

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK AND AFRICAN WOMEN
STUDIES

**THE INFLUENCE OF URBAN CRIMINAL GANGS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC
LIVELIHOODS OF FORMER FEMALE GANG MEMBERS: THE CASE OF GAZA
CRIMINAL GANG IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

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NOVEMBER, 2022

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented to any other University for any award.

Signature..



Date 17th November 2022

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family, who have stood with me during my academic endeavor. I will be forever grateful for your prayers and material support during my study period.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCs	:	Assistant County Commissioners
CBD	:	Central Business District
CBOs	:	Community Based Organizations
EX	:	Former
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KDHS	:	Kenya Demographic and Health survey
KIIS	:	Key Informant Interviews
NCRC	:	National Crime Research Centre
NGAO	:	National Government Administration Officers
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organization
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Science
USA	:	United States of America
WB	:	World Bank

ABSTRACT

Females are influential agents of social change in the African social sphere, and their participation in criminal gangs is likely to negatively affect future generations. Consequently, if allowed to join criminal gangs, they are likely to bring up children who are truant and notorious criminals, and fail to contribute meaningfully to the social development agenda. To ensure that they make a meaningful contribution to the society and shun crime, those females who choose to leave gang life need to be supported to rebuild their lives. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the implications of gang membership on former female gang members' social and economic livelihoods outside the gang. The following specific objectives guided this study while recognizing that the focus was on a sample of ex-gang female members. The study aims were; (a) to find out how females are recruited into Gaza gang and implication of their recruitment (b) to determine the factors that inspired the females' decision to leave Gaza gang (c) to examine the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihoods post gang life (d) to find out the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on female ex-gang member's social and economic livelihoods. The study was anchored on the lifestyle victimology theory and Feminist Criminology Theory. To achieve its objectives, the research was conducted in Nairobi East, in the areas of Dandora and Kayole where Gaza gang activities are documented on a daily basis. A mixed method design was used, and it involved combining the survey method for quantitative data and a qualitative research design. The study targeted 300 former female Gaza gang members, and a sample size of 111 members was obtained using a constructed data set and simple random sampling. Out of 111 female ex-Gaza gang members, only 100 participants responded. The study also considered KIIs namely six local police officers, three NGAO officials, and two *Nyumba Kumi* officials as key informants. The quantitative responses were then analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data was analyzed for content and presented thematically. The study findings indicate that age and education have a role to play in determining gang departure for women. Females had been lured into the Gaza gang through drug usage in social places, especially in the housing estates. The findings of the study indicate that most female ex-Gaza gang members performed roles such as information gathering, ferrying goods, and storing firearms. The study concludes that the livelihoods of former female gang members was endangered due to increased stigmatization and stereotyping from the community members as a result of their past gang life. Engagement in criminal gang activity leaves women more prone to dangers such as sexual abuse and being more deprived economically than men in post gang membership. Most females in the gang are abused psychologically, sexually, and physically, which affects their social and economic livelihoods significantly in post gang membership. In conclusion, the study recommended that law enforcement agencies should map out all the places where recruitment for female gang members takes place and apprehend all the recruiters to protect vulnerable females. The National and County Governments should increase awareness among parents in the informal settlements on the potential recruitment of their young girls into criminal gangs. Additionally, the government should finance small business ventures to boost the economic livelihoods of former female gang members and empower them. Community programs for mentorship should be designed to assist the development of self-reliance culture in former female gang members.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Over the last six decades, developing countries have witnessed rapid urbanization in line with global trends. Currently, fifty-four percent of the world population has settled in urban centers, and it is predicted that this number will go up by over sixty percent by the year 2050 (World Bank, 2018). Urban areas bring with them a promise of socio-economic development, better chances of employment, increased income and enhanced ease of doing business. However, the mixture of strangers' results in an increased sense of invincibility, leading to loosened systems of accountability, which form a ground for moral delinquency (Jalil & Iqbal, 2010). Challenges associated with urbanization, such as inflation, unemployment, and increased income inequality stir the development of crime. Carter & Jones (2019) record that as urbanization has increased, so have organized crime rates, which not only cause physical and psychological damage but also cause victims to worry, trauma, insecurity, and uncertainty. Additionally, as Wincup (2018) has it, crime disrupts social stability and peace in cities, discouraging domestic and foreign investment.

Organized crime refers to the ongoing, organized, and orchestrated criminal behavior and actions by a group of people, and it involves engagement in illegal activities through organized and coordinated efforts (Wincup, 2018). Criminal gangs engage in various illegal activities, including narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, weapons smuggling, cybercrime, hacking, money laundering, and counterfeiting (Costa, 2018). Compared to other illegal activities, organized crime is "organized.". Its members include drug kingpins, public officials, police officers, accountants, bankers, military personnel, and other public officials (Europol, 2018). Organized criminal gangs comprise of brutal, hardened criminals, disciplined, dangerous, and armed with lethal weapons. They have been globally characterized by their use of violent force, such as shooting, intimidation, and beating, to resolve disputes (Kriegler, 2017). In Africa, for example, Boko Haram is one of the continent's lethal criminal gangs. Its impact on both social and economic aspects makes it the most notorious criminal gang in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2014).

According to Costa (2018), organized crime in most cities has traditionally been more appealing to men than women. However, women's participation in urban crime has increased since the 21st

century. Anderson (2018) suggests that since the 1990s, security agencies worldwide have noted increased female involvement in organized crime.

In Latin America, the number of females in prison facilities is growing faster than the population of men in jail (Bonello, 2017). In England and Wales, between 2011 and 2015, the number of females found guilty of extortion, drug trafficking, and prostitution rose by 9%; (Wincup, 2018). According to Selmini (2020), females occupy passive, subordinate and active roles in criminal gangs. However, the margins between perpetrators and victims are repeatedly blurred, yet most females end up being victimized psychologically, socially, economically, and physically.

In the African setting, Siegel (2014) noted that females featured in most of the cases reported by security agencies. For example, in Cape Town, South Africa, women took up various positions, such as spouses, leaders, organizers, recruiters, and traffickers in criminal gangs (Hübschle, 2014).

Siegel (2014) also noted that female gang members tend to be poorer and less educated than their male counterparts. Jalil & Iqbal (2010) underscore the reality that lack of education, income inequality, issues of unemployment, and abusive pasts almost invariably expose women to the vulnerability of gang groups, which further marginalize them and weaken their future social and economic prospects past their gang life. Moreover, roles in organized criminal gangs are significantly allocated along gender lines Hübschle (2014). This disparity explains why men occupy the most powerful positions while females tend to perform the lowest paid and riskier roles in an organized criminal gang.

Females join criminal gangs for economic gain and to escape abuse, only to find that fellow gang members often victimize them, a move that extends to their past gang life. Miller (1998) noted that females in criminal gangs witness more violence, including shootings, assaults, stabbing, rape, and homicides from their fellow male gang members. These experiences negatively affect the former female gang members' social and economic livelihood in future after exiting the gang.

Nowadays, it is common to find females carrying out tasks such as robbing money from transport drivers, passengers, traders, and drugs and arms trafficking as ordered by the gang (Hübschle, 2014). While carrying out criminal activities, the groups use the female members by

taking advantage of their unique nature, such as physical attractiveness and their perceived natural image of “innocence,” to conceal suspicion from the police and their intended crime victims. While this input may prove valuable to the gang, the females are more often socially and economically victimized since they get little or no share from the proceeds of crime (Hübschle, 2014). The discrimination of former female gang members in terms of sharing equal proceeds of crime acquired during their gang life, tended to leave the females poorer than their male counterparts, which eventually contribute to their negative social and economic livelihood once they exit the gang as they struggle to meet their basic needs (Hübschle, 2014).

In Kenya, Mutuku (2017) observed that information collection, carrying guns, cooking for male gang members who are in hideouts, raising their morale, and luring their enemies to their tricks are some of the roles played by women in the organized criminal gangs in Kenya. The roles played by the females while in the gang tended to “harden” the females which make them to be more aggressive while tackling their social and economic livelihood even after leaving the gang (Mutuku, 2017).

Moreover, the country’s cabinet minister for internal security published a gazette notice on crime prevention in 2010. The gazette notice contained the laws and concentrated on investigations, deterrence, and punishment for perpetrators of criminal acts in Kenya. The law provides strict rules against gangs operating within the country and guarantees the sentencing of offenders for at least fourteen (14) years or life imprisonment. The law also stipulates strict penalties for financiers, organizers of criminal gangs, and gangs that commit serious crimes, including a life sentence for being involved in the administration of illegal oaths.

The Organized Criminal Act of 2010 and the Persons Act of 2010 outline ways to stop Kenyan gangs through counter-trafficking. The act also lists the names of gangs operating in Kenya involved in crimes such as oath-taking, extortion, terror attacks, robbery, money laundering, and kidnapping (GoK, 2010). The government, in conjunction with officials of community-based security initiatives commonly referred to as *Nyumba Kumi* and other local leaders, are at the frontline to assist in combating crimes by monitoring the criminal gangs besides taking the appropriate legal action.

As part of the government's initiatives to combat and deal with organized crime, the Kenya Gazette Notice No. 10427 was issued in 2016, listing Al-Shabaab, 'Mungiki' sect, forty-two brothers, Youth Alliance, Jeshi la Embakasi, Kamukunji boys, Kamjeshi, and Gaza gangs as some of the most prominent Kenyan organized criminal outfits.

According to National Crime Research Centre (NCRC) report released in 2018, Kenya has witnessed an upsurge in organized criminal gangs. The Gaza gang, listed among the illegal units operating in Kenya in the Gazette Notice issued in 2016 (No 10427), is found in Nairobi County and its suburbs. It comprises of members who commonly wear gold and silver-colored rings, collar chains, and bulky hoods and have tattooed parts of their bodies for identity (Wangechi, 2017).

According to Mutuku (2017), the Gaza gang has been operating in Kenya since 2012 and has been accused of committing some of the most heinous crimes in the capital city. Initially, the Gaza gang worked with single centrally placed command but split into smaller groups with various names such as "Mbogi" and "Portimal." These sub-groups have their own leadership but perform similar functions and target young and less educated youths for recruitment (Mutuku, 2017).

This study focused on the Gaza gang because of the critical concerns about its illegal activities in the city and its reputation as a lethal entity. Like other criminal gangs, its activities are characterized by the use of violent force, intimidation, blackmail, extortion, and female gang members to lure potential targets into their trap (Wangechi, 2017). Statistics from National Crime Research note that although other gangs are attracting female members, in the Gaza criminal gang, their presence is increasing faster based on an analysis of daily arrests in their geographic area of operation. As a result, a significant number of former female gang members who are paroled and released having served prison sentences are affiliated to the Gaza criminal gang.

1.2 Problem Statement

A recent global concern about females joining organized criminal gangs has emerged primarily in European and African countries (Bonello, 2017). Although locally, this concern has recently been noted in existing research and in an increasing number of incarcerations of female gang members, little is understood in terms of how females fare when they shun gang life. Statistics from National Crime Research indicate that although other gangs are attracting female members, the Gaza criminal gang's female membership is significantly larger based on an analysis of daily arrests in Eastlands.

