

Research into youth  
gang culture  
criminology essay



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A] Conduct your own research into youth gang culture.

This research analyse the myths & realities surrounding the highly problematic of youth gang in the UK. There is little research into the gang problem in the UK which has led to the large amount of research from the USA being involved to the UK.

Key areas in this research were the analysis of different theories of youth gangs, the use of different subcultural concept in order to explain the emergence of youth gangs & the impact of the press in changing public perception and government reaction, as the effect this has on official statistic.

Hallsworth & Young [2008] stated the gangs was for the first time clearly linked to the problem of urban violence and use of weapon in the UK suggested a Home Office report 2008, published following the rise in gang related incidents, which were the focus of much media attention. The Centre for Social Justice [2009] went on the state that media coverage has at times been suggestive of an expansion in gang related youth violence, extraordinary headlined & television documentaries relating to gang violence & death as well the involvement of girl gangs in the UK. Indicated that the issue is similar to that in the USA where the common perception is that this group are armed, dangerous & ready to kill [Hallworst & Young 2008]. Every time a youth is killed as a result of street violence, particularly when it involves knives or guns, questions are sent through the press as to whether the incident was linked to gangs [Hallsworth & Young 2008]. However, it is

stated that much of the press report in the UK are not backed by practical evidence of a large scale issues.

The issue with defining gangs, the use of word 'gang' can lead to events which can not be gang related defined as such [Marshall 2005]. The Greater Vancouver Gang study identified group who were recorded by the police as a 'gang' even though they did not consider themselves this way [Gordon 2000]. Bullock & Tilley [2002] stated that almost all who belong to informal group might be deemed to be gang member even if they are not criminal, despite previous studies such as Willmott's [1966] survey in East London showing that it is usual for youths of eighteen to go around in small group [Farrington & West 1977].

Hallsowrth & Young [2008] stated that there is a small consensus on what groups are gang and this stay the subject of on going debate. They explained that were 3 level of delinquent collective [Marshall 2005]

Peer group are the most common, implicated in petty but unorganised crime.

Gangs who are more likely to use deadly violence & protect their territory than other street groups [Sanders 1994 cited in Bennett & Holloway 2004].

Organised Criminal group who operate black markets, where specific view crime their regular occupation [Marshall 2005] and where youths can operate as part of the adult organised groups [Stelfox 1998].

Peter Stelfox found it difficult to find a generally agreed theory of a gang which was applicable to the UK issues [Pitts 2007]. He stated on a broad

theory to suit the aims of his research , showing that a gang criminal  
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purpose, but uses violence - the threat - fear of violence to further a criminal purpose, but excluding football hooligans & terrorist [Stelfox 1998]. This theory Stelfox found a national total of 72 gangs in the UK. Those using alternative theories for example the Metropolitan Police [2006 cited in Pitts 2007] recorded 169 youth gangs in London and Hallsworth & Young's [2008] discovered state that gang membership in the UK is no more than 37% of the youthful population. The problem that will arise when trying to identify youth gang using different theories

The majority of young people are law-abiding citizens who a valuable contribution to community. Young people are disproportionately more likely to be the victim of violence & to scary about the impact in their live. British Crime Survey evaluate that young men from 16 to 24, for example are more than four times more likely to become the victim of violent crime than general population and there were over 500, 000 violent incident against 10 to 15 years olds in 2010/11

A young person's risk of being a victim of violence is heavily determined by their age, sex & class. Family elements like parental neglect or violence are important, but so too are broader community elements like local attitudes to the illegal economy or high crime rates.

What elements lead young people to commit serious violence are:

Early childhood neglect & abuse

Ill health in the family

Parental violence & drug addiction

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School exclusion & early conduct disorders

Violent victimisation & repeated hospital visit

Early involvement in local gangs

Gang Membership also drives serious violence. Data on gangs is not systematically recorded in the UK, evidence suggest that gang membership is relatively rare. Youth surveys have found that 2 to 7% of youth people aged between 10 & 19 years report being a member of a gang.

Gang played a small, but significant role in the riots earlier this year. Across the 10 Forces where the disorder was most prevalent a total of 417 arrestees during the event of the disorder were reported to be members of gangs – 13% of the total.

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