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WHY AMERICAN BOYS JOIN STREET GANGS

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ABSTRACT

It is well known that gangs flourish in low-income African American ghettos and Mexican barrios. There have been a moderate number of studies surrounding the reasons why youth join gangs. However, few have emphasized the life path of gang members beginning from age 7 years through adolescence and what Freud identified as the latency phase. This paper contributes to the literature on gang recruitment and socialization by introducing the life path of gang members, providing a rationale as to why certain boys join gangs, and show how developmental patterns are consistent with DSM-IV-TR categorical criteria of ODD/CD and ASD patterns of delinquent youth.

*Keywords:* Criminology, Gang Culture, Sigmund Freud, United Stated States.