As a result, a larger number of females who are paroled and released having served prison sentences are affiliated to the Gaza criminal gang. Little then is known and documented about their attempt at reintegration into the society and specifically their daily social and economic livelihood as they seek to “settle.” Therefore, this study sought to find out if in fact females who are former gang members can provide insight into why they are driven towards the gang life yet more of them are likely to be victimized even past their gang life. Further, having exited gang life, would it be probable that the difficulties of setting up sustainable livelihoods continue to ensure that female ex-gang members are victimized?

By focusing on females in criminal gangs this study shows concern for them because females are influential agents of social change in African social sphere. If the plight of females who have been linked to crime is unaddressed, it may result to a highly criminogenic community. In Kenya, previous studies conducted on criminal gangs by Shauri & Musa (2020), Mutuku (2017) and Omboto (2013) in Nairobi County and Kilifi County have focused on the effects of gangs on the social and economic livelihoods of the general society without explicitly focusing on the impacts of gang membership on the daily livelihoods of females who have exited gangs. A review of these studies revealed that none had addressed the socio-economic experiences of females post gang life.

This research therefore sought to respond to existing research gaps by investigating the influence of gang life and experiences of females who have exited the gang as they seek to make meaningful socio-economic livelihood outside the gang.

1.3 Research questions

The following research questions guided this research:

- i) How are the females recruited into the Gaza gang and the implications of their recruitment?
- ii) Why do females decide to leave organized criminal gangs?
- iii) What is the influence of the roles that female recruits play in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihoods post gang life?
- iv) To what extent does the Gaza gang's structure and activities impact on the social and economic livelihoods of former female gang members?

1.4 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of gang membership on former female gang members' social and economic livelihood.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i) To find out how females are recruited into Gaza gang and the implications of their recruitment.
- ii) To determine factors that inspires a females' decision to leave a criminal gang.
- iii) To examine the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihoods post gang life.
- iv) To find out the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on former female gang member's social and economic livelihoods.

1.5 Justification of the study

This study finding will be helpful to policymakers who have the responsibility of making policies on control and prevention of crimes to discourage females from joining gangs and at the same time, the study will suggest institutionalizing support strategies of females who have exited gang life to be able to improve their livelihoods. The study findings will also enrich the stakeholders with appropriate strategies to use so as to successfully address and support the at-risk former female gang members who could easily be lured back into gang life. Finally, this

study is designed to contribute to literature on female involvement in criminal gangs. The research will provide more understanding of the social and economic dynamics that emerge, once the female gang members exit the gang (Mutuku, 2017).

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the study

The study was conducted in Nairobi County's Gaza gang hotspots; Kayole and Dandora estates. The study was limited to examining how gang participation affected the social and economic well-being of female ex-gang members. The study was restricted to ways of recruiting females into the Gaza gang, factors that make the female gang members to exit the gang and examining how the roles played by females recruits affected their social and economic livelihoods. Finally, the study focused on the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on female ex-gang member's social and economic livelihoods. A mixed method design was used, and it involved combining the survey method for quantitative data and a qualitative research design. The research's sample comprised of 111 former female Gaza gang members who formed the primary source of data. The study also considered KIIs namely six local police officers, three NGAO officials, and two *Nyumba Kumi* officials as key informants. This study focused on the Gaza gang because it is one of the oldest, well organized and structured group in the city (Mutuku, 2017).

1.7 Definition of Key Terms and Concepts

This section gives a general definition of terms used in this research study and includes the following:

Crime: Refers to any action that is punishable by the law.

Economic livelihood: This entails an individual's ability to earn some income, occupation status, and ability to start and operate successful business ventures with a view of satisfying basic needs.

Ex-female gang membership: This refers to former female members of a gang. It comprises of females who had been members of the group for over five years before surrendering to the security authorities and are out of the gang for the last three years.

Gang: A gang is a group of people who, through the organization, formation, and establishment of an assemblage, share a common identity.

Livelihood: Livelihood is the way in which an individual secures basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing.

Organized crime: Organized crime is a form of crime that involves a criminal network operating both globally and locally. Some of the illegal activities carried out by the criminal network include extortion rackets, smuggling, cybercrime, hacking, money laundering, and counterfeiting, among others.

Security: It refers to the pursuit of freedom from threats.

Social change: Social change is the transformation brought into human lives due to social interactions.

Social Livelihoods: Entails social networks and social support such as social capital. Social networks include people or groups of people brought together by shared values, activities, beliefs, and norms. Social networks influence individuals' livelihood and may include family, relatives, neighbors, teammates, and workmates and friends.

Social-economic livelihood: It entails the influence that an individual has over social and economic resources that are used to satisfy the basic needs. Social and economic livelihood is

operationalized as social networks (stigma and stereotype) and economic livelihood which is about incomes and expenditure for the provision of basic needs.

Socialization: It is a process in which an individual learns new ways of living based on interactions with other individuals in society.

Victim of crime: Refers to any individual or a group of individuals who have suffered social, economic, psychological, or physical loss/ injury due to criminal activity.

Violent crime: It is any crime in which the perpetrator either uses or threatens to use coercion as a means to achieve an end. Examples include robbery, mugging, murder, kidnapping, rape, carjacking, and terrorism.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the literature on the influence of gang membership on females' who have exited gang life and are seeking to revive their social networks and economic lives. The literature is global, regional, and finally, local. Research gaps identified in the literature are highlighted. They form the basis of discussion. The second part of the chapter focuses on specific theories that converge the conceptual and theoretical frameworks anchoring this study.

2.2 Background of Criminal Gangs in Kenyan Towns

Gangs have a long history in Kenya. According to National Crime Research Centre (NCRC) report released in 2013, Kenya has witnessed an upsurge in organized criminal gangs. A report released by the National Crime Research Center in August 2013 listed some notorious gangs, including al-Shabaab, Sungu Sungu, Sabaot Land Defense Forces, Mombasa Republic Council, Kibera Battalion, Superpower, 'Mungiki', Kamkunji Pressure Group, Gaza gang, and forty-two brothers. Other gangs include the Kenya Youth Alliance, Jeshi la Embakasi, Kamukunji boys, and Kamjeshi. These gangs were gazetted in the Kenya gazette notice issued in 2016 No10427. These gangs' crimes include oath-taking, extortion, terror attacks, robbery, money laundering, and kidnapping (GoK, 2010). The government, in conjunction with the 'Nyumba Kumi initiative' an initiative implemented to ensure that neighbors in city dwellings are familiar with each other, has attempted to combat gang crime. However, these criminal groups are hard to banish because they are expansive and well organized.

Shauri, Mutubwa, & Musa (2020) highlight that gangs continue to be a security concern in the country because they perform terrorist activities and increase unsafety with their criminal ventures. Shauri, Mutubwa, & Musa (2020) emphasize that gangs in Kenya have become a challenge not just in urban areas but also in rural areas. Gangs like Mungiki and Forty-two brothers have heightened insecurity in rural regions where they have taken root and have defined territories. However, Lauderdale & Burman (2009), in their study assessing female gangs in correctional settings, establish that not all gangs engage in criminal activities. They argue that some gang members who are stereotypically perceived as criminals and perpetrators of crime are

merely victims of unfavorable environments that marginalized them and stifled their opportunities to make choices, causing them to seek refuge in gangs. The researchers also consider that criminal justice systems have not been favorable to the youth; corrupt and brutal structural systems are macro factors that push female youths further into crime. However, Mutuku (2017), observes that female gang members are automatically pushed into criminal activities like carrying guns, covering for male gang members in hideouts, distributing narcotics, and luring their enemies to their tricks.

2.3 Recruitment of Female Membership in Criminal Gangs

Dorais and Corriveau (2019) investigated females' recruitment tactics employed by several Canadian criminal gangs. This study was carried out in Ontario, Toronto, and Manitoba cities. A sample of 122 people, comprising both masculine and feminine gender gang members representing several criminal gangs, was selected. The study results revealed that experienced criminal gangs were familiar with where to get young females, that is from youth clubs, schools, trading centers like shopping malls, train and bus stations, and airports, among others.

Knox (2008), in his study, revealed that females often join gangs through a male relative, such as a family member or a boyfriend proxy. Although some females join gang organizations to offer support services such as driving getaway vehicles or transporting narcotics and money, others take up the same roles as male members. Many gangs have devised systematic methods for recruiting new members into their prostitution networks. This strategy bears fruit as young girls are allured by money, drugs, and the thrill of gang life, despite not being exposed to the same conditions that would traditionally drive anyone to join a gang. Gangs sponsor events organized to select suitable candidates in the same way they do other types of recruiting. If, in these events, they identify a young woman who meets their criteria, the gang informs her of its gang membership, guarantees security, and begins to offer her presents, further cementing their social connection (Johnson, 2011).

Miller's (1998) analysis of girls engaged in gangs in Columbus shows that female gang members often utilize their gender to prevent participation in actions that they find risky or morally problematic. As a result, gang girls' positions and personalities, including gender negotiation skills in gang crime participation, can have direct consequences in terms of violence and victimization. Firmin's (2018) study revealed various risks facing female members in Italy who

either were gang members or associates of a gang member. These included the participation of young females in offending conduct, physical violence, separation from friends and family, drug dealing, verbal aggression, pressure to get involved in sexual doings, and rape/ other sexual assaults.

Harrington et al. (2000) noted three methods for recruiting females into organized criminal gangs. Familial affiliation is one of the methods identified by Harrington, whereby a family with a past lineage of gang members, automatically amounts to new members of the family being recruited into the gang. This recruitment takes place fairly passively because the family gang member puts little effort as the family member typically expresses interest in the activities of the gang member only for them to become automatic recruits. Another method is still based on familial connection, but in this case, the family member actively encourages fellow family members to join the gang, an idea they oblige to on the basis of trust and connection (Densley, 2012). Method three is that of peer involvement. In this case, peers encourage each other to become gang members by selling the idea of gang involvement as something exciting, creating an almost natural attraction to the lifestyle. According to Umaña & Rikkers (2012), another common means is having a romantic involvement with a gang member, which automatically sets up the woman to be a gang member by association. Whereby a charismatic and charming male gang seduce females into the gang life. Mostly this happens in a local setting whereby most individuals are familiar with each other (Densley, 2012)

According to Nimmo (2001), Gangs rarely actively put in a deliberate effort to attract female members. Young women in troubled communities may consciously seek out gangs as a strategy to gain protection. Women who lacked employment, reliable familial connections, and solid recreational activities would be easily predisposed to gangs and lured into activities that slowly had them recruited into the criminal group. Girls who lacked the necessary tools to navigate life would also be readily predisposed to gang members in gang-ridden communities. as observed earlier in this study, female gang members shared a history of sexual abuse, neglect, poverty violence, and complicated family and community set ups.

