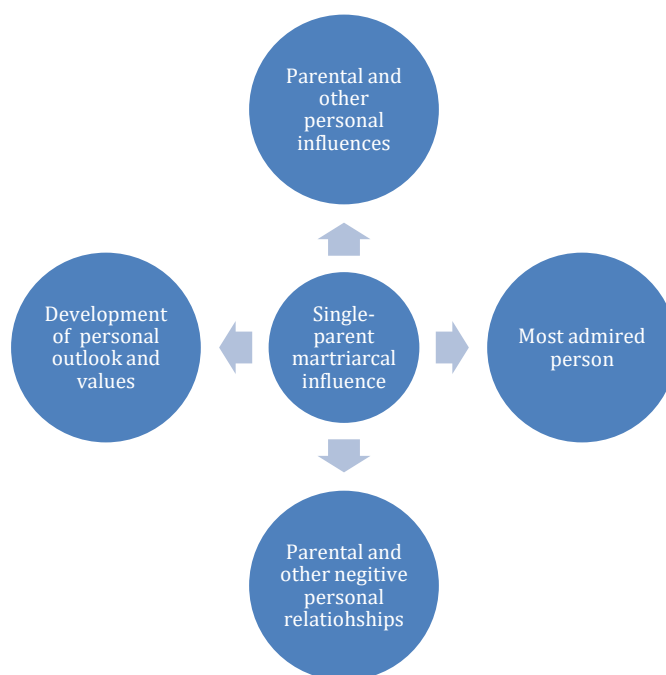
Moustakas's (1994) modified van Kaam method of analysis was used in the thematic analysis process for this study. Data analysis was conducted through a thorough and meticulous approach to coding, categorizing, and developing themes. These codes,

categories, and themes manifested from the observed data from the participants' stated experiences during the in-depth interview process. The specific codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data were unique and insightful. These codes and categories represented a bountiful selection of poignant areas of significance that yielded four significant themes directly addressing the research question and its complex tributaries. The themes that emerged were: parental and other personal influences, most admired persons, parental and other personal negative interactions, development of personal outlook and values (See Figure 1).

To assure consistency in the themes, clustering and thematizing procedures were utilized to address the need for the iterations to be representative and accurate of the participant's responses. The four themes that emerged are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 2

Single-Parent Matriarchal Influence



Theme 1: Parental and Other Personal Influences

Parental and other influences revealed all the subjects indicated that individuals present in the home where they resided during the period in question influenced them. Their decision-making process ranged from very influencing to barely affecting. The following are examples of significantly influencing to slightly controlling statements.

P1 said, “My mom works very hard to keep me on the right path. That’s the only adult I had because my father died when I was young.”

P12 shared, “The adults I grew up around like, like my father, mother, grandmother, aunt, and uncle, we all didn’t stay in the same house, but we lived very close, and they had the greatest influence on me.”

P2 stated, “Do you want me to keep it 100% with you? Forget him! (Referring to his father) My mom is my parents. And my stepdad was not much help.”

Theme 2: Most Admired Persons

Most admired person, this theme surfaced as a combination of clustering and thematizing the codes of perception of biological mother and father, and perception of the parental unit and additional adult influences. The data revealed that 11 participants indicated their mother or mother-figure was the person they admired most. Participants’ responses are summarized in the following excerpts:

P12 said, “The person I admire most is my mother because of how much she was on me when I was young. I did not always do good, but she was always the person who put me back on track.”

P14 shared, “I would have to say, my mama. She made a lot of sacrifices, and she still does to this day.”

P15 stated, “My mom is the most admired person in my life; she is a stand-up woman; she made sure all of us were straight.”

The data revealed that two participants indicated that the father or father figure was the person they admired most.

P19 said, “The person I admire most is my dad because he went through hard times, and despite being locked up, he never gave up on me.”

Finally, the data revealed that 30% of the participants indicated other adults ranging from teachers, coaches, mentors, and professional athletes as persons they admired most. Samples of these excerpts from the study’s participants are:

P10 shared, “Marshawn Lynch is the person I most admire because he is the person. I always wanted to be like him.”

P11 stated, “Kevin Durant is the person I most admire because of his work ethic and persistence.”

P20 said, “The person I admired most was my football coach; he treated me like family. He was the only person who believed in me.”

