

# DRUG RELATED VIOLENCE AMONG MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH IN LAREDO, TEXAS: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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## Abstract

While the problem of drug related gang violence may no longer command national media and a high level of policymakers' attention and concern, in border communities, drug related barrio gang violence remains a major concern on both sides of the border, and for their communities' respective leaders and policymakers. The project's larger study examines the epidemiology of drug related violence among Mexican American youth in two communities and three major neighborhoods in Laredo, Texas. With regard to gang members' lifetime use of drugs like heroin, cocaine, crack/cocaine, amphetamines, other opiates, inhalants, acid/psychedelics and marijuana, Laredo gang members reported wide ranges of substances and levels of use. Unlike earlier community gang studies, the sampling approach and method allows us to speak to a wider range of gangs, gang members, and activities that other earlier studies were not able to address. The data suggests that it is unlikely that gangs, drugs, and violence will abate in border gateway cities.

## INTRODUCTION

The persistence and spread of gangs in Mexican American (M/A) communities are not new concerns (Moore, 1986; Gonzalez, Moore & Mata, 1980; Zatz, 1980), yet the growth and spread of drug related barrio youth gang violence remains a major dominating issue-- particularly in borderland communities (Sanders, 1996; Moore & Virgil, 1993; Moore, 1991; Spergel, 1993). While the problem of drug related gang violence appears to no longer command national media attention or to be of interest to high-level federal and state policymakers, drug related barrio gang violence remains a compelling concern on both sides of the border, as well as for their communities' respective leaders and policymakers.

With the exception of Sander and Fagan's (Fagan, 1989, 1992, 1992, 1993, 1996) work, there is a dearth of research on drug related violence in border communities, especially those with longstanding gang problems. Actually, the problems and issues associated with drugs, gangs, and violence in border communities remain largely unaddressed in both social science research (Jankowski, 1991; Klein & Maxson, 1989; Moore, 1991; Vigil, 1988) and government monitoring/reporting systems, such as DAWN, ADAM, and PULSE (Harrison & Kennedy, 1994).

Valdez and Mata found two predominantly Mexican American cities in Texas (San Antonio and Laredo) to have experienced an unprecedented increase in illicit drug use and violence among its youth and youth adults. Their interest was in particular stimulated by (1) the growth and spread of gangs along the U.S./Mexico border, (2) the longstanding relationship between gangs and drugs, (3) the escalating nature of youth and gang violence, and (4) the growing involvement of gangs in narco-trafficking. Valdez and Mata designed a large study to examine the epidemiology of drug related violence among Mexican American youth in two communities and three major neighborhoods in Laredo and San Antonio. The purpose of the overall study was to identify and distinguish the relationship between gang violence and illicit drug use among youth and young adults ages 14 to 25 years, who would be derived from street active M/A youth using a community field study methodology.

This article focuses on the City of Laredo and presents preliminary findings from this three-and-one-half year project. The paper will also suggest the growing importance and need for primary basic studies, such as this Center for Drug and Social Policy Research (CDSRPC) effort, as well as social indica-

tor-based reports like those of Border Epidemiology Workgroup (BEWG), PULSE and Texas Commission on Drugs and Alcoholism (TCADA). The essay largely explores Laredo's border community youth gangs -- type and range; and second explores the role that gang membership status plays in gang activities, drug use, illegal and other criminal activities and experiences with family and selected acts of street violence.

#### WEBB COUNTY- CENSUS DATA:

The metropolitan area of Laredo has a population of over 133,239 (U.S. Census, 1990). However, the estimate for the population of Webb County in 1998 was 188,166, and in 1997 it was 181,302, a change of 6,864 individuals. The comparison of urban and rural population percentages for this county have never fluctuated significantly. The urban population is 123,682, while the rural is 9,557. For the past decade, Laredo has largely been an urban community and one of the cities that has quickly increased commercially. The gender breakdown in 1990 was 63,959 male, and 69,280 female. Persons of Mexican origin comprised 94 percent of the total population in Webb County, Texas.

The educational attainment for persons above the age of 25 was not distributed adequately. There were 35,573 individuals who had less than a 12th grade education, which represented 27% of Webb County's 133,239 inhabitants. There were 25,355 individuals with less than a 9th grade education, and the 10,218 individuals that were between 9th and 12th grade that had not received a high school diploma. However, high school graduates registered at 11,221, and those that had received some college or earned some college degree totaled 21,373.

Median household income in 1989 was \$18,074, while per capita income in 1989 was \$6,771. Thirty-eight percent (50,114) of Webb County was living below census poverty guidelines in 1990. The 1996 Census estimates depicted a much more dismal outlook. During 1996, the median household income was \$24,288, with a 90% confidence interval between \$21,323 and \$27,236. However, state estimates between 1995-96 indicated that 17 percent of the population was living in poverty. 29,527 people under the age of 18 were in poverty. However, there were 10,430 children between the ages of 5 and 17 belonging to families below the pov-

erty line. While one of the last growing SMSAs, pockets of poverty still mark growth and changes Laredo has experienced the past three decades.

