



University of
Strathclyde
Humanities &
Social Sciences

University of Strathclyde

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Ambivalence of Agreement: A Study of
Youth Gangs in their Local Communities in
Two Areas of Glasgow

Sinéad Gormally

2011

Copyright Statement

‘This thesis is the result of the author’s original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.’

‘The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.’

Signed:

Date:

Abstract

The core research question analysed in this thesis is- ‘What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities?’ To explore this question the theoretical underpinnings of collective identity creation and ontological insecurity provided a useful lens to examine the reason for gang affiliation and the underlying social relations between youth gangs and their local communities.

The research focuses on two urban areas within Glasgow and utilised a plethora of research tools, including reflective recordings, participant observation and in-depth interviews to ascertain the views of both youth gang members and local residents in each area. Each area experiences high levels of multiple deprivation and has reported gang activity.

This thesis initially explores the definition of a youth gang and seeks to provide a working framework to differentiate between young people who are gang members compared to those who do not identify with the local youth gang. It subsequently analyses the multi-level agreements prevalent within both areas between residents and youth gang members.

I will argue that there are differing relations apparent between those classed as the community ‘in-group’ and those deemed to be external to the community. I also suggest that the agreement between youth gang members and the police force is one of ambivalence that is driven from this internal/external dichotomy. I conclude by arguing that youth gang members provide a protective role to their community and are tacitly endorsed to do so by the community ‘in-group’.

Acknowledgements

There are so many people that I need to thank for supporting and contributing to this thesis, as well as many more for ‘putting up with me’ during this process, that the list would be endless. So for anyone I have not mentioned by name, I apologise and thank you from the bottom of my heart. Firstly I must thank all those people who agreed to be interviewed and who spoke so openly about their lives, thoughts and feelings. Your stories have not only shaped this thesis but will continue to shape my life and work for a very long time.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of Govanhill Youth Project and FARE. In particular a huge thank you must go to Carolann, Jamie and Damian at GYP and Chris, Claire and Liz from FARE who not only welcomed me in to their work but gave up a huge amount of personal time to support me and the creation of this thesis. Your continual commitment to working with young people who are often forgotten, judged or stereotyped should be heralded.

This project would not have happened if it wasn't for the continual support and patience of Professor Howard Sercombe and Professor Ross Deuchar. Howard's constant ability to throw new thoughts and ideas into the mix with Ross's attention to detail and focus on the practicalities made for interesting, yet inspiring supervisory sessions, which will be greatly missed.

A special thank you has to go to my family whose endless support and belief in me has got me to this stage. To my dad Brian for listening daily to my trials and tribulations; to my mum Avila for her feedback and constant encouragement; my sister Aoife and brother Conor for taking my mind off academia, making me laugh and ensuring I still maintained some sense of normality outside my PhD. To my godmother Monica who provided invaluable feedback. To my partner Paddy who inspired me to keep going with the PhD irrespective of the difficult times. My friends, colleagues and the ‘clan’ have also been invaluable in this, at times, taxing process. I don't have the space or words to sufficiently thank all those people, but you know who you are and I owe you a drink!

Contents Page

CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
Research Questions	4
Route Map to the Study	5
Demographics of the Research Areas	8
CHAPTER TWO	22
Gang Definitional Literature.....	22
Introduction.....	22
Overview of Gang as a Concept and Term.....	23
Sub- Cultural Literature	28
Deviance Literature.....	33
Can it be Defined?	37
Conclusion	41
CHAPTER THREE	47
The Literature on Community Agreement.....	47
Introduction.....	47
Historical Literature	47
American Literature	52
Social Control Framework.....	63
Impact of Social Change.....	70
American Literature Conclusions	71
Recent British and European Studies.....	72
Historical Glaswegian Literature	73
Contemporary Gang Studies in the U.K.	75
Territoriality/ Division of Society.....	80
British Literature Conclusions	82
Conclusion	83
CHAPTER FOUR.....	86
Theoretical Framework.....	86
Introduction.....	86
Ontological Insecurity.....	87
‘Othering’- Similarity and Difference	92
Essentialism	97
Crime.....	100
Conclusion	105
CHAPTER FIVE	110
Methodology	110
Introduction.....	110
Grounded Theory	111
Ethnography.....	114
Reflexivity and Social Construction	116
Bias and Positionality	118
Methods.....	120