Theme 3: Parental and Other Personal Negative Interaction

Negative interaction emerged as a theme from the clustering of emotional responses and sentiment grading. I identified negative interaction using open-ended questions that allowed participants to express themselves through a series of questions measured on a sentiment scale to account for emotions that otherwise would be missed or

overlooked. The sentiments examined range from negative to very negative. It was of the utmost importance that these deeply rooted issues were recognized and considered. These emotions and sentiments grading emerged from the data collected in 80% of the study's participants. The scholarly examination of the study question required in-depth analysis of contributing factors of the causes and characteristics associated with the matriarchal influence of which negative interaction is one. A few examples of the study's participants' iterations of antagonistic interactions are as follows:

P10 said, "The person I dislike most is my mother. Based on my friends' relationships with their mothers, mine was terrible. We always had some beef. I just wanted to have my mother."

P14 shared:

The person I had the most negative interaction with was my mom. We always bumped heads on every level, and I couldn't do anything right. I hated her so much; I just wanted to do things right to prove her wrong.

P17 stated, "I hated my older brother so much. That's the most negative interaction for me. He always caused a lot of confusion when he was around. I dislike him."

P2 said, "My father is the person I had the greatest negative relationship with; he was never around and always lying about everything."

Theme 4: Development of Personal Outlook and Values

Outlook and values emerged as themes when clustering and thematizing several codes and categories. Those codes and categories combined several codes that allowed

the studies participants to consider their personal experiences and their ability to give advice based on their knowledge and outcomes. This process allowed the participants to reflect on the totality of their journey and provide heartfelt advice to others. A portion of the participant's recommendations are summarized in the following excerpts:

P12 said, "My advice to others is to listen to your parents. A lot of stuff they say is real. Listen to the people around you. Appreciate the knowledge and keep moving forward."

P1 shared, "At the end of the day, your parents know what's best for you."

P13 stated, "Always go with your own decisions no matter what others tell you. In all reality, you will be held responsible for your actions."

P14 said, "Don't rush to be grown; take your time, stay focused; you will be an adult."

Summary

This qualitative study aimed to increase the understanding of how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between 18 and 25 to join gangs in Chicago. The participants provided in-depth and personal iterations addressing the research questions. These iterations were captured using telephone technology and transcribed, coded, and analyzed with the assistance of the NVivo software program. An in-depth analysis of the collected data yielded four themes: (1) parental and other personal influences, (2) most admired persons, (3) parental and other personal negative interactions, and (4) development of personal outlook and values. The themes derived from the analysis were an accurate depiction of the

participants' lived experiences gleaned from their perspectives and stated perceptions of their lived experiences. All 20 participants shared personal accounts of their individual experiences that they believed forged their development and decision-making process.

Theme 1 focused on parental and other personal influences on the study's participants, emphasizing their environment and the individuals that constituted that setting. Every participant indicated individuals impacted them in their environment that affected their development and decision-making. The study participants articulated influence by some form of positive or negative relationships with assorted individuals that influenced their decision-making process.

Theme 2 focused on participant perception of the most admired persons. All 20 participants indicated that there was an identified individual that they most admired and how that person had an impactful influence on their development and choices. Furthermore, positive, and negative sentiments also surfaced as a significant factor in this theme.

Theme 3 involved examining parental and other personal negative interactions. All participants except two indicated that some form of parental and other personal negative interaction directly or indirectly affected them and their decision-making process. It concerned their personal and social development and how positive and negative sentiments influenced their decision-making process.

Theme 4 focused on the participant's development of personal outlook and values. All 20 participants provided a unique detailed account of how this theme was manifested and instrumental in their lives and decision-making. The participants

expressed the manifestation of their development through the personally derived and articulated advice that each participant offered to individuals believed to be in similar environments and situations that they experienced.

Chapter 4 encompassed demographics, setting, and summarizing of the data collection method. Included in this chapter was evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a comprehensive summary of the main points of this chapter. Chapter 5 includes interpretations of the findings, study limitations, implications, recommendations, and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This qualitative study aimed to increase understanding of how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between 18 and 25 on joining gangs in Chicago. In this research project, I examined the lived experience of 20 African American men who reside in Chicago. One of my goals in this research project was to expand the knowledge based on the contributing factors that should be considered and understood about the behaviors and conditions of the African American men that constitute the phenomenon of gangs. Building on the present literature was an essential first step in achieving the goals of this research project. An in-depth examination of the plethora of contributing issues and conditions that collectively influence this phenomenon was vital to my research project. The second purpose of this research project was to expand the knowledge base of the phenomenon of gangs, allowing a unique opportunity to promote positive social change that can affect this worldwide issue.

