

## **Sexual Violence among Mexican-American Gang Affiliated Females**

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Mexican American female adolescents are at a disadvantaged structural societal position in several areas: socioeconomic, ethnicity, gender, and age. Therefore, some researchers have posited that some Mexican American female adolescents join gangs to resolve societal structural problems, even at the cost of increased risk for substance use, sex, crime, and violent activities (Miller, 2001). The present study explored sexual violence among high-risk Mexican American adolescent females using Johnson (1995) typology of intimate partner violence. Life history interviews were conducted on 150 Mexican American gang affiliated females, ages 14-18 years, to elicit information regarding participants' exposure to and experience with crime, drugs, violence, and sexual behavior.

Results of the qualitative analysis revealed two analytical concepts: 1) Context of sexual violence and 2) Attitudes towards sexual violence. Within the context of sexual violence theme, five sub-themes were found: emotional manipulation, sexual coercion, attempted rape, rape, and gang initiation. The attitudes towards sexual violence theme, two themes were found: acceptance of sexual violence and blaming the victim of sexual violence. The author argues that the sexual violence experienced by the study's female adolescent participants in the street gang culture is characterized by patriarchal terrorism as explained by Johnson's (1995) typology, in which the male perpetrator used violence to control the female victim. The implications of the study are for advocacy efforts to address attitudinal change of sexual violence through media and increase male participation in the responsibility of violence against women. Additional research should be conducted with a focus on male perpetrators and prevention programs should also be developed with an aim at attitudinal change of violence against women.

#### **References**

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- Miller, J. (2001). *One of the guys*. New York: Oxford University Press.