#### METHODOLOGY

The data for this analysis were drawn from a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) study focusing on drug related violence among Mexican American males in gangs in South Texas (Yin et al., 1996). The project was conceived as a comparative multi-method, multi-level study that sampled from a range of gangs and gang members in Laredo's working class and poor neighborhoods. The communities selected included almost all poor and nearly all working class neighborhoods situated in Laredo's central, west, and south side areas.

The project utilized a community field study approach in an effort to identify and determine the size and extent of gangs and other high-risk groups. Considerable time and effort were expended the first year to: determine the characteristics of gangs, explore and describe their primary activities and membership, determine the leadership structure of gangs, and examine the relationship to their respective neighborhoods and other communities. An extensive life history interview document was developed heavily influenced from prior work completed by George Beschner, Paul Goldstein, Albert Mata, Joan Moore, and Diego Vigil. Rosters of gangs of non-institutional and street active members were compiled, as well as developing a sampling strategy to ensure a more representative sample of gangs and gang membership.

The interview data allowed the researchers to identify and explore illicit drug use and violent experiences. It also allowed for the study of the relationship between illicit drug use and violence as a function of individual, gang, or other group membership. Further, the interview data allowed for the exploration of gang members' involvement and relationships with their respective families, social service agencies, faith community, and neighborhood-based networks. Simultaneously, CJS, social services, and census data were gathered as a means of examining idiosyncratic individual, neighborhood, and community differences.

The broader project's data collection relied on social indicator data, CJS and social mapping techniques, fieldwork observations, fo-

cus groups, and a life history survey. Gangs and gang members were identified and served as the basis for gang rosters, the random sampling of gangs and gang members. Although this particular paper reports on only one community of the field study, it remains mindful of the significant role and value of the different data collection methods heretofore mentioned in border and non-border findings.

The sample was drawn from the central, west, and south sides of Laredo that were divided into the following neighborhoods: Cantaranas, El Catorce, El Chacon, El Cuatro, El Siete Viejo, El Tonto, El Trece, La Azteca, La Colonia Guadalupe, La Guadalupe, La Ladrillera, Los Amores, Los Monies, Siete Luces, and Santo Nino. Each gang varied in size, organization, leadership, and claimed [turf] area. See table 1.

The sample was stratified by gang and gang membership as described below:

- a) Leaders
- b) Original Gangsters or Veteranos

- c) Core members
- d) Periphery and other members

A random sample was drawn from the final membership rosters that yielded 117 male gang members ranging in age from 14 to 25 years. Study Sample Subjects (Ss) were largely Mexican-American males.

The life history instrument consisted of nine sections that included: (1) family history, (2) neighborhood and community/institutional relations, (3) gang structure, (4) violence, (5) drug use, (6) illegal activities, (7) friendship patterns, (8) school experience, and (9) sexual behavior. The life history interview document comprised open and closed-ended questions and gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. Interviews were voluntary and lasted from two to three hours. The use of scenario questions allowed for "thick descriptions" of incidents. Each subject was liked to black level census data as well. We now will turn to the paper's two major research questions.

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of Laredo Gang Members**  
**(N=117)**

Characteristics	Percents and Averages				
	Leaders (n=12)	O.G.'s (n=37)	Cores (n=47)	Others (n=21)	Total (n=117)
Age (Average (in years)	17.9	17.7	18.5	18.4	18.2
Male	100	100	100	100	100
Ethnicity					
Mexican Origin	92	92	94	95	93
Other *	8	8	6	5	7
Born					
In the U.S.	92	95	96	90	95
In Mexico	8	5	4	10	5
Marital Status					
Single	75	87	92	95	89
Married	--	5	4	--	3
Common Law	25	8	2	5	7
Separated/Divorced	--	--	2	--	1
Other					
Have A Job	25	22	11	24	18
Currently in School	33	41	36	48	39
Ever Lived in					
Public Housing	33	5	11	19	13

Source: "UHCDSPR: Drug Related Gang Violence in South Texas" RO1 - DA08604  
\* Identified as Latino and Others

**FINDINGS**

The data will be explored in terms of gang membership: *Leaders*, *OGs*, *Cores* and *Other* gang member status. Table 1&2 illustrates a variety of demographic characteristics pertaining to the Laredo gang study sample (N=117). In terms of gang status, *Leaders*, *OGs*, *Cores*, and *Others*, one finds a mean age of 18, ranging from 14 to 25 years of age. Nearly all were born in the U.S. and reported being of Mexican origin.

A little less than four in ten of Laredo gang members were currently enrolled and attending school, with *Others* and *OGs* more likely to be enrolled than *Leaders* and *Cores*. Less than one in five report being employed. *Cores* reported the lowest employment status with small differences between the *Others* statuses. Nine out of ten gang members were single. *Leaders* and *OGs* were more likely to be married or in common-law relationships than were reported living with their children. *Leaders* and *OGs* were more likely than *Cores* or *Others* to

have their children living with them.

In terms of current living arrangements, nearly eight in ten reported living with both parents, or in mother-only households. *Leaders* and *OGs* were more likely than *Cores* or *Others* to report living in other arrangements: father, grandparents, girlfriend, or friends. In fact, *Leaders* were three times more likely than the other gang statuses to be living on their own.