It was essential to this project to capture the essence of the African American men's influences and experiences that shape and promote their decision-making process. Therefore, I chose to use the descriptive data technique to assist in the gleaning of this information. In-depth interviews of 20 African American men who provided details of their individual experiences resulted from this process. The data gathered from the in-depth interviews were analyzed and interpreted with the assistance of NVivo software.

Interpretation of Findings

This qualitative study incorporated the examination of the lived experiences of 20 African American men concerning the effect that a single-parent matriarchal household had on them and their decision to participate in gangs. To assist in achieving this goal, I collected data through in-depth interviews that focused on my study participants' lived experiences and influences. The purpose and focus of the study design were to ascertain data from my research question: How and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between the ages of 18 and 25 on joining gangs in Chicago?

My primary finding was that the matriarchal influence is a conceptually complex and diverse prism. This finding results from the interplay of the origins, cause, and history of the matriarchal effect on Black men within this study's age parameters. I found that single-parent matriarchal homes caused by either absence of the father, father figure, or female-dominated environment contributed to the opportunity for negative life choices. Ninety percent of this study's participants related that they had limited or no relationship with their biological father or father figure. A multitude of studies supports this finding. Bacchiniet et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating the role of self-serving cognitive distortion and parental rejection, and community violence witnessed in YGM. The study's findings revealed a direct relationship between parental rejection and ASB. Barrett and Turner (2005) asserted that family structure and mental health, mediating effects of socioeconomic status, family process, and social stress affect the

gang phenomenon. The authors suggested a correlation between growing up in single-parent matriarchal households and youth maladjustment.

After I conducted a detailed analysis of the data, the second key finding was the discovery of the four prominent themes. The first theme focused on parental and other personal influences. Data revealed that all participants indicated that a father's participation or lack thereof greatly influenced their situations and outcomes. The second theme focused on the most admired person; 95% of the participants indicated they had a specific person they admired and modeled themselves after. This theme is significant because the participants noted that the person most admired was not their biological father over 90% of the time. The third theme focused on parental and other personal negative interactions. Sixty percent of the participants indicated that a negative interaction, either with a biological parent or an outside personal relationship, influenced their decision-making. They noted that these outside influences may have resulted from a lack of family stability and structure. The fourth theme revealed in this finding was the development of personal outlook and values. This theme echoed 100% of the participants' opinions. Every participant indicated that their unique individual situations greatly impacted their personal development, life outlook, and value system. They noted that positive and negative situations help forge who they are and what type of person they have become. They shared this recognition by offering highly personalized and heart-felt advice to others who may be experiencing similar situations as theirs.

According to Saldana (2013), coding is not a precise science; it is primarily interpretive. When the data were analyzed, the yield was a unique set of codes,

categories, and themes. Qualitative content analysis was used to achieve this objective. The finding revealed several discrepant cases, which were factored into the calculation. These interviews showed that being raised and influenced in a household that included both mother and father was part of the data. These discrepant case qualities proved to be unique. One such situation was, despite the existence of a father, I identified the matriarchal influence as a significant driving force of those participants. These discrepant cases factored into the analysis by accounting for the matriarchal power by understanding parental singularity did not have to be present for the matriarchal influence to be a significant factor in the participants' lives and decision-making. It is paramount to recognize and identify this essential element; it allows flexibility and the accurate evaluation of the matriarchal influence while accounting for dual parenthood.

The findings of this qualitative study include an extension of knowledge and confirm the assertions of several peer-reviewed studies in the literature review chapter of this project. My results and findings support the research conducted by Barrett and Turner (2005), which suggested a correlation between growing up in single-parent matriarchal households and youth maladjustment. Like the Barrett and Turner's study, my findings asserted a direct effect associated with the absence of a father or father figure and unfavorable decision making. The results revealed that most participants (15) indicated no relationship to negative relationship with their father or father figure. Further, the effect of the matriarchal influence perpetuated by the absence of a father or father figure proved to be an extension of a recent study investigating the role of self-serving cognitive distortion and parental rejection (Bacchiniet, 2020). The study

examined community violence in YGM; the findings revealed a direct relationship between parental rejection and ASB. The study also found a significant interaction between parental rejection and YGM. Confirmation of Bacchini et al.'s (2020) findings agree with my research results because most participants (17) related that they had low or no relationship with their biological father or father figure.