Agola (1999) examined the factors that influence female involvement in criminal activities in Kenya and the type and scope of female criminality, using females at Kenya's Lang'ata Women Maximum Prison as a case study. Therefore, a sample of 200 females was chosen for the analysis using a basic random sampling procedure. Data was gathered by direct interviews and questionnaires for both structured and non-structured questions. According to the report, female criminals were primarily engaged in minor crimes such as prostitution, petty robberies of goods, and bhang possession. It was further found that through these activities, the offenders earned their livelihood before their arrest, as most of them were not gainfully employed. Unfortunately, they received meager wages from these activities. Furthermore, some were recidivists as they had been imprisoned before for similar crimes. The females cited financial constraints as the leading causes of criminality.

According to Portillos, (1999) females are recruited into gangs by being promised protection and retaliation from other rival gangs. Portillos further argue that females are predicted to remain loyal to their criminal gangs for benefits such as protection and retaliation in their day-to-day lives.

2.4 Factors Inspiring a Females' Decision to Leave Criminal Gang.

Hong Kong, Thornberry (2015) in his study on the social cost of females joining criminal organizations, noted that girls would abandon the criminal gang primarily due to an incident or sequence of incidents that changed their view of the criminal gang as a secure place to stay. Other reasons included arrest followed by imprisonment, being severely beaten or seeing the same happen to a mate, and being coerced into harmful sexual practices. These reasons given by females for departure from the gang are useful in this study to identify whether in the case of the females leaving the Gaza gang are similar.

A study by Bendixen, Endresen, and Olweu (2016) focused on antisocial behavioral factors that led to adolescents to exit criminal gangs in Norway. The research used data from a total sample size of 1203 adolescents; 603 males and 600 females who were teenagers. Using descriptive statistics, the study revealed that, females who had left the gang were prone to discriminatory acts than their male counterparts. Further, the study established that, female ex-gang members indicated that they abandoned gang activities because the activities exposed them to endless surveillance by the police and other security agencies. Most of female ex-gang members

indicated that constant arrests and interactions with security apparatus made them exit gang membership. Further the research established that female ex-gang members decided to leave the gang due to promised rehabilitation programs from the government such as offering employment opportunities made them leave the gang. Additionally, the female ex-gang members were not comfortable with the social isolation by community members due to their criminal activities, an issue that made them decide to leave the criminal gangs to avoid being labelled as an outcast in the society. Further the study noted that the promise by government offer maximum security to the female ex-gang members by ensuring that other gang members do not attack them encouraged the female ex-gang members to shun gang life.

Higginson, Benier, Shenderovich, Bedford, Mazerolle, and Murray (2018) looked at the factors leading the youths to exit gang membership in five third world countries. The study established that the youths exit gang membership due to the fear of being victims of the offences and therefore decide to leave the gang to save their lives. The study also noted that, youths were being eliminated by the leadership of the gang once they fail to effectively execute a task assigned to them. This made the youths especially women to exit gang membership in fear of being killed.

Further, a study by Tonks and Stephenson (2019) in Switzerland hypothesized 6 ways that ex-gang members exited their respective criminal gangs. The study found that, fear of death imprisonment, gain of employment and disbandment of the criminal gang groups were contributing factors that led the female ex-gang members to exit the gang life. Moreover, Maruna (2011) carried out a study investigating the theoretical perspectives on desistance of female gang membership in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that narrative and maturational were among of the factors leading of female to exit gangs.

In Kenya, a study carried out by Mweu (2017) found that, sexual abuse by senior gang members especially on female gang members made a number of them to leave the criminal gangs within Eastlands specifically in Eastleigh. Additionally, studies has shown that male gang members may utilize the women in their own groups as objects for sex. Women are more likely to experience dating violence and sexual assault. Older male gang members may frequently sexually exploit gang members and make violent threats against them. Further, the study noted that fear of being

killed by either community members or the security agencies was another contributing factor for the female gang members to abandon criminal gang activities.

Based on the studies, there is scanty of information regarding why females would leave gang life. Most available literature leans towards joining rather than leaving hence the need for the current study.

2.5 Female's Roles in Criminal Gangs

Arskova and Allum (2014) argued that females are actively involved in criminal gang activities ranging from messenger, decision making, executer, and leadership positions whenever their associates are jailed. A study by Burton and Franklin (2015) focused on the role played by Mexican females in criminal gangs in Texas and California states in America. The study covered 200 female gang members from various gangs. This study's findings revealed that females had specific roles and responsibilities like looking decent and being readily available for entertainment when male gang members were out of work. Other gang tasks carried out by females who are gang members included weapons and drug trafficking since females were unlikely to be detected by security authorities as compared to men. The study further revealed that females had the sense that they had to constantly keep proving their worthiness as gang members. According to them, if they lost status, they were likely to be vulnerable to physical assault, sexual exploitation by the male criminal gang members, and, at worst, expelled from the gang.

In Africa, Siegel (2014), in his study, described how females from Nigeria had been linked to female trafficking. The females are the criminal gang leaders in addition to being charged with the planning role of the gang's activities. Additionally, as heads of the criminal gangs, they are responsible for issuing orders to juniors, coordinating all human trafficking undertakings, controlling finances, and managing the prostitutes who are the gangs' members. According to Siegel (2014), females from Nigeria have flourished in attaining the role of leading criminal organizations. In addition, Nigerian females take self-initiative whereby they plan, create networks, and carry out various tasks in illegal human trade. The rise in the number of females engaged in the human trafficking trade is a social phenomenon that can be described by socio-economic advances in the status of females in the entire society and by the opportunities to become wealthy quickly.

Hubschle (2014) carried out a twelve-country study project in Southern Africa which focused on the structure, type, and scope of the criminal organizations in the region. This study revealed vital empirical insights about the role of females in transnational human trafficking, drug trafficking, and threatened wildlife. The study observed that females played significant functions such as recruiting and transferring other females in addition to managing the trafficking of girls meant for sexual exploitation. Female gang members were also engaged in rhino poaching and drug trafficking syndicates. They also cook fashionable/ designer drugs in South Africa and Mozambique. These “cooks” possessed academic qualifications in pharmacology or chemistry from a recognized university or other chemistry-related fields. According to Hübschle (2014), in Cape Town, South Africa, females hold several primary positions in criminal gangs, which include team leadership, recruiters, organizers, traffickers, and other roles.

A study by Shaw & Skywalker (2017) observed that Female gang members played the role of recruiting and transferring other female members. They also managed the trafficking of girls meant to be used for sexual exploitation and ran the prostitution rings under the authority of male gang members. While a majority of female gang members have come from abusive families where they were exploited and sexually violated by their family members, they somehow recreate these abusive environments within the gangs. Being offered the opportunity to belong and the power to engage in sustaining the gang through the recruitment of other women and running prostitution rings almost desensitizes them to the pain that this lifestyle causes them. The fact that the gang lifestyle predisposes these women to a habit of drug abuse makes them numb many of their natural sense of right and wrong, creating an interesting dynamic of them being the victim as well as the abuser because they expose other young women to the same cycle of abuse they have been through by recruiting them into the gang. The stringent loyalty requirements expected of gang members give female members a sense of security and belongingness that was lacking in their upbringing. The sense of family gang membership accords them often leads these women to have relations and children with these gang members. Children of female gang members would almost certainly grow into gang members themselves because they end up developing in the same type of setting that these women were looking to escape in the first place. Such dynamics easily support the continuity of gangs. These women are also subconsciously comfortable with the violence that is part and parcel of gangs.

According to Kenya Standard Newspaper, dated 15th April 2021, the Kenyan Police officers arrested two women with dual (Kenya and US) citizenship. The two resided at the Racecourse area of Dagoretti Corner in Nairobi County. They were arrested and charged with possession of illegal firearms arms that included an M4 sniper rifle, four pistols, a submachine gun, and 3,700 bullets. In another publication, the Kenyan Daily Nation newspaper, on 17th August 2021, published a story about two suspected robbers and a woman who were shot by police in Muthaiga area within Nairobi County. The three suspects were in a car containing stolen items such as electronics and master keys. The police also discovered that the three suspects had altered their car number plates to avoid being detected by the police. The said suspects were also in possession of a pistol with seven rounds of ammunition.

Although females' roles in gang are extensively discussed, it is not clear whether there are reasons for leaving the gang that can be used by policy makers to encourage exit and rehabilitation. In addition, there is little literature on how the roles played by female gang members influences their socio-economic livelihood once they exit the gang.

2.6 Gang Structure and Activities on the socio-economic livelihood of Former Female Gang Members

In this study, the social aspects refer to a group or individual's ability to interact positively or negatively with others in any societal setting while economic livelihood is described as the ability of an individual or groups to generate income from various activities to satisfy their needs (Rimmer, Larson, Lapong, Purnomo, Pong-Masak, Swanepoel, & Paul, 2021). Therefore, social and economic livelihoods refer to activities that support income generation for an individual or for a group of people. Social livelihood implied by this study includes social networks, education, friendship ties, kinship ties, stigma, and stereotype. On the other hand, economic livelihood includes income amount, employment/occupation status, and entrepreneurship opportunities

Fleisher (2014) observed that females faced tougher, more demeaning entry standards into the gang and more ruthless initiation mechanisms than men due to gangs' reluctance to welcome female members into this male-dominated arena.

In Hong Kong, Thornberry (2015) investigated the social cost of females joining criminal organizations. According to the results of this research, sexual activities within criminal gangs

were prevalent among young females who are stigmatized and marginalized by other male and female gang members and the government or community. Beyond that, for girls, exiting the gang usually meant ending a relationship with a partner, trying to re-establish or re-establish a social network, re-joining school, schooling, or jobs, and coping with health issues caused by inadequate diet, substance addiction, and unsafe sex. Notably when girls would abandon the group, it was primarily due to an incident or sequence of incidents that changed their view of the criminal gang as a secure place to stay. Other reasons included arrest followed by imprisonment, being severely beaten or seeing the same happen to a mate, and being coerced into harmful sexual practices. These reasons given by females for departure from the gang are useful in this study to identify whether in the case of the females leaving the Gaza gang are similar.

According to Harding (2014), female gang participants advance up the gang ladder by gaining “street capital” based on social ability, while male gang partners do so by acquiring “street capital” based on aggression. For females, their claim and retention of power was a factor in how they were seen and handled by their gang mates. Indeed, the status of a female in the gang also determines whether she would be compelled to engage in sexual activity with male gang associates. Evidence shows that when females are seen as icons of male-dominated gangs, they will want to adopt symbolic male ranks. In contrast, when they adhere to more gender-based gangs, they will have a stronger potential to influence the group's culture (Miller & Brunson, 2000). Young's (2009) research on female gang participants in the United Kingdom found similar results. She discovered that adolescent girls are no longer on the fringe of street gangs; instead, they are willing participants in the type of violent brutality typically reserved for adults (Young, 2009).

According to Laidler and Hunt (2001), for some women, "looking bad" is a defensive tactic in the patriarchal world in the street. Additionally, it is a way of expressing strength in an environment where they have insignificant status. Since these women defy conventional gender norms, public response to their depiction as "bad girls" may be much more controversial than for their male counterparts. Simultaneously, research obtained in London by Harding (2014) shows that females frequently find themselves at the lower level of a dynamic social area that favors men and may accept their disadvantage.