Triangulation.....	122
Contact Environment	122
Participant Observation.....	125
Interviews.....	127
Youth Work Experience	129
Building Rapport and Listening.....	130
Ethical Issues	131
Participants.....	137
Data Analysis	140
Conclusion	143
CHAPTER SIX.....	146
Gang Definitional Evidence.....	146
Introduction.....	146
Fighting as Identification with the Gang	148
Identification with a Geographical Location	157
Symbols.....	165
The Origins of the Gang	169
Gender.....	176
Race.....	179
Conclusion	181
CHAPTER SEVEN	187
Why stop?	187
Introduction.....	187
Age.....	188
Fighting.....	194
Investment.....	196
Conclusion	202
CHAPTER EIGHT	205
Agreement with the police	205
Introduction.....	205
Trust/Mistrust.....	205
Treatment and Experiences.....	209
“Snitches Get Stitches” : The Consequences of Informing	217
Ambivalence in Practice: Good Cop/Bad Cop	224
Prejudicial Policing.....	231
Conclusion	237
CHAPTER NINE.....	242
Community Members Reporting Incidents to the Police.....	242
Introduction.....	242
Seriousness of Incident	242
Labelled a ‘Grass’ and Anonymity	245
Conclusion	248
CHAPTER TEN.....	250
Young People Protecting Their Area.....	250
Introduction.....	250

Young Peoples' Views.....	250
Community Members Views	255
Police Views	259
Youth Workers Views.....	259
My Reflections.....	263
Conclusion	264
 CHAPTER ELEVEN.....	 268
Knowing Young People Who Identify with Gang Membership	268
Introduction.....	268
What Does Knowing Mean?.....	269
Positives of Knowing Young People	269
Mutually Reinforcing Treatment	277
Negative Repercussions	279
Conclusion	282
Impact of Alcohol and Drugs.....	285
 CHAPTER TWELVE.....	 289
Family Relations	289
Introduction.....	289
Protection of Family	290
Personal Relationships	293
Views on Young People Fighting.....	295
Mothers' Views.....	296
Fathers' Views	299
Normalisation of Fighting Behaviours.....	301
Conclusion	303
 CHAPTER THIRTEEN.....	 306
Defining the Community	306
Introduction.....	306
Territoriality.....	307
Where do Boundaries Come From?.....	311
Fighting over Boundaries.....	316
Territoriality Conclusion.....	323
Defining the Area Based on Race.....	325
Geographical Boundaries.....	325
Cultural Essentialism	328
Fighting Based on Racial Boundaries.....	333
Labelling From Others.....	337
Race Conclusion	338
Overall Conclusion	339
 CHAPTER FOURTEEN	 341
The Entity of the Gang.....	341
The Entity of the Gang.....	342
The Relationship between the Youth Gang and the Community In-group	343
Relationship between the Youth Gang and the Broader Community.....	347
Relationship between the Youth Gang and the Police.....	350
The Agreement between Youth Gangs and their Local Community.....	352

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	359
APPENDIX ONE- Glossary of Terms	367
APPENDIX TWO- Coding list.....	370
APPENDIX THREE- Information sheet for young people.....	374
APPENDIX FOUR- Consent form for young people.....	376
APPENDIX FIVE- Information sheet for parental assent.....	378
APPENDIX SIX- Information sheet for community members	381
APPENDIX SEVEN- Consent form for community members	383
APPENDIX EIGHT- Information sheet for community workers	385
APPENDIX NINE- Consent form for community workers	387
APPENDIX TEN- Information sheets for police officers	389
APPENDIX ELEVEN- Consent form for police officers	391
APPENDIX TWELVE- Email confirmation of ethical approval.....	393

List of Tables

Table 1- Research Area Statistics.....	9
Table 2- Levels of Deprivation.....	11
Table 3- Area One participants.....	138
Table 4- Area Two Participants.....	138
Table 5- Both Areas Participants.....	138

List of Diagrams

Figure 1- Process of ‘Othering’	107
Figure 2- Alternative Process of ‘Othering’	107
Figure 3- Community In-Group.....	344
Figure 4- Broader Community Members.....	348
Figure 5- Relationship with Police.....	351
Figure 6- The Nature of the Multi-level Agreements.....	353

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The title of this thesis is 'The Ambivalence of Agreement: A Study of Youth Gangs in their Local Communities in Two Areas of Glasgow'. The thesis poses the question - What is the nature of agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? It locates the study in two inner city areas of Glasgow.