Drug onset for gang members for alcohol and marijuana average age is generally 13 years old. With a list of 12 different drugs, and controlling for gang membership status, the responses indicated that all *Leaders*'s, *OGs*'s, and *Others*'s onset differs slightly for each substance. Also, while *Leaders* had tried alcohol and marijuana by age 12, onset occurs generally during the early to mid-adolescent years for all other substances. At 14 to 15 years of age, gang members reported their first use of a wide range of substances to include: cocaine, crack, acid, downers, and

**Table 2**  
**Characteristics of Laredo Gang Members' Families**  
**(N=117)**

Characteristics	Percents and Averages				
	Leaders (n=12)	O.G.'s (n=37)	Cores (n=47)	Others (n=21)	Total (n=117)
<b>Current Head of "R's" Household:</b>					
Both Parents	33	32	38	48	38
Mother	25	43	45	38	41
Father	0	11	4	0	5
Grandparents	17	6	7	0	6
Self	25	3	0	5	4
Other Relatives	0	0	4	9	3
Friends 17.9	0	5	2	0	3
<b>"R's" Currently Living with:</b>					
Both Parents	33	32	38	48	38
Mother	25	43	45	38	41
Father	0	11	4	0	5
Grandparents	17	8	11	0	6
Alone	25	3	0	0	9
Girlfriend/Wife					
CommonLaw	16	3	4	5	4
Other Relatives	8	11	9	10	9
Friends 17.9	0	5	2	0	3
<b>"R's" with Children</b>	33	30	19	10	22

**Table 3**  
Average Age at First Use (for Ever Used)

Substance	Leaders (n=12)	O.G.'s (n=37)	Cores (n=47)	Others (n=21)	Total (n=117)
Alcohol	13.6	13.3	13.2	12.6	13.2
Marijuana	13.1	13.2	12.7	12.6	12.9
Crack	16.6	15.4	15	16.1	15.5
Cocaine by Itself	14.4	14.9	14.8	15.2	14.8
Heroin by Itself	17	15.4	15.8	17.3	16
Heroin & Cocaine (mixed together)	-	16	16.8	-	16.3
Acid/Psychedelics/ Ecstasy	15	15.9	15.3	15.3	15.5
Inhalants	15.2	14.3	14.2	15.1	14.5
Benzodiazepines (downers, rohypnol)	14.6	15	14.3	15.1	14.7
Other Opiates	-	18	16.0	17.0	17
Amphetamines	16	15.4	15.4	15.5	15.5
Other Drugs	15.5	14.4	15.6	14.7	15.5

Source: "UH-CDSRP: Drug Related Gang Violence in South Texas" ROI - DA08604

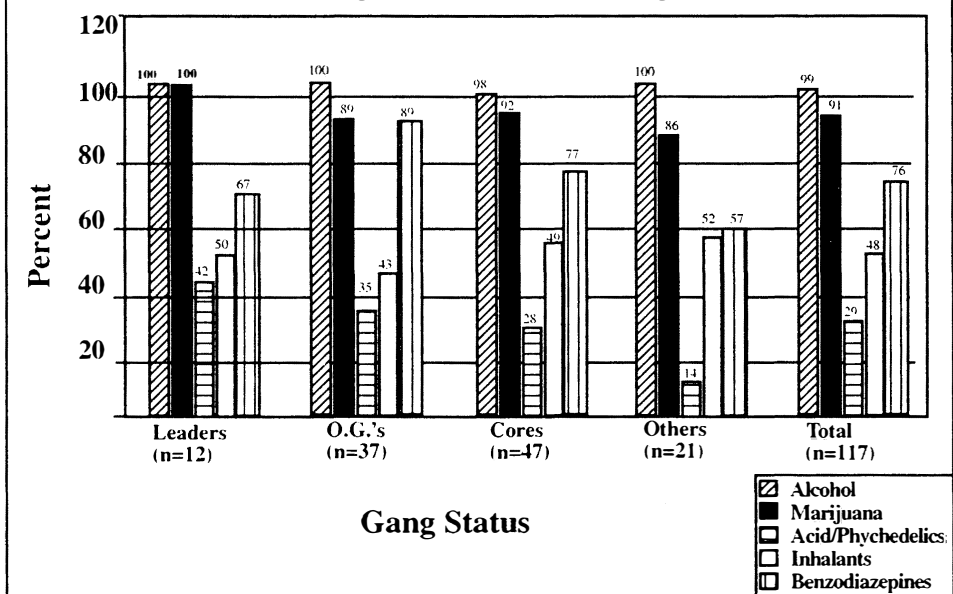
inhalants, yet for gang members, the first use of amphetamines and opiates age ranges from 15.5 to 17.

With regard to gang members' lifetime use of drugs like heroin, cocaine, crack/cocaine, amphetamines, other opiates, inhalants, acid/psychedelics and marijuana, Laredo gang members reported wide ranges of substances and levels of use. There are three levels of use: high, moderate, and low. In terms of high

lifetime use, one finds study subjects' lowest levels of drug use are opiates, amphetamines and "other drugs".