Pyrooz and Piquero (2013) assessed the social impacts of females in criminal gangs. According to this report, female participation in gang activities will lead to issues such as dropping out of school, job failure, addiction to and association with drug use, and adolescent parenthood. The study also revealed that gang membership decreases the members' involvement in other prosocial practices and may break ties with prosocial groups and societal institutions such as families, friends, religious communities, and colleges in order to concentrate more intensely on gang membership. The consequences would be more severe as one gets more involved in criminal activities. Action taken by security agencies against the gang members may lead to community stigmatization or incarceration in a detention facility, both of which result in a criminal record that may stifle personal growth and work performance once one exits gang life.

Dukes (2007) assessed the ritual of initiation of gangs with specific attention to the differences in what is expected of men and females in Mexico. According to the study, men were expected to suffer a beating by gang members, and the length of time for suffering differed depending on the gang they wanted to join. On the other hand, females had two choices: one was to be beaten, and the other was to have intimate intercourse with various gang members for an equal period. According to the research, taking the second choice would result in an irreversible lack of respect since sustaining a beating demonstrated resilience, honor, and bravery, replicating exemplary masculinity that was highly valuable to the community. Those women who chose to engage in the sexual assault were never made full members of the gang. A third path to join the gang was through proximity, or whether the female is a male gang member's girlfriend or wife. If the participant was significant enough in the organization, the female did not have to go through any initiation rite. The rest of the gang treats these females with respect, even though they were supposed to tolerate constant infidelity and that if they reciprocated, they could face death.

Cepeda and Avelardo Valdez (2016) discovered that young females who were involved with male gang members were considerably more likely to partake in alcohol abuse, illegal activity, and harmful sexual behavior. These vices had detrimental personal and social effects, which included sexual victimization, engagement with criminal justice enforcers, and drug addiction even after leaving the gang. The study also established that gangs function as escalators, propelling gang-engaged youths into more extreme and risky activities of violating the law. The study further revealed that these young females' lives were marked by a sense of low dominance

and alienation when they exit the gang. These insecurities and harsh realities were heightened by unaddressed anxieties and deception that pervaded gang life. For some of the girls, the gang was their only other choice, and it was better than the one they abandoned. They not only believed they had no alternative place to go; but also believed they had no one to talk to because their relations with non-gang members had deteriorated.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review and emerging Research Gaps

A review of the literature reveals little empirical evidence on female involvement in organized crime in urban areas in Kenya compared to the studies carried out in the USA, Canada, Mexico, China, and Hong Kong. Moreover, there is even less literature on the livelihoods of females who have exited gangs. However, the literature review indicates that female's involvement in organized crime is a result of dysfunctional families and pursuit of status by females, and females gang membership has a profound social-economic impact on former female gang members (Adler, Ovando, & Hocevar, 1999; Agola, 1999; Knox, 2008; Millers; 2014; Thornberry, 2015). Where there is now an increasing number of females leaving gangs, there is need to ensure that recidivism is mitigated and rehabilitation is effective by supporting their social and economic endeavour.

According to a growing body of evidence, females had been full participants and leaders in criminal groups at various times in history, with some females taking the top leadership of criminal organizations. However, in Kenya, the influence of criminal gangs on the socio-economic livelihoods of former female gang members has not been well documented. This dynamic understanding is fundamental because a conceptual mirage could negatively impact mitigation measures.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on two theories namely the Feminist Criminology Theory by Marie-Andrée Bertrand (1986) and lifestyle victimology theory by Siegel (2006). The feminist criminology theory was the main theory of this study. It was used to enhance an in depth understanding of women in criminality expounding on their roles and experiences, and gang life effects on their social-economic livelihood in post gang life.

The French-Canadian criminologist Marie-Andrée Bertrand (1986) is among the pioneers of the feminist criminology school of thought. According to feminist criminology theory, a rise in females' economic opportunities has made females prone to crime just like males. According to Bertrand, females have become more engaged in both open fields and significant crime. Feminist criminology theory was applied to this study to better understand the diminishing gender gap in crimes and the motivators of females' engagement in crimes.

However, feminists' theory is criticized for not taking into consideration the impact of gang life on the social and economic livelihoods of females in post gang life. In addition, the feminist theory, being a causative theory of criminology, has some weaknesses as it focuses on the causes of females' participation or engagement in criminal gang activities without considering the impact of the female gang membership on the females who have exited gangs.

Consequently, the study applied the lifestyle victimology theory by Siegel (2006), a more recent theory to address the incompleteness of the first theory. According to Siegel, crime is a person's choice to enable them function in life. Siegel further argues that individuals who opt for risky lifestyles such as taking drugs, drinking alcohol, and participating in criminal activities tend to become victims. Lifestyle victimology theory observes that individuals whose daily activities increase their exposure to crime are likely to be victims of crime. This theory explains how female gang membership increases the chances of females becoming victims even when they exit gang activity. Female gang members are more often victimized physically, psychologically, socially, and economically by their counterpart male gang members inside the gang. When females exit gang life they are still often subjected to victimization. The Lifestyle victimology theory is relevant in this study since vulnerable females are a group more likely to be victimized compared to male gang members, which continues to influence their daily social -economic livelihoods post gang membership especially if they do not receive external cushioning through policy initiatives and social networks which reduce victimization.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

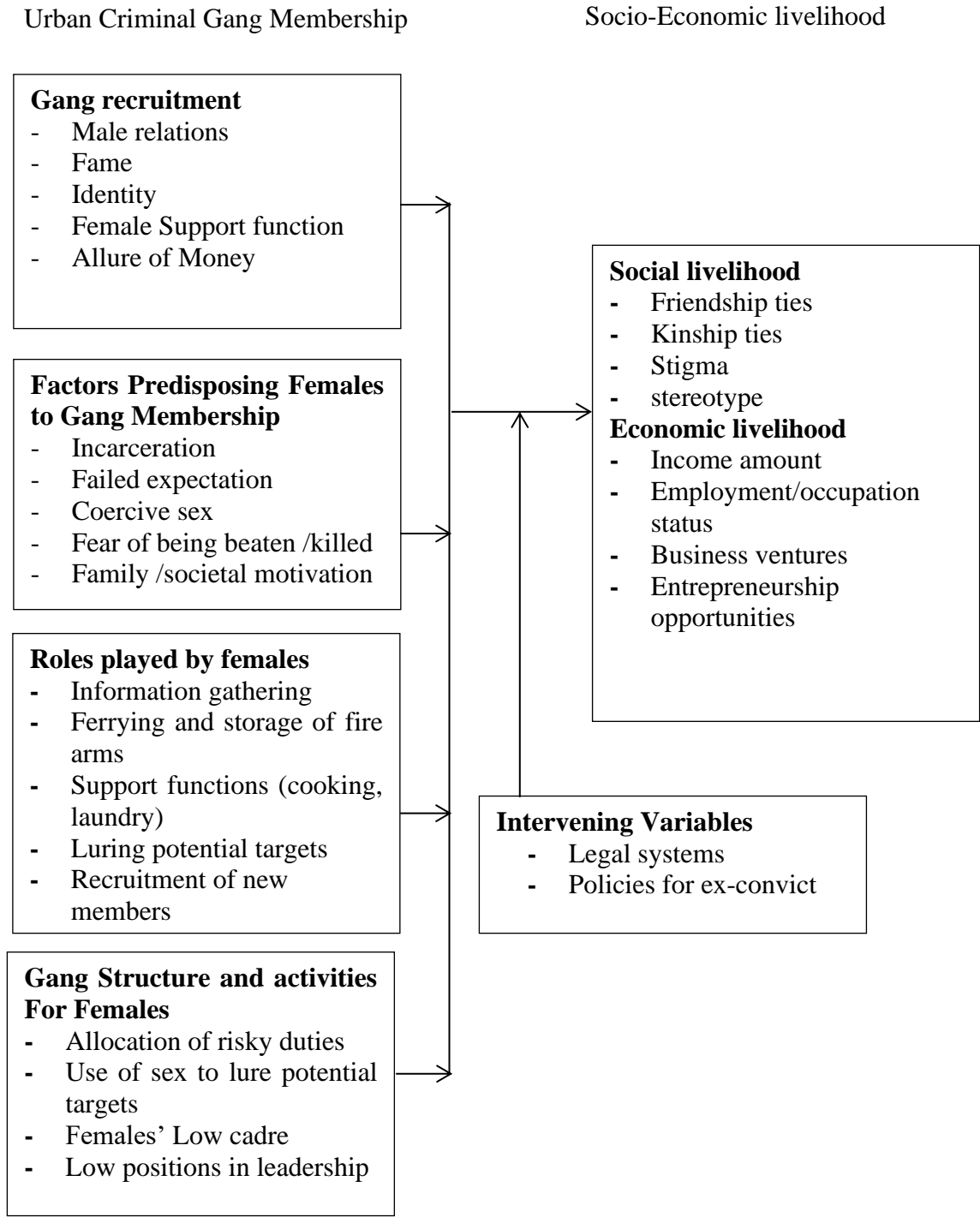
Vaughan (2008) argued that a conceptual framework demonstrates the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Figure 2.1, shown below, displays the independent variables, which include gang recruitment, factors predisposing females to exit gang membership, roles played by female gang members, and the structure and activities of the gang.

The dependent variable of the study, i.e. the social-economic livelihood was measured in terms of social networks (kinship ties, friendship ties, stigma and stereotype, and economic livelihood (income amounts, employment/occupation status, and entrepreneurship opportunities). The figure below illustrates the correlations including the intervening variables, such as the country's laws and policies.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presents the methods that were used to conduct the research including gathering data and analyzing it. It outlines the research design used, as well as the study's location, target population, survey and sampling methods, data collection process, data processing techniques, and ethical concerns.

3.2 Research site

This research was conducted in Dandora and Kayole estates within Nairobi East. This neighborhood is located east of the Central Business District (CBD) and is primarily made up of low-income residence. The first estate to be reached from the CBD is Kayole. It is 13 kilometers from the CBD. Dandora is the next, and it is 14 kilometers from CBD. As per the 2019 census, the total population of the research area is 560,752, accounting for 18% of Nairobi's population and occupying 22.8 square kilometers. Dandora and Kayole are the major estates in which the Gaza gang has set up criminal operations.

