

Juvenile gang

Science



Apply the functionalist point of view to the phenomenon of female juvenile gangs in Hong Kong and evaluate its explanation. The recent female juvenile gang problem has sparked off public concerns in Hong Kong, because they are more rampant in the newly-developed towns such as Tseung Kwan O, Tin Shui Wai and Tai Po. Comparing with the figures of girls joining gangs by Dr. T. W. Lo in 2001 and by the Federation in 2005, the trend of girls's participation in gangs is increasing. In the following, the phenomenon of female juvenile gangs in Hong Kong will be discussed in detail by the functionalist point of view.

Then, the explanation will be evaluated. Before discussing the phenomenon of female juvenile gangs in Hong Kong by the functionalist point of view. Let start with the definition of structural functionalism and definition of female juvenile gangs. Society is a system with various social institutions performing important functions to the society and to individuals. The structural functionalism is based on the assumption that society is a stable, the function of each part of the community should be able to co-ordination to make a harmonious and efficient society.

Female juvenile gangs is defined as girls who are below the age of 21 and have been members of gangs. Gangs consist of three features. First, gangs are stable groups with regular gatherings. Second, gangs involve deviant behavior such as fighting. Third, gangs affiliate with triad societies. By the functionalist point of view, the social structure and condition have a great effect on female juvenile gangs forming. Girls who were joined juvenile gangs are unable to play their role in different class of society because of

social inequality, so they can not achieve the goal and they are tempted to have deviant behavior.

At the family level, family put many pressure on the girls, they felt out of place with their family due to poor relationships with parents and bad growing experience. Under such circumstances, they tend to escape from the real family and seek for other big family which can offer them emotional attachment. At their schools and working level, they can not get the sense of accomplishment in schools or from working. They are forced to attend classes or not satisfied in salary. At the peer level, due to the peer pressure and they meet friends with gang backgrounds, they have more chance to connect with gang members.

At the personal level, girls start to demand for autonomy and to be independent form 2 is the most vulnerable period for girls. Due to the puberty, they are easier to have emotional problems. Comparing with the boys, girls want to get protection and free entertainment from gangs rather than showing off. Those factors show that girls who were joined gangs can not take their responsibility in different level of society. They joined gangs in order to find their role in the other family and recognition from other members.

Besides, there are three type of female juvenile gangs, including autonomous group, satellite group and mixed group. Autonomous group is a all-female group. Members in this group are very independent and autonomous. They are not controlled by the male gangs. Also, these groups have the same features as male gangs in the way they behave and solve problems. Members in satellite group and mixed group are more likely to rely

on the male members or gang, they can get more protection or other support such as financial support or provide free entertainment, most girls have the role being 'wife' or 'little sister' of male members.

Female members play an auxiliary role in gangs. They almost carry weapon for male members and provide sexual services to male members. The activities in gang of boy and girl are quite different. For instance, boy involves more in criminal and violent acts than girl. But drug offences are more common in girls as girls are easier to evade the inspection. Boys are less likely to have free entertainment and are less emotional and gossip than girls in gangs. Sometimes, female members are needed to help male members to beat the girls from the other gang.

It is understandable that male members and female members have different function in gang. In order to maintain the female juvenile gangs, there are female leader and fighting girls in gangs. It shows that female members are taking on more specific roles within the group. For female leader, she should have a wide network of contacts in order to get more protection and free entertainment. On the other hand, she should be able to fight to protect her followers and appear to be mature. For fighting girls, those girls are look like a boy and they like fighting.

They will keep doing exercise in order to be stronger. It is a way to protect themselves and they can able to stay or exist in gangs. All the female members must know how to protect their reputation. Otherwise, the members of the gang will not respect them and they will be rejected or despised. In the female juvenile gangs, each member has their role in gang,

such as leader need to be presentable and eloquent. In different role, they have different function and this is how they maintain the system of gang.

By the functionalist point of view, the reason of formation of the female juvenile gangs can be explained. The female juvenile gangs also work as a society. Every member has her role and function, they contribute themselves in gang. Female members in autonomous group, satellite group and mixed group have different features and functions. On one hand, male members provide free entertainment and protection to female members. On the other hand, female members help male members to carry the drugs and weapon. There are mutual beneficial relationship between male and female members or gangs.

However, structural functionalism can not explain how the girls join the gang as there are many other factors. In addition, it can not explain how are the female members formed their identities. By the structural functionalism, we can explain the function of the leader (Big sister) and fighting girls and the relationship between leader and her followers. But, we can not explain how they can be a leader or fighting girls, the process of being the female leader consist of many factors. Structural functionalism can not explain the phenomenon of female juvenile completely. References 1.

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