With regard to drug use during the past 30 days, we find that Ss drug use is characterized by three modes. The use of alcohol, marijuana and cocaine are at the highest levels. Again, the use of benzodiazepines and crack/cocaine can be characterized as moderate and represent the next mode. The re-

**Figure 2.1 Lifetime Drug Use**



maining substances had the lowest levels of reported use. Interestingly, *Leaders'* use of cocaine in the last 30 days is higher than that of *OGs*, *Cores*, and *Others*. None of the *Leaders* group reported any heroin use, but almost 20 percent of the *Cores*, 11 percent of *OGs* and 10% of *Others* reported using heroin in the past month.

While eleven percent of the *OGs* indicated they had injected heroin, only 2% of *Core* members had injected heroin. None of the *Leaders* or *Others* reported any injection of heroin during the 30 days prior to the interview. Again, *Leaders* and *Others* had not recently injected any drug.

#### ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

We will now turn to how *Ss* characterize family members' use of alcohol, drugs and their involvement in illegal activities with a drinking problem, nearly six in ten *Others* and half *Leaders*, *Cores* and *OGs* respectively, responded affirmatively. When asked a similar question "whether or not the *Ss* had a family member who used drugs" *Ss* reported a wider range: 38 percent (*Others*) to 83 percent (*Leaders*). When asked if they ever had a family member involved in illegal activities, over seven in ten responded affirmatively. Their involvement decreases from 83% for *Leaders* and 78% for *OGs*, to 64% for *Cores* and 62% for *Others*.

Table 6 illustrates the percentages of each of the gang sub-groups who have witnessed, and/or who know about selected acts of violence. When asked if they had witnessed (or knew about) their father hitting their mother, 32% of the *OGs* responded affirmatively, and 17% of the *Leaders* answered likewise. When asked if they had witnessed their mother hitting their father, 29% of the *Others*, and 17% of *Leaders* and *Cores* had witnessed this type of violence.

Next, the *Ss* were asked if they had witnessed a family member being shot because of gangs, drugs, or some other reason. Twenty-four percent of the *OGs* reported witnessing a family member being shot because of gangs. Seventeen percent of the *Leaders* reported witnessing a shooting related to drugs or other reasons.

#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

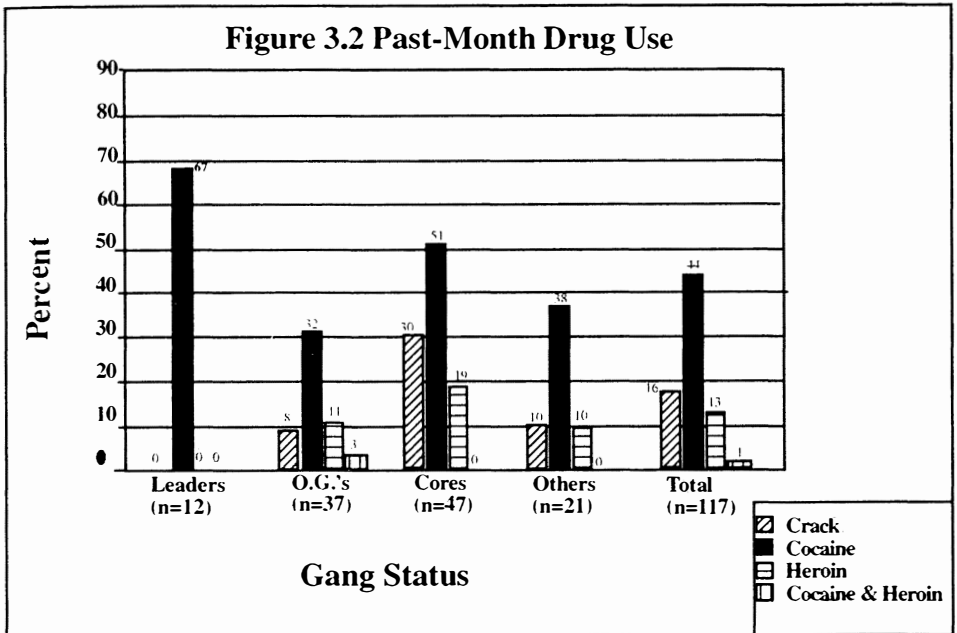
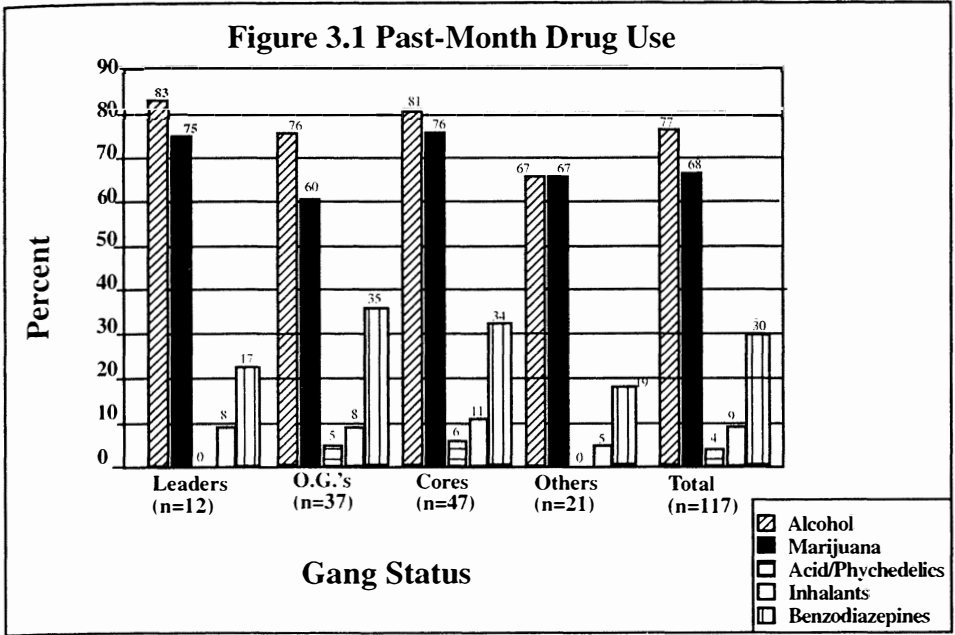
We now will turn to gang members' involvement in illegal and criminal activities. Gang members were asked if they owned a gun at the time of the interview, or had car-