The findings also confirmed and expanded the findings of several of the peer-reviewed studies discussed in the literature review. One found a correlation between growing up in single-mother households and youth maladjustment. Barrett and Turner (2005) and my results asserted a direct effect associated with the absence of a father or father figure and negative decision-making. My findings were most of the participants indicated no or a negative relationship with their father or father figure, and all the participants indicated current or former gang membership. Although all participants were gang members, it cannot be empirically proven or asserted that the primary influencing factor contributing to the participants' involvement in gangs is a direct by-product of matriarchal upbringing or influence. However, the results indicate most of the study participants showed a matriarchal influence effect.

Further, Bergen-Cico et al. (2013) ran a qualitative analysis using the in-depth interview method performed with men who have histories of gang affiliation and street crime. Bergen-Cico et al. found deprivation and adrenaline addiction contribute to gang membership. My results and findings were most (17) of the participants indicated an absence of a father figure or male influence, supporting Bergen-Cico et al.'s assertions.

Raby et al. (2016) asserted, grounded in the meta-narrative, that emergent gang-affiliated men have experienced developmental trauma and are drawn to street gangs to fulfill their fundamental need to belong, be protected, and achieve socio-economic status stability. My findings support Raby et al. in that most participants indicated that they experienced some form of family trauma and sought strength in their most admired person choice. Finally, my results and findings are an extension of knowledge from the peer-reviewed study of Goodwill (2016). Goodwill studied the effects of several different variables and their impact on gang membership entry among prospective Indigenous men. Goodwill attempted to understand and describe incidents that have facilitated gang entry of the subjects. Likewise, my results and findings indicated that all study participants indicated that a particularly memorable incident, positive or negative, played a role in their development and decision making.

Analysis and interpretation of my findings in the context of the matriarchal theory (1995) and CRT (2013) found that the matriarchal theory, which produces the matriarchal influence, positively impacts most of the study's participants. The collected data revealed that the matriarchal influence affected most (17) of the study's participants.

Further, most of my study participants indicated a strong to moderate positive matriarchal influence on their development and decision-making. The other participants showed a moderate to negative matriarchal impact on their development and decision-making. CRT (2013) originated and arose when individual legal scholars, most notably Bell and Freeman, expressed frustration with the glacial pace of racial reform in the mid-1970s. Revised and expanded by Delgado and Stefancic (2013), CRT examines the social

and political causes of the minority experience and issues in the United States of America. The research question in my study, “how and to what extent single-parent matriarchal households could influence African American men between the ages of 18 and 25 on joining gangs in Chicago,” falls within the realm and scope that the CRT addresses. Delgado and Stefancic also asserted that CRT is a theoretical and interpretive mode that challenges the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression. When I examined the CRT’s effect on African American men’s propensity to join gangs in Chicago, marginalization and its impact on the study population must be acknowledged and considered to examine the phenomenon appropriately. CRT focuses on these critical issues: in-depth critiques of liberalism; revisionist interpretations of history; crime; the intersection of race, sex, and class; the Black-White binary; intergroup relations; legal institutions, critical pedagogy, and minorities in the law; gay and lesbian issues; cultural nationalism and separatism; criticism and self-awareness; and critical White studies, among others, all of which contribute to the totality of marginalization and are applicable in my research findings. Examining this phenomenon through these theoretical lenses and recognizing the existence and influence of marginalization was critical in the scholarly examination of the central research question of my study.

Scholarly examining how being raised in a single-parent matriarchal household influences Black men in the stated age range, all the issues and history associated with matriarchal theory (1995) and CRT (2013), including their many complications and nuances, were necessary for a comprehensive and scholarly observation. My study attempted to understand and identify incidents that may have facilitated gang entry of the

subjects. The findings and results of my research concluded that extended family members, economics, and community significantly influenced gang membership's risk and probability among the study subjects. These same issues revealed themselves in the in-depth interviews with the study participants who considered contributing factors in the decision-making process that constituted the matriarchal influence.