The concept of 'agreement' began as a hypothesised position rather than an assumed reality. It is not meant to suggest, that youth gangs actively create a written pact of social interaction or agreement of how to live together with their community members. Instead I am examining the fitting together of a youth gang and their local community and as such I am seeking to analyse and evaluate the 'social fit'. The notion of agreement also allows deeper insight into engagement processes that are often not analysed, evaluated or thought about by those involved in them. Utilising a word and concept that is not usually associated with this type of research provides scope to explore the questioned interactions.

The concept of agreement may take various forms; from a contractual written agreement, to a tacit endorsement which may not be recognised as an active agreement from all participants. The agreement may take a number of forms in the relations with differing sections of the community and broader society. Although the manner in which the agreement is mediated is important; it is the underlying reason for particular engagements which is central to the research. The fact that the concept of agreement is prefixed by the suggested 'ambivalence' further suggests that the former cannot be understood in contractual terms that have clear consensual parameters. Rather there may be a spectrum of meanings contained within the implicit relationships between the youth gang and their local communities.

The fluidity and potential variance around the concept of agreement is partnered by an equally controversial and ambiguous term: gang. Gangs as a construction

within society have recently had increased political, policy and media attention. David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, in a statement after the London Riots in the summer of 2011 stated,

It's time for something else too. A concerted, all-out war on gangs and gang culture. This isn't some side issue. It is a major criminal disease that has infected streets and estates across our country. Stamping out these gangs is a new national priority. Last week I set up a cross-government programme to look at every aspect of this problem. We will fight back against gangs, crime and the thugs who make people's lives hell and we will fight back hard. The last front in that fight is proper punishment. (Cameron, 2011)

This demonstrates the negative sentiments associated with gangs. The concept that the state will wage war against gangs shows the disassociation made by the Prime Minister between gangs and the legitimate, law abiding citizens. The language of fighting and disease immediately creates an adversarial narrative between the state and people who associate with gang behaviour. David Cameron heralded the work of the Strathclyde police in the same statement, failing to differentiate between the types of gangs found in differing localities. This national political stance on gangs within the UK is mirrored within the Glaswegian context with recent media reports suggesting:

For years the violent gangs of Glasgow have terrorised their small neighbourhoods, brandishing machetes, axes, baseball bats, even croquet mallets in running, alcohol-fuelled battles, which often left rivals mutilated and dead. It gave Scotland's largest city the unwanted reputation as one of the most dangerous in Western Europe.

Now the gangs with names such as the Calton Tongs, Parkhead Rebels and the Garthamlock Young Team, are fading away. They are being broken up and dispersed thanks to a full-frontal assault by the police, prosecutors and council officials. (Carrell, 2011)

This suggests that not only do gangs exist within a Glaswegian context but there is often a negative portrayal of them and their relations with their local communities. It alludes to a terrorised neighbourhood, where gangs use extreme violence, leaving people mutilated and murdered. It also highlights the potential relations between youth gangs and the law enforcement agencies, where they have adopted a 'full-frontal assault' on gangs.

Both these recent reports show that gangs are seen to exist within communities throughout the UK. They are deemed to be negative entities that make the lives of law abiding citizens unbearable. There is a clear policy agenda to eradicate gangs and both advocate the use of tough sanctions against those seen to be involved in gang behaviours. Both statements, one from the Prime Minister and the other from a media outlet, use adversarial and aggressive language to show the strength of the 'fight' and 'assault' on gangs within the UK.

This study has taken place during a time when discussion on gangs has become increasingly frequent, both in terms of policy decisions and media based reporting. In 2006 the Independent newspaper (2006) in Scotland reported that there were 170 gangs in Glasgow according to a list reportedly compiled by the Strathclyde Police. This figure was higher than London, despite the obvious population differences. This study was thus conceived as a part of a studentship in 2008 with the University of Strathclyde in an attempt to gain the views and opinions of those involved in gang membership, as well as those living in the neighbourhoods where gang behaviour was reportedly prevalent.