ried a gun during the 30 days prior. *Leaders* reported the lowest ownership with *OGs* leading *Core's* and *Other's* ownership levels. Moreover, when asked if they had carried a gun in the last thirty days, a little less than one in three of all gang members reported that they had carried. Carrying a gun in the last 30 days described a little less than half of *Ss* that owned a gun. Yet, when *Ss* were asked, "if they had ever fired a gun in a gang related fight," a little over two in three gang members reported they had. Nearly four in five *OGs*, and nearly three in four *Leaders* responded that they had. Surprisingly, 57 percent of *Others*, the lowest level of gun users, involved nearly 3 in five of this youth gang category.

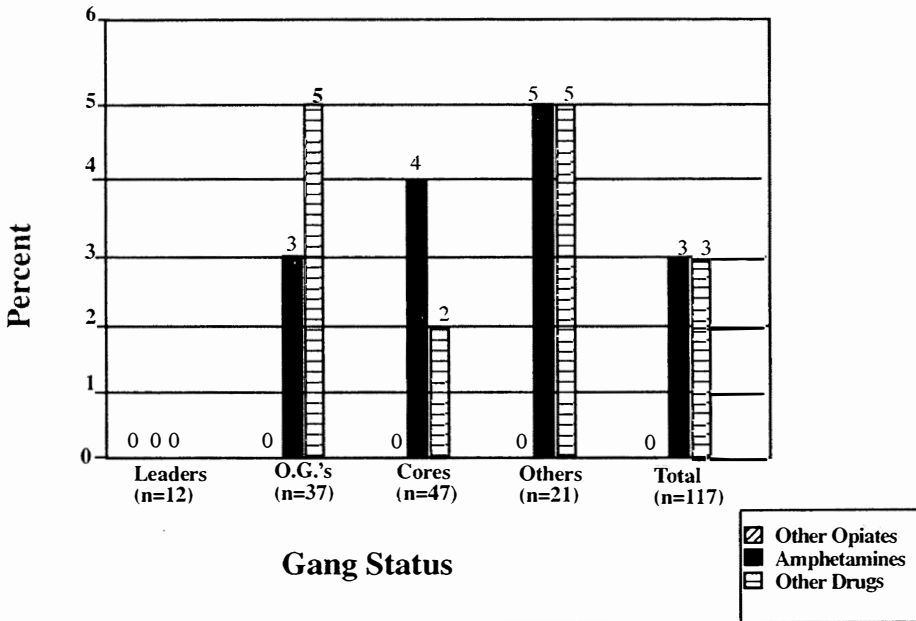
Seeking not to minimize the fact that 67% of Laredo gang members (N=117) had fired a gun in a gang related fight, we also asked if the gang members had been arrested for nonviolent and violent crimes, and if they had sold drugs in the last 30 days. For all three items, *Core* gang members' levels exceeded those of *OGs*. *Others* and *Leaders* (except for arrests for nonviolent crime).

A little over four in ten of all gang members, reported being arrested for a violent crime. In terms of nonviolent crime, six in ten reported being arrested with declining numbers of *OGs*, *Cores*, and *Others*, respectively. In terms of dealing drugs in the last 30 days, one observes two distinct modes. Interestingly, 51 percent of *Core* members reported selling drugs during the last 30 days. Yet, only 17 percent of *Leaders* reported selling drugs in the last thirty days.

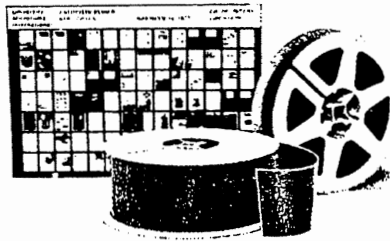
In terms of how the gang members perceived the relationships between their respective gangs and Nuevo Laredo gangs, seven in ten gang members reported being connected to Nuevo Laredo gangs through illegal activities or through drug dealing. A little less than one in eight reported having serious conflicts or fights with Nuevo Laredo gangs. While nearly three in four reported being involved in criminal activities in Laredo, Texas, only one in five activities were related to Nuevo Laredo. Those engaged in criminal activities that lasted less than a month reported levels that were half of those with criminal enterprises lasting a month or more. *Cores* and *OGs* reported significantly higher levels of involvement than *Leaders* and *Others*. For the most part, Laredo gangs' illegal activities were more likely to be related to the U.S. than to activi-