The extension of knowledge produced by my study through the lens of CRT (2013) and matriarchal theory (1995) indicates that the matriarchal influence does affect the decision-making process of African American men 18 to 25. The findings of this study suggest that the participants' decision to join and participate in gangs is in part driven by the marginalization of the African American community. When conducting an appropriate and meaningful study on this phenomenon, I must consider the long-term effects of marginalization on the family structure, values, and economics. Results and recommendations indicate that single-parent matriarchal influence on Black men requires an expanded search on the complex and multifaceted issues associated with this phenomenon. A final interpretation recognizes that the theoretical lenses of this study, matriarchal theory, CRT, and the research question share their foundational origins in the concept of marginalization.

Limitations of the Study

Numerous limitations to trustworthiness arose from the execution of this study. This study was limited to a minimum of 20 current or ex-gang members who self-identified using purposeful and snowball sampling. Understanding qualitative results are not generalizable. Future studies could focus on different cities, states, and countries to

account for the geographical, social, and political differences in the phenomenon of gangs.

A second limitation was that similarities and conditions were shared with the study's participants. The similarities shared with the study's participants could have created a bias and potentially influenced outcomes. Potential bias was addressed by strictly adhering to the ethical guidelines for qualitative research and ensuring that I remained objective and impartial. Several measures addressed this potential influence with a clear understanding of how difficult it would be to eliminate my biases. The third measure I employed to limit bias was to use multiple media to code the research participants' gathered data.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research include examining the diverse set of conditions that allow appropriate and specific addressing of the vast and complex issues associated with the phenomenon of gangs. Gangs, an international issue, require recommendations that consider social and geopolitical conditions that affect that specific society and culture, which is paramount to any successful future research. A second recommendation addresses a limitation mentioned in the limitation section of this study, which was the small sampling size used. Future researchers can use a more extensive sampling size, extending social, geographic, and political conditions. Understanding the population's culture, society, and political needs is essential to a productive and valuable study. A third recommendation examines the connection between gang membership and the necessity of individuals to experience the fulfillment and desire for inclusion and

acceptance. Finally, future studies can concentrate on the probable origin of phenomena such as gangs, matriarchal influence, and terrorism. That possible originating concept for this and many other unfair and undesirable social issues is the concept of marginalization. The recommendations for addressing marginalization in the academic realm is to increase and invest in education from early childhood development through college or vocational training for all citizens equally. Addressing marginalization from a practical standpoint is to simply make discrimination of any type illegal and unacceptable by enacting and enforcing laws to assure equality and equitability is achievable through educating and encouraging fairness and justice for all citizens.

Implications

The implications for positive social change are unique and multi-layered. It has several appropriate levels that it can affect. Gangs and the matriarchal influence are such a vast and wide-reaching phenomenon that the ranks of potential social change reflect the enormity: individual, family, societal, cultural, national, and international levels.

The individual-level implications are the linchpin to appropriately investigating and evaluating the phenomenon of gangs and the matriarchal influence. The indisputable fact that all gangs consist of individuals influenced and motivated by many issues and situations is a significant starting point when examining the implications for social change. Individuals, their societal influences, culture, family structure, and political prowess are all factors that affect the phenomenon of gangs and matriarchal power.

Family implications show and confirm a significant connection between family structure, influence, or lack thereof, and the phenomenon of gangs. The findings show

that matriarchal influence is affected by family structure, interaction, and behavior. It is necessary to examine this study question at its rudimentary level and concentrate on the family and its related influences and members.

Societal and cultural implications are significant; the expectations and influences of the respective society and culture dictate the necessity and effectiveness of any change in its constituents. Gangs and gang membership are not an exception to the above-stated rule. Understanding the societal and cultural norms and expectations in which the research and examination occur is a significant focal point for positive social change.

The national and international implications for positive social change are enormous. Gangs are a global phenomenon and are subject to all the above-stated factors. The impact of positive social change affects nations and societies around the world. The wide-reaching and enormous possibilities of positive social change are critical for the national and international communities. The necessity to investigate this phenomenon at its rudimentary level, which is its membership and motivations, such as matriarchal influence, is the first step in thoroughly examining and addressing this phenomenon for positive social change worldwide.