Not only have gangs become important in the political arena but the world of academia has also increasingly become interested in gangs and their existence within society. Although arguably gangs are not a new phenomenon and have long been reported as synonymous with Glasgow (Davies, 2007a, 2007b), there was still a need to study the current construction of the gang and how it relates to its Glaswegian community.

Whilst many writers have explained gang affiliation in relation to structural issues such as shifting populations, industrialisation (Thrasher, 1927) and lack of

employment (Hagedorn & Macon, 1988); others have suggested that membership is a rational choice based on the benefits gained (Jankowski, 1991, 2003). Some suggest that many young people are wrongly labelled as gang members (White, 1999) whilst other academics claim the term should not be used at all (Hallsworth & Young, 2008). The confusion surrounding this topic makes it an academic minefield that must be gradually cleared. One way, is to analyse how the young people who have, or continue to identify with gang membership, engage and interact with their local community. This interaction may provide insights into whether 'youth gangs' exist in the manner presented above; the reasons for gang affiliation; the community context within the studied areas and the broader community views on the existence of gangs.

Research Questions

This study deconstructs the notion of a youth gang. Although not a native of the city, it became apparent to me that there were long standing cultural, social and historical associations with gangs in Glasgow. This led to one of my fundamental research questions- **What is a youth gang?** It also became rapidly apparent that the wealth and breadth of literature focussing on youth gangs was at best inconsistent (Decker & Winkle, 1996; Goldson, 2011; White, 1999, 2007) and at worse incompatible with any of my personal experiences or subsequent research findings. Although some academics (Hallsworth & Young, 2008) suggest that gangs are too different and diverse to be labelled and categorised under one definition, I decided to propose a definition for this research in order to provide grounding and clarity to the study. As such, a proposed definition of youth gangs, for the purposes of this research, was established and tested through the views of the participants.

Youth gangs from the outset were not assumed to be either negative or positive but were recognised as a phenomena that many in Glasgow have an opinion, story or stance about. It is these underlying assumptions that led me to formulate the subsequent research questions.

The central research question sought to answer- **What is the agreement between the young people who identified with gang membership and their local community members?** The notion of community is not simplistically viewed as territorial affiliation as within the sites of study there could be a number of smaller communities whose identity and affiliation is based on communicative forces (Delanty, 2003) as opposed to geographical allegiances. There are also external institutions, such as the police, who have direct influence and power over the relationships created and maintained within the investigated areas. To identify willing community member participants, it was decided early in the study that considerable time would be spent within the selected geographically defined areas to identify and understand the intrinsic social networks that were prevalent.

What is the agreement with the local police? I was aware of the complex relationship often apparent between young people and the police. Therefore it was essential to hear the views of the young people, the police and the community members on this often controversial engagement process.

What is the agreement with those outside the community? The possibilities for who is deemed to be outside the community depends on the context, make-up and views on the participants. As will be discussed, this is often based upon lines of demarcation demonstrating difference in identity affiliation.

Route Map to the Study

Chapter two explores the controversial concept of youth gangs. It provides an overview of American, British and European research that specifically focuses on gangs. There is an analysis of sub-cultural and moral panic literature which was historically more prevalent within British research in the study of youth groupings. This leads to a more criminological view of gangs based on the concept of deviance. The chapter concludes by analysing and evaluating the various gang usages and proposes a new gang definition that will be tested and challenged throughout the study findings. This chapter provides a basis in the literature for the first research question- What is a youth gang?

Chapter three seeks to analyse the concept of agreement, evaluating how other academics have explained the relationship between youth gangs and their local communities or neighbourhoods. The chapter begins by analysing literature compiled by historians on youth gangs and their engagement with their communities. It then reviews American literature concerning gangs and their neighbourhoods. Some of the themes addressed within this section include parents views on gang activities, family relations and differing community stances i.e. tolerance, acceptance and active encouragement of gangs. After this, the chapter turns to European and British studies that focus on youth gangs, exploring community relations and community reactions to violence, the territorial nature of gangs and how this can impact on the agreement with community members.