Dandora and Kayole have similar business activities. Businesses such as kiosks, banking agent shops, groceries, stalls, markets for vegetables, shops for serials, tailoring businesses, 'kazi mtaani' and many other casual job-related activities are found in these estates. Further, as per KDHS reports (2019), most households residing in these estates are low-income families and some are living below one dollar a day. Simply put, majority are self-employed thus accessing basic needs is mostly problematic. The government, in conjunction with officials of community-based security initiatives commonly referred to as *Nyumba Kumi* and other local leaders are at the frontline to assist in combating crimes by monitoring the criminal gangs besides taking the appropriate legal action. Like any other slum estates within the city, Dandora and Kayole have had criminal gangs for several decades and their activities are characterized by the use of violent force, intimidation, blackmail, extortion, and female gang members to lure potential targets into their trap. To eliminate such as acts, community policing activities have been enhanced in the area by the government and CBOs. For example, 'nyumba kumi' initiatives have been introduced in several parts of these estates with the aim of curtailing rise in criminal activities. To promote this initiative, chairpersons have been selected by the dwellers. The chairpersons are

chosen as a link between the residents and the security personnel and they are always in touch with security agencies including Assistant chiefs and chiefs, especially when criminal activities are reported.

3.3 Research design

Research design is the strategy and arrangement of an inquiry that helps the researcher to elicit answers to the study question (Kerlinger, 2011). This research used a mixed method design, combining the survey method for quantitative data and a qualitative design. The intention was to investigate the implications of gang membership on female ex-gang members' social and economic livelihood outside the gang. A triangulated analytical approach mixing quantitative and qualitative methods was used to ensure robust data collection. The benefit of triangulation is that the flaws and strengths of each method are combined to produce reliable results.

3.4 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was socio-economic livelihoods of former female Gaza gang members from Kayole and Dandora, estates in Nairobi East who were aged over 18 years.

3.5 Unit of Observation

The units of observation were the female ex-Gaza gang members and key informants of Kayole and Dandora, estates in Nairobi East.

3.6 Target population

Singh and Nath (2015) defined a population as a category of persons, activities, or artifacts with similar measurable features. The study targeted females who had exited the Gaza gang and had been independent of gang activity for approximately Four years. Data base of 300 females who had left the Gaza gang in 2018 was kept by the security apparatus to whom they had surrendered. The female gang members undergoing reform were among the youth put under government-sponsored programs such as the *Kazi Kwa Vijana* program to enhance the reforms process in the area under the study. This program engages the jobless youths and those in the process of reforming from criminal activities. The list was availed to the researcher by the National Government Administration Offices which included ACCs and the chiefs in the area of study upon application.

3.7 Sampling procedure and sample size

According to Patton (2014), a sample is a discrete portion of a statistical population whose characteristics are investigated to learn more about the whole. When it comes to individuals, according to Webster (2015), a sample is a group of respondents chosen from a wider population for survey purposes. A simple random sampling technique was used to identify 111 female ex-Gaza gang members.

The sample size of 111 female ex-Gaza gang members to be interviewed was derived from Yamane's (1967) scientific formula.

The formula asserts that: $n = N/(1 + Ne^2)$

Where:

n = sample size

N = total population

e = margin of error (0.075)

The sample size therefore was computed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}n &= N/(1 + Ne^2) \\n &= 300/(1 + 300 \times 0.075^2) \\n &= 111 \\n &\approx 111 \text{ respondents}\end{aligned}$$

The research also included responses from 6 local police officers, 3 NGAO officials, and 2 Nyumba Kumi officials one from each study location who formed the study's key informants. In addition, purposive sampling was used to identify key informants. According to Babbie and Mouton (2015), purposive sampling entails selecting a sample based on the population's knowledge and the study's purpose.

3.8 Data collection methods

The research used quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data and key informant interviews provided the qualitative information. Data was collected with the assistance of three trained research assistants using a structured questionnaire and a key informant guide. The assistants were trained for three days on how to administer the questionnaire and ensure that it is completed. The data collection took four weeks.

3.8.1 Questionnaire

Primary data from the female ex-gang members was collected using a questionnaire. Questionnaires are less expensive than personal interviews. Cooper and Schindler (2011) advocate using questionnaires while conducting descriptive studies.

The questionnaire was to find out how females are recruited into Gaza gang and the implications of their recruitment, to determine the factors that inspire a females' decision to leave a criminal gang such as Gaza gang, to examine the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihoods post gang life and to find out the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on female ex-gang member's social and economic livelihoods post gang life. The questionnaire was used on participants from two locations, i.e., mainly Kayole and Dandora. The questionnaire in the appendix (i) was used to guide quantitative data collection. During the questionnaire administration, one transcriber was used to interpret the questions for the respondents in the event of a language barrier.

From the data obtained, out of 111 questionnaires administered, 100 responses were considered which is 90% response rate. Kothari (2008) underscored that a response rate above 50 percent is adequate for a descriptive study. The return rate of questionnaires from the respondent implied the willingness of the former female Gaza gang members to participate in the study.

3.8.2 Key Informant Interviews

The Key Informants were people with expertise, power, or comprehensive knowledge about females' gang membership. Key informant interviews were done with local leaders who handle security matters on a daily basis in the area of study. The key informant guide in appendix (ii) was administered to 6 local police officers, 3 NGAO officials, and 2 Nyumba Kumi officials to gather information on how females are recruited and implications of their recruitment, the factors that inspire females' decision to leave a criminal gang such as Gaza gang, the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihood post gang life and the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on female ex-gang member's social and economic livelihoods post gang life

3.8.3 Document Review

Reports from the security apparatus about the former female Gaza gang members activities were among the documents which were reviewed as secondary data for this study. The secondary sources provided guidance on the discussions emanating from the research's findings and in drawing conclusions.

3.8.4 Observation

The study used observation as a way of gathering data. Observation was used when the female ex Gaza gang members were being interviewed. Body language and demeanor in crime study and psychology could indicate a negative psychological impact of some of the female ex-gang members who were interviewed. Some of the females who left Gaza gang could be seen shedding tears while narrating the cruel situation that they went through during their gang membership days.

3.9 Data Collection Tools

The primary tool for the collection of quantitative data in this study was a Questionnaire. The questionnaire contained various subsections touching on different themes and took at least one hour. The study also employed key informant guide that entailed a list of topics on female participation in gangs, and each issue was discussed in detail. The key informant guide was administered to the local police officers, NGAO officials, and Nyumba Kumi officials for around one hour.

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis in the research process is crucial. It entails organizing and analyzing data with the aim of collecting valuable knowledge to address research questions and aid in the achievement of research goals (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The process began with cleaning the data in the instruments every day after fieldwork. This step ensured that all information was captured and coded. The data was sorted out and keyed into the SPSS (Version 25) kit. The data on the print out in the form of frequencies were analyzed and then presented using descriptive statistics in tables showing frequencies and percentages. A Cross tabulation was used to assume the relationship between the level of education and the roles that females gang members play while in the gang.

Qualitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources were analyzed using content analysis. This approach is readily suitable for objectively and systematically analyzing the thematic content of responses received. The researcher organized the findings and explained them in the discussion as study findings.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

A social researcher must be ethical while gathering and analyzing data and writing conclusions (Denscombe, 2013). Before proceeding with fieldwork, the researcher secured a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology, and Innovation (Ref: NACOSTI/P/22/16469) and a letter of introduction from the Department of Sociology and social work of the university after approval of the study. The researcher also informed the administrators in the area of study about the intent of the study. The researcher further ensured that the subjects' privacy was protected, that confidentiality was maintained, and assured them through informed consent. Without distressing the issues, a standardized data collection method was used. The researcher ensured that there was no breach of confidentiality or misrepresentation. Potential conflicts of interest were not concealed, and the analysis did not deceive participants about the research's intent.

The researcher ensured that neither the respondents nor the informants suffered physical or psychological damage. As a result, the study ensured that the participants were not placed in potentially dangerous situations.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The study sought to investigate the implications of gang membership on the social and economic livelihood of females who had exited gang life. The specific objectives that guided this study were; to find out how females are recruited and implications of their recruitment, to determine the factors that inspire a females' decision to leave criminal gang, to examine the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihoods post gang life and to find out the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on the female ex-gang member's social and economic livelihoods. The study was conducted within Nairobi East Area, covering mainly Dandora and Kayole estates.

This chapter presents demographic data of former female Gaza gang members. It also includes data presentation, analysis, and discussion according to the study's objectives. Questionnaires and an interview guide were used to collect data; the questionnaires were administered to 111 of 300 female ex Gaza gang members. An interview guide was used to collect data from local police officers, NGAO officials, and *Nyumba Kumi* officials.

Data were analyzed and reported descriptively using frequency distribution and percentages. A discussion was done in continuous prose and presented along the thematic areas using direct quotations for qualitative responses. Respondents for the qualitative data are anonymous; instead, pseudonyms are used.

4.2 Demographic Information

This section shows the attributes of the individual respondent that, include gender, age, and education level. The demographic information was meant to test the respondent's suitability to participate in the study for having had the privilege of interacting with the variables under study. Demographic data for former female Gaza gang members was collected using questionnaires. All respondents were drawn from the female gender.

4.2.1 Respondents' Academic Qualifications

The study sought to determine the level of education among female ex Gaza gang members. The findings are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Distribution of Respondents' Academic Qualifications

Academic Qualifications	Gaza ex-gang Members	
	F	%
Primary	55	55
Secondary	45	45

Table 4.2 shows that 55% of female ex-Gaza gang member's respondents had a primary level of education while 45% had a secondary level of education. The study established that gang members' recruitment occurs in economically disadvantaged zones like slums where there is little education amongst the residents and, to a more significant extent, targets vulnerable individuals. The study's findings implied that the recruiters mainly target individuals with a low level of education. Indicatively, young, less educated females take on several roles, such as information collection, carrying guns, cooking for male gang members in hideouts, raising their morale, and luring their enemies to their tricks (Mutuku, 2017). The findings are in line with those of Siegel (2014), who noted that female gang members tend to be poorer and less educated and hence are highly susceptible to economic manipulation.

4.2.2 Age Distribution of female ex Gaza Gang members

The study also sought to find out former Gaza gang female members' age distribution. The findings are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Age Distribution

Years	Female ex-Gaza gang Members	
	F	%
18-19years	35	35
20-24 years	35	35
25-29 years	15	15
30-34years	10	10
35-39 years	5	5

The analysis indicates that 35 (35%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18-19 years, 35 (35%) were aged between 20 and 24 years, 15 (15%) were aged between 25-29 years, 10(10%) were aged between 30-34 years, and 5 (5%) was aged 35years. From the study findings, the majority of former Gaza gang members who were females were in the age bracket between 18-24 years. This finding informs the likely age bracket of females who participates in criminal activities. It is also clear that recruiters of the Gaza gang target young females who are easily manipulated through motivations such as material gains and the urge to acquire a sense of belonging and superior social status. Further, most of the female ex Gaza gang members seem to be relatively in the same age bracket, which brings the aspect of peer pressure. Goodwill (2016) observed that peer pressure is a future entryway to gang membership among females, especially those in economically disadvantaged areas.

From the key informant interview analysis, females at a tender age, especially those in primary school, are being recruited into the Gaza gang at an alarming rate. To strengthen the findings, a NGAO official made the following remarks as presented below:

“Very young girls in primary schools are secretly being enticed to join the Gaza gang at a very high rate. In my church and the estate where I live, we agreed to monitor the behaviors of our children. We agreed that everybody should report any criminal behavior to Nyumba Kumi officials who have direct lines with the police and other security apparatus”.