**Figure 3.3 Past-Month Drug Use**



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**Table 5**  
**Family Members Problems: Drinking, Drugs & Illegal Activities (Percentages)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Leaders (n=12)</b>	<b>O.G.'s (n=37)</b>	<b>Cores (n=47)</b>	<b>Others (n=21)</b>	<b>Total (n=117)</b>
<b>Family Member with Drinking Problem</b>	50	51	49	62	52
<b>Family Member Using Drugs</b>	83	49	40	38	47
<b>Family Member Engaged in Illegal Activities</b>	83	78	64	62	70

Source: "UH-CDSPR: Drug Related Gang Violence in South Texas" RO1 - DA08604

**Table 6**  
**Selected Acts of Violence Rs Witnessed or Know About (Percentages)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Leaders (n=12)</b>	<b>O.G.'s (n=37)</b>	<b>Cores (n=47)</b>	<b>Others (n=21)</b>	<b>Total (n=117)</b>
<b>Witnessed Father Hit Mother</b>	17	5	5		
<b>Witnessed Mother Hit Father</b>	17	22	17		21
<b>Family Member Shot or Killed/Gangs</b>	8	24	0	10	15
<b>Family Member Shot or Killed/Drugs</b>	17	8	0	10	
<b>Family Member Shot or Killed/Other</b>	17	11	11	10	11

Source: "UH-CDSPR: Drug Related Gang Violence in South Texas" RO1 - DA08604

ties on the other side of the U.S./Mexico border. In terms of short-term involvement in illegal activities, less than three in eight gang members reported such enterprises. *Cores* and *OGs* were more likely to be engaged in such activities than were *Leaders* or *Others*. One must keep in mind that less than one-third of these enterprises were connected to Nuevo Laredo.

## DISCUSSION

Although preliminary, these findings provide important data concerning drug-related violence among Mexican American gangs in Laredo, Texas. These data suggest that gang members' role to their respective gangs are associated with different drugs and drug use experiences; in how they are related to past and current acts of violence; and finally, in how these are related to illegal activities (criminal versus drug dealing; short term and long term) in Laredo and Nuevo Laredo. The *Ss* range in age from 14 to 25. Most are 18 years of age, born in the U.S., single, and may be termed, youth out of the educational mainstream (i.e. low educational attainment and achievement, trouble and conflict with school administrators, teachers, and their peers). A small number reported ever living in public housing, but this was a more com-

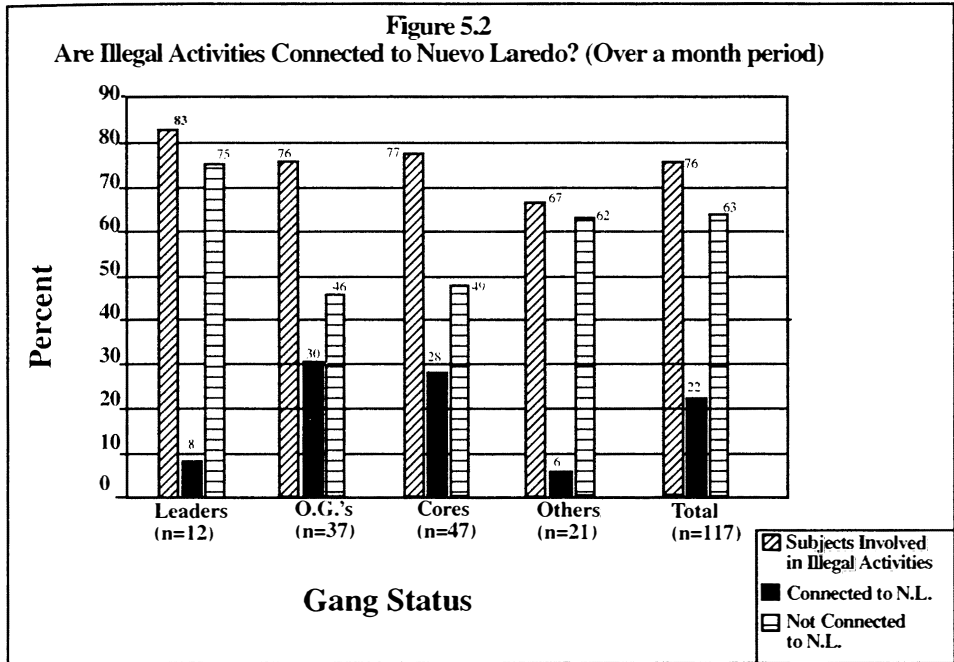
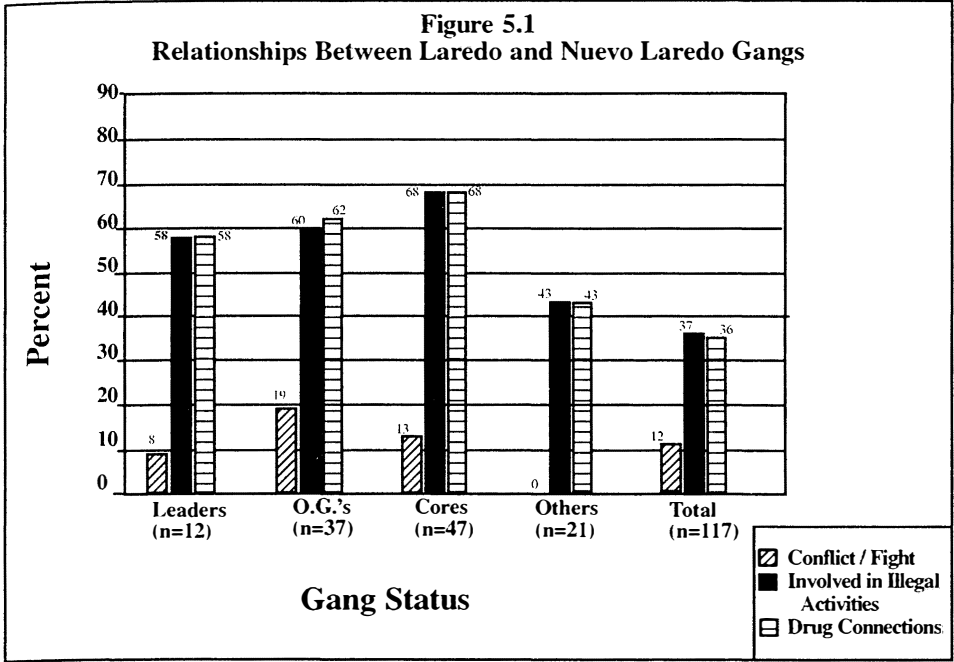
mon experience for *Leaders* and *Cores* than for their counterparts. Six in ten are not living or residing with their biological parents and are living in single-parent households or other non-traditional household arrangements. A little over one in five has children — an experience that is more common for *Leaders* and *OGs* than for their counterparts.