The theoretical implications of using matriarchal theory (1995) and CRT (2013) were paramount in properly examining this topic. These theories allow the research question examination through these separate and unique lenses. It afforded the observation of the study question from a historical perspective. One of the observations was that matriarchal theory addressed the study's central question through its history of being identified as one of the earliest forms of societal management. Matriarchal theory

underwent a concerted attack through societal and gender-driven devices that have influenced the matriarchal roles worldwide. CRT's implications on this study examine how and why the non-majority and individuals of color seem to be disproportionately affected and victimized by society and allowed to be subjected to this and other oppressive societal behaviors continuously. CRT focuses on several societal situations that directly influence and perpetuate the matriarchal existence and its effect. According to CRT, liberalism; revisionist interpretations of history; crime; the intersection of race, sex, and class; the Black-White binary; intergroup relations; legal institutions, critical pedagogy, and minorities in the law; gay and lesbian issues; cultural nationalism and separatism; criticism and self-awareness; and critical White studies, among others. Recognizing and developing a clear understanding of how these issues influence and affect positive social change is vital in performance and perpetuating positive social change at all these respective levels. Using these theoretical lenses revealed a unique commonality that necessitated this and future studies to examine and consider marginalization as a significant factor in this phenomenon.

Conclusion

The critical finding of this study is that all the participants in this research project indicated some form of matriarchal influence. Understanding the origination and depth of the matriarchal influence was essential for examining and developing information critical to addressing gangs and their matriarchal impact. The appropriate analysis of the matriarchal influence required a multidimensional examination approach with a solid theoretical and historical perspective.

The essence of this study illuminates the complexity and diversity of this international phenomenon which affects the quality of life for societies worldwide. This phenomenon of gangs, their origins, causes, and membership are the recommended focus for properly examining and addressing this critical and widespread topic for future research. Clarifying and understanding that gangs domestically or internationally are a collective group of individuals motivated by an accepted commonality is essential to the proper and effective addressing of this phenomenon. Politics, societal shifting, economics, family structure, and religion are all issues that must be focused upon when properly addressing the phenomenon. The findings necessitated the consideration of marginalization and its effects on this study's participants. A review of the marginalization of the African American community was essential when addressing this phenomenon and its matriarchal influence. A significant takeaway from this study is that a researcher must consider the marginalization factors, what they are, and how they affect the culture and society in which the analysis occurs. The critical and scholarly examination of the phenomenon of gangs and their multitude of contributing factors avails researchers a unique and profound opportunity to gain much-needed insightful knowledge of a second worldwide phenomenon that is prevalent and present. That phenomenon is terrorism. The phenomenon of gangs and terrorism (domestic or international) share similar properties and attributes that, if examined thoroughly and correctly, can address two of the world's most coveted issues, achievement of peace and social civility.

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Appendix A: Research Questions

1. Tell me about the adults who lived with you as a youth in the house.
2. What were each person's respective responsibilities in the house?
3. What person had the most significant influence on you as a youth?
4. What was the most fun you experienced as a youth?
5. Describe an unforgettable event in your youth.
6. Who did you admire most in your youth, and why?
7. Who did you dislike most in your youth and why?
8. Describe your first experience with a gang.
9. What influenced you to join the gang you chose?
10. Discuss why you left the gang.

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

[Provided as needed]

June 15, 2021

Dear Darryl Edwards,

Based on my research proposal review, I permit you to conduct the study entitled *A Qualitative Examination of Single-Parent Matriarchal Homes' Influence on Gang Membership* within the [provided as needed]. As part of this study, I authorize you to verbally invite and post flyers in the [provided as needed] main facilities inviting individuals who meet the pre-describe criteria to sign up to participate. I authorize you to conduct in-depth interviews virtually using Internet technology, allowing accurate documentation to be accomplished audio/visually. Using this technology to conduct these interviews ensures a safe and reliable research experience for participants and research staff. The data collection instrument source is researcher-produced interview questions developed with input from a subject matter expert in gangs and gang violence. I authorize you to conduct member checking at the end of the individual interviews by setting up a follow-up interview with the participants to review the findings virtually using internet technology, allowing accurate documentation audio/visually. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their discretion.

Organization's responsibilities include verbally inviting candidates to participate and posting and handing out flyers inviting candidates to participate in the study. Provide a room and computer equipped with Zoom technology for interviews and member checking. Provide the supervision required by your agency to conduct the interviews and member checking safely and per your agency's policies. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study if our circumstances change.

The student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential. I will not provide it to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

[Provided as needed] has agreed to provide professional counseling to any participants who request or require intervention due to the psychological distress that may arise from participation in this study.

Sincerely,

[Provided as needed]

I'm using Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. The Uniform Electronic Transactions Act regulates electronic signatures. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).