4.3 Gaza Criminal Gang Recruitment of its Female Membership

The first objective of the study sought to find out how females are recruited and implications of their recruitment. In the analysis, mean and standard deviation were effectively used to show measures of dispersion and central tendency.

Table 4. 3 Gaza Criminal Gang Recruitment of its Female Membership

Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Stdv
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Young females join the Gaza gang in full awareness that it is a criminal gang	10	10	35	35	30	30	15	15	10	10	3.2	1.12
Recruited to the Gaza gang by their male friends	30	30	60	60	5	5	-	-	5	5	4.1	0.85
Introduced to the Gaza gang by family members	-	-	20	20	45	45	10	10	25	25	2.6	1.07
Introduced to the Gaza gang by being offered gifts	15	15	55	55	20	20	5	5	5	5	3.7	0.95
Lured to the Gaza gang through drugs	60	60	25	25	10	10	-	-	5	5	4.35	1.01
Given some roles in the Gaza gang for cash returns	35	35	40	40	20	20	-	-	5	5	4	1.00
Females are recruited into the Gaza gang from entertainment joints and events	55	55	30	30	10	10	-	-	5	5	4.3	1.01

Table 4.3 indicates that 85 (85%) of the female ex-Gaza gang members agreed that they were lured to the Gaza gang through drugs (M=4.35, SD=1.01). Further, 80 (80%) of the former Gaza gang members who were females indicated that they were recruited into the Gaza gang from entertainment joints and events (M=4.35, SD=1.01). Moreover, 90 (90%) of the female Gaza gang members who had left the gang affirmed that they were recruited to the Gaza gang by their male friends (M=4.10, SD=0.85). Finally, 80(80%) of the respondents agreed that they were given some roles in the Gaza gang for cash returns (M=4.00, SD=1.00).

The key informant interview results also indicated how Gaza gang recruits and ensures loyalty among its members. For instance, a Nyumba Kumi Initiative officer Mr Otieno who lives in Dandora area stated the following:

“No single member of Gaza criminal gang is sober. The members are first introduced to drug taking to intoxicate them. Once they get used to the usage of the drugs, gang members easily manipulate and entice them by creating a feeling that they have found a new and a better home in the gang”.

A police officer (whose identity is withheld in line with the data handling requirements) from the area stated the following.

“Though Gaza gang split into smaller groups, each group has as a way of ensuring that members do not exit the group. Those female members of the Gaza gang are always threatened if they show signs of exiting the group. The threats comprise of death threats or being beaten by their male counterpart. Gaza members also take oaths of secrecy which makes them to remain loyal to the gang. Furthermore, all gang members have to be shaved using a razor that is believed to be given out by a moderator of the rituals”.

To affirm the findings that females are also recruited by their male friends, a key informant who is a member of the *Nyumba Kumi* Initiative from Dandora said:

“Recently, Jane Muthoni (not real name) made headlines in social media in 2018 as being a killer despite her being very beautiful and characterized by charming looks. Muthoni belonged to one of the most dangerous criminal gangs but was tracked and eliminated by the police. Muthoni was recruited into the criminal gang by her boyfriend, who taught her the criminal activities.”

It is, therefore, clear that Gaza gang members recruit females into the gang through social interactions, drug usage, and married or boyfriend relationships. The findings agree with those of Knox (2008), who noted that young females are allured by money, drugs, and the thrill of gang life. Finally, the findings are also in line with those of Firmin (2018), who observed that females regularly join gangs via a male relative, such as a boyfriend or family member.

4.4 Determinants for Female gang member’s Decision to leave the Gaza Gang

The second objective of the study sought to determine the factors that inspired a females’ decision to leave criminal gang membership. In the analysis, the mean and standard deviation were effectively used to show where the opinions of many of the respondents were. The standard deviations indicated the extent to which the responses deviated from the mean. A deviation of less than one indicated that the responses did not vary significantly.

Table 4.4. Determinants of a Female’s Decision to exit membership of the Gaza Gang

Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Stdv
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Sexual Coercion	20	20	60	60	5	5	5	5	10	10	3.75	1.14
Failed Expectations	20	20	75	75	-	-	-	-	5	5	4.05	0.81
Family motivation	30	30	25	25	10	10	15	15	20	20	3.3	1.52
Early unplanned pregnancy	15	15	60	60	5	5	15	15	5	5	3.65	1.07
Fear of being beaten	35	35	45	45	15	15	-	-	5	5	4.05	0.98
Incarceration	60	60	30	30	5	5	-	-	5	5	4.4	0.97

(n=100, Average Mean=3.86)

Table 4.4 indicates that 90 (90%) of former Gaza gang members who are females agreed that they exit the Gaza gang because of incarceration (M=4.40, SD=0.97). Further, 80 (80%) of the female ex-Gaza gang members indicated that they exited from the Gaza gang due to the fear of being beaten by their fellow male gang members (M=4.05, SD=0.98). It can be inferred that females leave Gaza gang as a way of escaping mistreatment from their male counterparts. Moreover, 95 (95%) of the females who left Gaza gang members affirmed that failure to meet their expectations in the gang made them shun gang life (M=4.05, SD=0.81). In addition, 80 (80%) of the ex- Gaza gang members agreed that they abandon the Gaza gang due to fear of being coerced into harmful sexual practices (M=3.75, SD=1.16).

The responses from the female ex -Gaza gang members agree with Thornberry (2015) who noted that girls would abandon the gang group primarily due to an incident or sequence of incidents that changed their view of the criminal gang as a secure place to stay. Thornberry argued that arrest followed by imprisonment, being severely beaten or seeing the same happen to a mate, and

being coerced into harmful sexual practices were some of the reasons given for female exit from the gang.

From the interviews, it is deduced that females were likely to leave the Gaza criminal gang due to the fear of being incarcerated after seeing how their counterparts were being arrested and jailed. According to an assistant chief from the area Mr. Kioko:

“Most females exit the Gaza criminal gang due to fear of consequences such as being arrested and jailed for many years. Others completely abandon the gang activities after serving their jail terms. Once they get out of the prison, they become reformed members of the public, which is a good thing.”

Additional findings from the key informant interviews indicated that failure by females to meet their expectations such as earning better income and securing protection from the gang were some of the key reasons why the females exited the gang. The respondents from the Key Informant Interviews observed that many females joined the gang with big expectations of securing a better place that they can call a home, only to be victimized/ mistreated within the gang. Further the interviews revealed that harsh situations for females within the gang such as being subjected to violence, physical assault and forcible sex, which lead to unplanned pregnancies were some of the explanations given as reasons for females exiting the gang.

Further, the findings from the key informant interview noted that, fights within the gang, fear of being killed and fear of female ex-Gaza gang members being victimized by the society contributed to their exit from gang life.

4.5 Roles played by females in the Gaza gang

The third objective of the study sought to examine the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihood post gang life. In the analysis, mean and standard deviation were effectively used to show measures of dispersion and central tendency.

Table 4.5 Roles Played by Females in the Gaza gang

Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Stdv
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Information gathering	40	40	55	55	-	-	-	-	5	5	4.25	0.89
Ferrying of firearms	45	45	40	40	10	10	-	-	5	5	4.2	0.98
Storage of firearms	40	40	35	35	15	15	5	5	5	5	4.00	1.10
Support functions (cooking, laundry)	30	30	45	45	20	20	-	-	5	5	3.95	0.97
Luring potential targets	40	40	50	50	5	5	-	-	5	5	4.20	0.93
Recruitment	35	35	50	50	20	10	-	-	5	5	4.10	0.94

(n=100, Average Mean=4.11)

Table 4.5 indicates that the majority, i.e., 95(95%) of the female ex-Gaza gang members agreed that females perform the role of information gathering (M=4.25, SD=0.89). Further, 90 (90%) of the female Gaza gang members who exited the gang indicate that females are involved in luring potential targets (M=4.20, SD=0.98); More so, the female ex-Gaza-gang members suggest that females are involved in the ferrying of firearms (M=4.20, SD=0.98). Moreover, 90 (90%) of the respondents affirmed that females gang members play the role of recruiting new gang members (M=4.10, SD=0.94). Finally, 75 (75%) of the females who left Gaza gang agreed that females are involved in storing firearms (M=4.00, SD=1.10).

The female ex-Gaza gang members were also required to state some of the socio-economic roles they played during their Gaza membership days. Majority of the female ex-gang members mentioned that coordinating robbery with violence, pickpocketing, and burglary operations as one of the roles that they engaged in. Some indicated that, they offered storage for arms such as guns and pistols meant to commit criminal activities. Further, it was found that, some participated storage of illegal drugs such as bhang that they could supply to well-connected individuals in the society unnoticed.

The female ex-Gaza gang were also asked to state how the mentioned roles affect their current ex-gang lives. From the results, it was clear that, most of the female ex-gang members had fully transformed and never focused on past way of life as such, they felt much safe in their current life that is free from security surveillance and traps. Others indicated that, they are presently engaged in fruitful income generating activities such as 'Kazi Mtaani' and other worthy small businesses as such, they no longer relate with past shoddy social and economic activities they used to engage in. Further, some female ex-gang members indicated that, after rehabilitation and reformation by various agencies including Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and security agencies among others, they no longer think of past lives. Through such support, they no longer have a link with former colleagues who are still active members of various gangs within the city. However, the sexual abuses they faced during their gang life especially from male colleagues was found to have mentally affected their current living conditions as such, many had to consistently go for guidance and counseling sessions to improve their mental stability. Further, it was found that, the fact that many of them witnessed the death of former comrades in the 'line of duty' in the hands of security operatives were still traumatized and haunt most of them to date.

Further responses from some female ex-Gaza gang members indicated that the roles that they played before exiting the gang had "hardened" them besides making them more aggressive as they work to improve their livelihood.

To affirm this, a former female gang member lamented that:

"The gang life has really made some of us to be aggressive while working to meet our daily economic needs. The beating and all manner of mistreatment had hardened me. I can now take most of the challenges head on. The courage to store illegal firearms had made me more courageous while carrying out day today chores more specifically after abandoning the gang life."

From the key informant interview, one of the area chiefs Mr. George, who was familiar with the Gaza gang lamented on the roles of females in the gang as follows,

“Nowadays, a huge number of young females are being recruited into the Gaza gang. They are used as spies on behalf of the gang besides storing proceeds of crime. The young females disguise themselves as prostitutes in bars to conceal their actual identity. Then, in collaboration with their male colleagues, they lure potential targets, intoxicate them using a drug commonly known as ‘mchele’ and rob them of their valuables”.

Further, one of the NGAO officials stated the following:

“Some of the female gang members operate horticultural businesses such as the sale of fruits and vegetables in disguise of their criminal activities. They hide guns in the sacks that they use to keep vegetables. As a matter of fact, these ladies are the best behaved during the day for purposes of concealing their actual identity. They befriend almost all the security personnel to avoid cases of suspicion”.