Gang members reported earlier **drug use onset** for a wide of range of drugs — especially alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, benzodiazepines, and heroin. Gang members' drug onset is earlier than it is for non-gang and other at risk minority youth. Also, *Ss* drug use in the last thirty days suggests three modes. In the first mode, one finds a large number of gang members who used marijuana, alcohol and cocaine. A second mode involves a moderate number of gang members who have used amphetamines, benzodiazepines and cocaine. The third mode involves a smaller number of gang members who reported using heroin, crack, psychedelics, opiates, inhalants and cocaine/heroin. While *Leaders* were reluctant to use heroin, many use cocaine regularly. Also, *Cores* and *OGs* were more likely than their counterparts to have injected drugs in the last thirty days. In short, gang members may vary in number and frequency of drug use, their

**Table 7**  
**Selected Illegal and Criminal Activities (Percentages)**

Activity	Leaders (n=12)	O.G.'s (n=37)	Cores (n=47)	Others (n=21)	Total (n=117)
Currently on Own	33	68	57	38	55
Carried a Gun in Last 30 Days	25	38	36	14	32
Fired Gun in Gang Related Fight	75	78	64	57	67
Arrested for Violent Crime	42	38	45	43	42
Arrested for Non-Violent Crime	58	46	47	43	46
Sold Drugs in Last Three Months	17	43	51	29	41

Source: "UH-CDSRP: Drug Related Gang Violence in South Texas" RO1 - DA08604



use and related risk behaviors portend a population in the near future that will be becoming increasingly involved with CJS. The data also suggest that moderate to low numbers of gang members are willing to use a wide range of drugs. Nonetheless, most are not willing to inject them. Yet, a large number are engaging in criminal enterprises and drug dealing. It is unclear, if they will be like earlier generations of Mexican American drug users who have reported longer average lag times before they enter drug abuse treatment. Also, due to their experiences with family violence, crime, and drugs, it is unclear if service providers will be able to meet their needs and situations. Their current and future drug use can only serve to heighten the risk of diseases like STDs, HIV and hepatitis. Their need to cope and deal drugs, and their residing in stressed families and neighborhoods will only serve to heighten their involvement with illegal activities, crime, and violence.

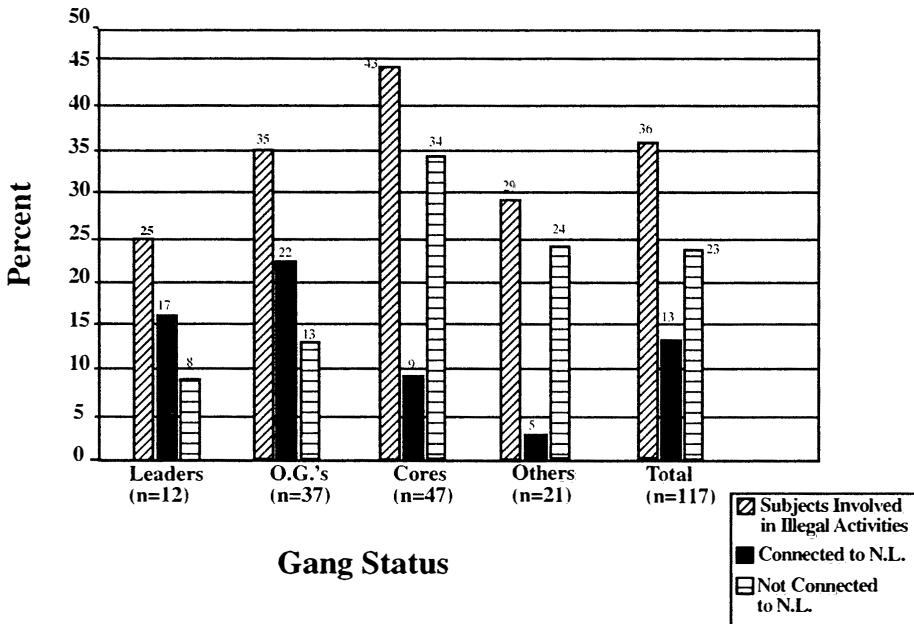
**IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND RESEARCH**

