

Delinquent Peers and Gangs

- As juveniles enter adolescence, the peer group comes to occupy a central place in their lives
- Associating with delinquent peers is a major cause of delinquency
- Many, if not most, commit delinquent offenses in the company of their peers

What impacts do delinquent peers have on delinquency

- Having delinquent peers is typically the strongest correlate of delinquency
 - H-1: Individual traits, family problems and negative school experiences cause delinquency
 - H-2: Association with delinquent peers causes delinquency
 - H-3: Delinquency causes juveniles to associate with delinquency peers
- The association between delinquent peers and delinquency is partly due to the causal effect of delinquent peers on the individuals delinquency
- Longitudinal research: Even when other variables are controlled, associating with delinquent peers leads to an increase in subsequent delinquency
- Associating with delinquent peers is often the best predictor of subsequent delinquency
- Data suggests that the progression from no delinquency to serious delinquency typically proceeds in the following manner
 - Juveniles associate with mildly delinquent peers before they engage in delinquency
 - This peer association leads to minor delinquency
 - The minor delinquency leads to association with more delinquent peers
 - That association leads to more serious delinquency

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