The study showed that female ex-Gaza gang members played significant roles in intelligence gathering, transportation, and storage of guns and stolen goods before exiting the gang group. They also played the role of recruitment of new members into the gang besides spying for the gang before luring potential targets into the trap. The findings concur with the observations of Burt and Simons (2015) who established that female gang members had specific roles and tasks, such as transporting drugs and weapons before leaving the gang life, since the police could not easily detect them compared to their male counterparts. The findings further agree with those of Hubschle (2014), who observed that female ex-gang members played significant roles such as recruiting and transferring other females besides managing the trafficking of girls meant to be used for sexual exploitation during their gang membership days.

4.5.1 Education Level and Roles Played by Females in the Gaza gang

The study sought to determine the relationship between education levels of the female ex-Gaza gang members and the role they played during their gang membership days. Cross tabulation was deemed appropriate for analyzing the relationship between education levels of the gangs and the role they play in the gang. Cross tabulations provide a way of analyzing and comparing the results for one or more variables with the results of another (or others).

Table 4.6. Education level and roles Cross tabulation

		Information gathering	Ferrying of firearms	Storage of firearms	Support functions	Luring potential targets	Recruitment	Total
Education Level	Primary	10	15	5	10	5	10	55
	Secondary	15	5	15	0	5	5	45
Total		25	20	20	10	10	15	100

Table 4.6 therefore shows the relationship between education level which was primary and secondary level against roles played by former female gang members such as information gathering, ferrying and storage of fire arms, support functions (cooking, laundry), luring potential targets and recruitment of new members during their past gang life. It was established that majority of gangs with secondary level education participated in information gathering and storage of firearms, while majority of members with primary level of education participated in ferrying of firearms, support functions and recruitment.

4.5.2 The significance of the relationship between Education Level and Roles Played by Females in the Gaza gang

The study sought to determine the significance of the relationship between Education Level and Roles Played by former Female Gaza gang members during their gang membership days. Table 4.7 shows the significance of the relationship between education level which was primary and secondary level against roles played by female gang members such as information gathering, ferrying and storage of fire arms, support functions (cooking, laundry), luring potential targets and recruitment of new members based on p value statistical significance indicator.

Table 4.7: The significance of the relationship between Education Level and Roles Played by Females in the Gaza gang

		Value	Asymp. Std.	Approx. T	Approx. Sig	Sig
Education Level	Contingency Coefficient	.597			.000	.000
Roles played	Spearman Correlation	.393	.088	4.233	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases		100				

Contingency coefficient is a measure of association based on chi-square. Contingency coefficients are used to estimate the extent of the relationship between two variables, or to show the strength of a relationship. The value ranges between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating no association between the row and column variables and values close to 1 indicating a high degree of association between the variables. Contingency coefficient was established to be 0.597 indicating a strong relationship between education level and roles played by the gangs. The findings established that the relationship is significant since $p < 0.05$. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure of linear correlation between two sets of data. That is the relationship between education level and roles played by the gang. The findings established that the relationship is significant since ($r=0.393$, $p < 0.05$).

4.6 Structure and Activities of Gaza Gang

The fourth objective of the study sought to find out the implications of Gaza gang's structure and activities on female ex –Gaza gang member's social and economic livelihoods post gang life. In the analysis, mean and standard deviation were effectively used to show measures of dispersion and central tendency.

Table 4.8 Structure and Activities of Gaza Gang

Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Stdv
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Prevents sibling ties	30	30	45	45	5	5	15	15	5	5	4.05	0.97
Prevents parental ties	55	55	25	25	15	15	-	-	5	5	4.25	1.04
Being a female Gaza	45	45	45	45	-	-	5	5	5	5	4.20	1.03
Female Gaza gang	50	50	40	40	5	5	-	-	5	5	4.30	0.95
Female members of Gaza gang are often	30	30	45	45	5	5	15	15	5	5	3.80	1.17
Female participation in Gaza	75	75	20	20	-	-	-	-	5	5	4.60	0.92
Protected by male gang members	30	30	35	35	15	15	10	10	10	10	3.65	1.28
Enjoy economic gains	10	10	50	50	35	35	-	-	5	5	3.60	0.86
Offered low cadres	10	10	70	70	10	10	5	5	5	5	3.75	0.89
Risky tasks	20	20	35	35	30	30	10	10	5	5	3.55	1.07
Top leadership positions	20	20	45	45	15	15	15	15	5	5	3.60	1.11
Hard to be detected	35	35	55	55	5	5	-	-	5	5	4.15	0.91
Victimized by the community	45	45	45	45	-	-	5	5	5	5	4.20	1.03
The frequent beatings and rape	45	45	35	35	15	15	-	-	5	5	4.15	1.01
Reduces chances of operating	50	50	35	35	10	10	-	-	5	5	4.25	0.99

(n=100, Average Mean= 4.00)

Table 4.8 indicates that the majority, 95 (95%) females' participation in Gaza gang activities could lead the females to drop out of school (M=4.60, SD=0.92). In addition, 80 (80%) of the female ex- Gaza gang member agreed that female participation in Gaza gang activities prevented parental ties (M=4.25, SD=1.04). Further, 90 (90%) of the former Gaza gang members who were females indicated that being a Gaza gang member in the past reduced their chances of operating a successful business venture after exiting the gang (M=4.25, SD=0.99). Further, 90 (90%) female ex- Gaza gang members could not get jobs because of their previous gang identity, stigma, visible scars, threats, and broken limbs (M=4.30, SD=0.95). Moreover, 80 (80%) of the

females who had left Gaza gang indicated that the frequent beatings and rape of female Gaza gang members led them to become antisocial and aggressive even after abandoning the gang life (M=4.15, SD=1.01).

The female ex-Gaza gang members were further asked to explain how their social life was after exiting the gang. In response to the dangers that former female gang members face once they left the gang and join the community, a female ex-gang member responded as follows

"The gang life interfered with my family. my family was broken, my good friends run away from me and I had to start life afresh." "I regret to have joined the gang. I Left the gang poorer than I was and currently the society does not accept that i reformed. Most of the time people do not like my company." "Currently I live in fear of being attacked by male counterparts whom I left in the gang. I have to be on high alert over any attack. Once I see such signs i relocate to new places."

Further the female ex -Gaza gang members were asked about their current economic engagement after exiting the gang. A former female gang member responded as follows;

"Securing a good job after exiting the gang is proving to be difficult. The employers dismiss me over the past association with the gang. Running a successful business is also another challenge. In the first one year after leaving the gang i started a grocery shop for economic engagement. Very few customers were willing to buy items from me. Majority thought am still in the gang." During my free time, i engage in church activities. I no longer associate myself with the gang since I don't want to be influenced. I am a reformed person."

From the qualitative analysis, it was established that female participation in the Gaza gang had a negative impact on the female's social and economic livelihood outside the gang. It's clear from the findings that involvement in gang activities leads to school dropouts, cutting parental ties, social stigmatization, and a lifetime possibility of being labeled a criminal besides being subjected to negative stereotype. This agrees with the lifestyle victimology theory which denotes that individuals whose daily activities increase their exposure to crime are likely to be victims of crime. The female gang membership increases the chances of females becoming victims of the same even after abandoning the gang. Gang membership also prevents female ex-Gaza gang member from securing a job opportunity or operating a successful business venture in future because of being labelled as criminal. The findings also imply that female gang membership

makes the female ex-gang members to develop antisocial and aggressive behaviors in society due to their past experiences in gang life.

To affirm the above findings, a key informant from the security sector stated the following,

“Nobody is willing to employ former female Gaza gang member. They are all perceived to be spies for criminal activities. Even the relatives and friends of ex-gang female members treat them with suspicion, which often leads to a relationship gap. Moreover, most female gang members are school dropouts and have no proper academic papers to secure jobs”.

Moreover, the research findings align with Pyrooz and Piquero (2013) who revealed that gang membership decreases a member's involvement in other pro-social activities especially after leaving gang's life. Pyrooz and Piquero noted that female gang members break ties with pro-social groups and societal institutions such as families, friends, religious communities, and colleagues to concentrate on gang membership and this make it difficult for female ex- gang members to proclaim the relationships once they exit the gang.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study summary, conclusion and recommendations. In addition, the chapter provides suggestions for additional research study areas. Finally, the chapter ends with a provision for implications for policy and practice.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to investigate the implications of gang membership on the social and economic livelihood of females who had exited gang life. The findings of the study are summarized below:

5.2.1 Recruitment of Female Members into Gaza Criminal Gang

The first objective of the study sought to find out how females are recruited and implications of their recruitment. From the study findings, a good number of former Gaza gang members who were females were aged between 18-24 years, with primary and secondary education levels as their highest academic levels. These findings confirmed that most females who join the Gaza gang have informal education, mainly primary and secondary status, and are very young to understand the adverse effects of joining such criminal groupings.

Furthermore, the study revealed that majority of the former Gaza gang members who were females were lured to the Gaza gang through drug usage in social places, especially at the house estates. Drugs made the females an easy target for recruitment since intoxication made them more comfortable to relate with the recruiter who easily manipulated them through enticements such as money, protection, love, and constant supplies of drugs.

The research also indicated that the female ex-Gaza gang members were recruited into the Gaza gang from entertainment joints and events such as pool playing venues, video-watching shops, and public stadiums where members meet in disguise of watching a game. Moreover, the study confirmed that female ex-Gaza gang members were recruited to the group by their male friends while others were enticed to join it by being offered gifts.

The study further noted that females who were already recruits of the Gaza gang were maintained in the group by being subjected to threats, including deaths and beatings, in case they

left the group. The female members who exited the Gaza group were forced to move to other places to avoid being tracked by other gang members.

5.2.2 Determinants of the Decision to exit the criminal gang

The study's second objective sought to determine the factors that inspire a female's decision to leave a criminal gang such as the Gaza gang. The study observed that former Gaza gang members who are females exited the group because of fear of being incarcerated. The female ex-Gaza gang members agreed that arrests by security agencies in the country and their imprisonment made them to disengage with Gaza gang. This could imply that, arrests and incarcerations of the females instilled fear which forced them to leave the gang life.

The study also established that fear of physical assault and victimization by their fellow male gang members and the community members led the female ex-Gaza gang member to abandon criminal gang activities. This may also be an indication that fear of being perceived negatively by members of the society including relatives contributed to the exit of female ex-gang members from criminal groups such as Gaza.

In addition, the study revealed that a failed expectation in the gang is one of the reasons why the female ex-gang members left the gang. This implied that the females join the gang with high expectations of securing a better home, protection and better income from the gang only to realize that the gang does not meet such expectations. This led the former gang members who were females to abandon the gang life. Moreover, it was established that the female ex-Gaza gang members abandoned the gang due to fear of being coerced into harmful sexual practices or forcible sex which they had seen their fellow females go through.

It was also noted that female ex-Gaza gang members affirmed that witnessed fights within the Gaza gang, made them leave the group. As such, there seems to be frequent disagreement amongst Gaza gang members as they share proceeds of crime and this had profoundly contributed to exit of female ex-Gaza gang members from the group.