Unlike earlier community gang studies, the sampling approach and method allows us to speak to a wider range of gangs, gang members, and activities that other earlier studies

were not able to address. Yet, the lack of basic and applied data for other border cities suggests that these findings remain tentative and subject to additional investigation and scrutiny. The lack of comparable data and the lack of substantive applied and basic studies bearing directly on high-risk youth, their drug use, and their experience with violence underscores the need for more background, contextual, and trend studies. Moreover, these data serve to underscore the need for school-based and community-wide surveys about gangs, drugs and violence. No less important for borderland communities are monitoring and surveillance systems like PULSE, ADAM, DAWN, High school senior surveys, and trauma registries (TRs). It is unlikely that gangs, drugs, and violence will abate in border gateway cities; and they largely missed by these data systems..

As a cross-sectional random sample, this study attends to differences across gangs and gang membership, but not to changes over times in these communities. The phenomena of gangs getting younger and older needs to be pursued in these two communities and across the US/Mexico border. Moreover, it is unclear to what degree border gangs are

**Figure 5.3**  
**Are Illegal Activities Connected to Nuevo Laredo?**  
 (For periods of less than a month)



largely a Mexican-American youth experience rather than Mexican one. The Ss clearly delineated their knowledge and links to Mexican youth gangs on the Mexican border communities, but remains open to further and future investigations.

The large number of Ss coming from single parent household to alternative family arrangements remains high and troubling. The number of Ss with children portends a number of youth that drugs gangs and violence will be a common and expected experience. Low work and education attainment levels also suggest need for alternative education and youth training programs. To not address these two issues will only further these youth reliance on sub-economy and welfare economy. MST, FAST, BSFT, and other substance abuse & mental health services clinical bench and trails studies programs have yet to focus on these border youth populations. The low public housing experience reported by gang members may not be typical of other border communities or maybe due to role that border *colonias* communities play in these youths lives.

The media and some policymakers arguments that gangs were becoming supergangs, composed of super gangsta's, and networks of gang enterpeuralship is greatly over drawn. Works of Bourgoies, Padilla and Jankowski need to be more closely examined; in fact these should be contrasted to the more detailed measured works of Sullivan, Spergel, Maxson and Klien, Brotherton, Curry and Decker. The day of generalizing from convenience sample of a gang to all gangs in a community or even within large gang must be challenged. Gangs differ in history, community context, relationship to their local straight worlds, to their subeconomy, and criminal networks. They also differ in terms of their local public reaction to factors making for gang proliferation and gang control. This must be monitored and addressed in current and future studies. Specifically means:

- Public health models and community field studies . Ones building on state of art and science of Spergel, 1995; Sullivan, 1995; Maxson, 1995; Johnson et. al, 1994.

- Criminal Justice System (CJS) and public health model based studies of drug and violence along the U.S./Mexico border and between twin border communities (Moore, 1978; Fagan, 1989,1992; Moore, 1991).

- Development and evaluation of basic, applied and policy data and studies of drugs and violence along the U.S./Mexico border that allow BEWG, PULSE, ADAM and DAWN to attend drug related gang violence along US/Mexico Border.

- Bi-national studies of drugs and violence along the U.S./Mexico border and between twin border communities that go beyond social policy by Five o'clock news and political jingoism. Studies that seek to provide measured response and grounded in realities that these communities, their families and youth face.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The project and these data are products of the collaborative efforts of senior and junior research staff. The authors would like to thank Nickalos Rocha, George Lara, Ed Codina, Melissa P. Navarro, and Richard Arcos. In Laredo, we want to thank STACADA and the field research staff. The data collected for this project was a product of two NIDA grants 5R01da08604-04, 5R24da07234-08 and small grant support from the UT Austin Hogg Foundation for Mental Health.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse has projected that the population of Webb County will have increased seven percent from 1997-99. In addition, between 1997-99, there was a projected six percent increase for youth between the ages of 0-17. However, adults comprised an increase of seven percent. The annual average unemployment rate for 1997 was 10.5%, and in 1998 it was 9.2%.

2. The Drug Enforcement Agency has confiscated many amounts of drugs in its last few years of existence. However, this past year there were noticeable changes.É Marijuana confiscation from 1995-98 increased 36 percent.É Cocaine confiscation increased 86 percent, and cases where dosage units were confiscated increased 163 percent.

3. The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse has projected that the population of Webb County will have increased seven percent from 1997-99.É In addition, between 1997-99, there was a projected six percent increase for youth between the ages of 0-17.É However, adults comprised an increase of seven percent.É The annual aver-

age unemployment rate for 1997 was 10.5%, and in 1998 it was 9.2%.

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