Finally, the study indicated that death of fellow gang members in the hands of security agencies made female ex-Gaza gang members to leave the criminal gang and the results could be interpreted to imply that, most of the female ex-gang members left the gang due to the fear of being killed.

5.2.3 Roles played by female members of the Gaza Gang

The third objective of the study sought to examine the influence of the roles played by female recruits in the Gaza gang on their social and economic livelihood post gang life. The findings of the study indicated that majority of the female ex -Gaza gang members performed the function of information gathering, ferrying, and storage of firearms during their gang membership days. In addition, the research showed that some female Gaza gang members who had abandoned the gang were involved in luring potential targets besides playing the role of recruiting new gang members in their previous gang life.

The study further showed that majority of the female ex-Gaza gang members were engaging in criminal tasks such robbery, burglary and pickpocketing during their previous gang life. From the research results, it was clear that, most of the female ex-Gaza gang members had fully transformed and never focused on past gang life as such but they felt much safe after abandoning gang activities which made them to be free from continuous security surveillance. However, the study indicated that the sexual abuses the female ex-Gaza gang members faced during their gang life especially from male colleagues was found to have negatively affected them psychologically since many of them had to regularly go for guidance and counseling sessions to improve their mental stability.

In addition, the study found that many female ex- Gaza gang members who witnessed the death of former colleagues in the ‘line of gang duty’ in the hands of security agencies were still traumatized. Finally, the study indicated that the roles played by the female ex-Gaza gang members before exiting the gang had “hardened” some of them besides making them more aggressive as they work to improve their livelihood after exiting the gang.

5.2.4 Structure and Activities of the Gaza Gang

The fourth objective of the study sought to find out the implications of Gaza gang’s structure and activities on female ex-Gaza gang member’s social and economic livelihoods post gang life. The findings revealed that most females who participated in Gaza gang activities were primary and secondary school dropouts. The research observed that female participation in the Gaza gang activities reduces their parental, sibling, and familial ties even after leaving the gang life. The relatives of ex-Gaza gang members who were females still lived in fear of one of their own due

to her known past criminal activities, creating a social gap between them and the former gang member.

The study observed that it was difficult to have stable families amongst the female ex-Gaza gang members because their past engagement with the gang made the environment unsustainable for family growth as most females shared husbands. In fact, the females who had abandoned the Gaza gang activities were being treated as prostitutes by their male counterparts which eventually affects negatively their social economic engagements to meet their basic need since one was already labeled as a criminal

The study further revealed that former Gaza gang members who were females had very minimal chances of operating a successful business venture. Of the few former female gang members who operated small businesses, most majored in horticulture vending business, such as the sale of fruits that were legally registered but were being stereotyped to be carrying out the business in disguise of their criminal activities.

The study further indicated that it was difficult for female ex-Gaza gang members to secure a white-collar job due to employers' fear of their past criminal records. The study also noted that some female ex-Gaza gang members became antisocial due to the mistreatment they faced during their gang membership days which tended to harden them. The issue of female ex-Gaza gang members being raped by their male counterparts or having multiple 'husbands' had made some contract sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, which motivated them to carry out commercial sex business without fear of anything after exiting the gang. This implied that the female ex-Gaza gang members' experiences during their gang membership days had made them more desperate.

The study also noted that the female ex-Gaza gang members were being stigmatized by the community due to the fear that they might have not reformed fully. It was also noted that the females who had left Gaza gang were often stereotyped to be antisocial due to their gang life history. This makes them not to fully get integrated with the rest of the society members.

The study further underscored that the Female ex Gaza gang members ended up being economic victims because of being economically exploited by the male gang members during their past gang life. The study further noted that majority of female ex-Gaza gang members were assigned

risky and low-cadre jobs during their past gang membership which made them to remain poor even after leaving the gangs.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that the livelihoods of former female gang members are affected in various ways after they exit gang life. Many females carry the trauma and fear with them which jeopardizes their attempts to rebuild their lives post gang. In the specific case of Gaza gang, the females who have exited conveyed that they felt endangered due to increased stigmatization and stereotyping from the community members as a result of their past gang life. This makes successful post gang life and social reintegration difficult. Economically their businesses make very little incomes. Generally social and economic life after the gang is difficult due to diminished social networks. Additionally, having engaged in criminal gang activity leaves women more prone to dangers such as sexual abuse and being more deprived economically once they exit the gang. Consistent with the literature reviewed, most females in the gang are abused psychologically, sexually, and physically, which negatively affects their social and economic livelihoods significantly in post gang membership.

5.4 Recommendations

This study makes the following recommendations:

- i. The government should develop more avenues to empower women who play a significant role in the country's economic growth by supporting female ex-gang members with a vote to start small businesses to boost economic livelihood.
- ii. Community programs for mentorship should be designed to assist the socio-economic well-being and progress of female's ex-gang members so that they become self-reliant.
- iii. Law enforcement agencies should map out all the places where recruitment of female gang members takes place to apprehend all the recruiters and protect vulnerable females.
- iv. The National and County Governments, CBOs, and NGOs among other bodies should increase awareness among parents in the informal settlements on the potential recruitment of their young girls into criminal gangs.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The following suggestions are made from the study.

- i. More studies on female who have exited gangs need to be carried out in other cities and major towns in Kenya such as Nakuru, Kisumu, Mombasa, Thika and Nyeri, where organized criminal gangs have been reported to be in operation.
- ii. Further, a survey on business ventures that would be lucrative to female ex-gang members to support any government financing should be carried out.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Primary Respondent Questionnaire

My name is Njeru Muturi Moses, a student of the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on the influence of urban criminal gangs on the socio-economic livelihood of former female gang members: the case of Gaza criminal gang in Nairobi County. I am requesting you to be part of this study because of its academic contribution, and I promise to keep this information confidential, and I will use it for academic purposes only. Should you require a copy of my work after it is completed, you can contact me at muturim4@gmail.com, and I shall oblige.

Section A: Background Information

Education level

Primary Secondary Diploma

Undergraduate Postgraduate

Any Other

What is your age? _____

Section B: Recruitment of females into Gaza criminal gang

Please designate your degree of support for the statements below by matching a corresponding tally of; (1) = strongly disagree, (2) = disagree, (3) = neither agree nor disagree, (4) = agree, and (5) = strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Young females join the Gaza gang in full awareness that it is a criminal gang					
Females are recruited to the Gaza gang by their male friends					
Young females are introduced to the Gaza gang by family members					
Females are introduced to the Gaza gang by being offered gifts					

Females are lured to the Gaza gang through drugs					
Females are given some roles in the Gaza gang for cash returns					
Females are recruited into the Gaza gang from entertainment joints and events					

Section C: Determinants for female’s decision to leave the Gaza gang

To what extent do you agree that female gang members exit the gang due to the following factors?

(1) = strongly disagree, (2) = disagree, (3) = neither agree nor disagree, (4) = agree and (5) = strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Incarceration of the gang member					
Fear of being beaten by fellow male gang members					
Experiences of being coerced into sexual practices					
Early unplanned pregnancy					
Motivation by family members to exit the gang.					
Failure to meet their expectation in the gang					

Section D: Roles played by females in the Gaza gang.

To what extent do you agree that female ex-gang members played the following roles in criminal gangs (1) = strongly disagree, (2) = disagree, (3) = neither agree nor disagree, (4) = agree, and (5) = strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Information gathering					
Ferrying of firearms					
Storage of firearms					
Support functions (cooking, laundry)					
Luring potential targets					
Recruitment					

In your opinion, what are some of the socio-economic roles you played during your Gaza membership days?

How does the mentioned socio-economic roles affect your current life as female ex-gang members?.....

Section E: Structure and activities of Gaza gang

Please specify your degree of support as per the statements below with a matching tally of; (1) = strongly disagree, (2) = disagree, (3) = neither agree nor disagree, (4) = agree, and (5) = strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Female Participation in Gaza gang activities prevents sibling ties					
Female Participation in Gaza gang activities prevents parental ties					
Being a female Gaza gang member reduces the chances of being employed					

Female Gaza gang members are unable to get jobs because of their gang identity, stigma, visible scars, threats, and broken limbs					
Female members of Gaza gang are often isolated from the social groups such as religion in the society					
Female participation in Gaza gang activities might lead the females to drop out of school					
Female Gaza gang members are usually protected by male gang members					
Female Gaza gang members enjoy economic gains from gangs activities					
Female Gaza gang members are offered low cadres in the gang structure					
Females in the Gaza gang are mostly assigned the most risky tasks in the gang structure.					
Female Gaza gang members with experience can take up top leadership positions in gang structure					
In the Gaza gang structure, females are assigned activities that are hard to be detected by the authorities					
Females engaging in Gaza gang members are often victimized by the community					
The frequent beatings and rape of female Gaza gang members leads them to become antisocial and aggressive					

Being a female Gaza gang member reduces the chances of operating a successful business venture.					
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

Now that you have left the gaza gang, how is your social life?

What are the economic engagements that you occupy yourself with daily?

Please tell me how you spend your free time? _____

Do you belong to any support group? Yes [] No []

Explain briefly _____

Do you still associate with gang members? If so why?..... If not why?

Appendix II: Semi-Structured Key Informant Interview guide

My name is Njeru Muturi Moses, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting research on the influence of urban criminal gangs on the socio-economic livelihood of former female gang members: the case of Gaza criminal gang in Nairobi County. I am requesting you to be part of this study because of its academic contribution, and I promise to keep this information confidential, and I will use it for academic purposes only. Should you require a copy of my work after it is completed, you can contact me on muturim4@gmail.com, and I shall oblige.

1. Please tell me the ways in which Gaza criminal gang recruits its female membership from an expert point of view.

.....
.....

2. Tell me, from your experience and expertise, what do you think are the factors that determine a female's decision exit the Gaza gang?

.....
.....

3. Approximately how many members are there in the Gaza gang according to recent reports and is there an emerging trend?

.....
.....

4. In your view, what is the major activity played by Gaza's female gang members?

.....
.....

5. In your view, have the livelihoods of the female ex-gang members fared social-economically?

.....
.....

6. Are there any government and non-governmental support that is given to the females who have voluntarily exited the Gaza gang?

.....
.....

7. Please explain the kind of dangers do female ex-gang members face once they exist the gang and join the community – list threats from gang and from community?

.....
.....

8. What advice do you have for the females who voluntarily join gangs?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix III: Introduction Letter from University of Nairobi



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK & AFRICAN WOMEN
STUDIES

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March 16, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MR. NJERU MUTURI MOSES
(MA STUDENT)**

This is to confirm that Mr. Njeru Muturi Moses (C50/22161/2019) is a registered Master of Arts student at the Department of Sociology, Social Work & African Women Studies, University of Nairobi. He is currently working on his research proposal entitled, "*The Influence of Urban Criminal Gangs on Social-Economic Lives of Female Gang Members: The Case of Gaza Criminal Gang in Nairobi County, Kenya*"






Any assistance accorded to him will be highly appreciated.


PROF. CHARLES NZIOKA

CHAIR DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, SW & AWS



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