Chapter four provides a theoretical framework to the study. Drawing on the notion of ontological insecurity (Young, 2007) it suggests that the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities is substantially based on the need for security and identity. This is subsequently related to group identity and the potential for 'othering' (Young, 2007) to occur towards outsiders. Finally there is a discussion of how this theory links to crime and concludes with a description of how it will be used to analyse the collected data.

Chapter five addresses the methodological positions adopted throughout the research, it examines the use of grounded theory and ethnography in the study. The chapter also explores the epistemological position of social constructionism and the necessity for reflexivity throughout the research process. The practical methods used to gather the data are discussed, as are the ethical questions raised.

Chapter six and seven provide empirical evidence in relation to the question- What is a youth gang? Chapter six initiates this conversation by analysing how different sections of the community define a youth gang. This chapter is split into seven broad themes: fighting; geographical identification; symbols and the symbolic representation of the gang; age specificity; where the gang came from; the question of gender; and finally, the relevance of race as an identifying factor of youth gangs within this research.

Chapter seven explores the differing reasons for young people leaving the gang suggesting it may be due to a change of perception and/or investment in their lives, generally based on maturation or access to differing opportunities.

Chapter eight explores the question- What is the agreement with the police? It begins by analysing the concept of trust and mistrust which many youth gang members and police exhibit towards each other. This is followed by an exploration of the treatment and experiences of the young people within the two research areas. The chapter analyses the complex interplay of reporting criminal incidents to the police and then the issue of race is introduced and discussed in relation to differential police treatment in research area two.

Chapters nine, ten and eleven relate to the nature and basis of the agreement between the young people who identified with gang membership and their local community members.

Chapter nine covers the agreement between community residents and the youth gang based on the willingness to report incidents to the police, asking if there is an active agreement between the community members and youth gang members about the parameters of reporting to external institutions of control.

Chapter ten explores whether young people and/or community members feel the youth gang protects their area. Chapter eleven analyses the personal relations between community residents and young people, in a chapter entitled- 'Knowing young people who identify with gang membership'. The impact of drugs and alcohol has deliberately been considered in the conclusions of this chapter due to the emergent theme that use of these substances can often change the nature of the agreement under discussion, and at times override established social codes.

Chapter twelve explores the impact of family relations. This chapter initially explores the concept of protecting the family, differentiating between the mothers' and fathers' opinions about fighting, and the normalisation of violent or aggressive behaviours. This directly links to the agreement between community

residents and youth gang members as it concludes that, often unwittingly, there is an acceptance and normalisation of gang behaviour within both the family and the broader community.

Chapter thirteen seeks to answer the question- What is the agreement with those outside the community? This chapter begins by analysing territoriality as a means of differentiating who is deemed to be within the community and who is excluded. There is an exploration of the creation of geographical boundaries and where these boundaries originated and the role of fighting in their maintenance. It concludes by demonstrating how part of the agreement between the youth gang and their local community is based on the creation of similarity through differentiating others.

Chapter fourteen draws together conclusions from the overall study. It draws generalised conclusions based on all of the gathered evidence to elaborate on the main research title - 'The Ambivalence of Agreement: A Study of Youth Gangs in their Local Communities in Two Areas of Glasgow'.

Demographics of the Research Areas

Prior to the literature and evidence chapters, a narrative of the two research areas studied is provided below. Statistics from the Scottish Government are used to give a factual account of the levels of recorded deprivation in both areas. This is followed by a subjective account of the areas, drawn from personal reflexive recordings taken throughout the data collection process.

Although the primary form of data collection was ethnographic these statistics provide useful contextual data. The figures are taken from the Scottish neighbourhood statistics (www.sns.gov.uk, accessed 15/12/09) and link to a specific postcode. For the purposes of anonymity the specific area code has been removed. To gain these figures the central postcode of each of the geographical areas under investigation was used.

As with all statistics, these can be scrutinised based on the definitions used, the methods of collection utilised and the purposes for which the government collect such data. These statistics are thus in no way comprehensive but provide beneficial contextual demographical information.

Research Area Stats

	Research Area 1	Research Area 2	Glasgow City	Scotland
Percentage of total population who are income deprived: 2008	55.3	42.0	28.6	17.1
Percentage of populations aged 16-24 claiming Jobseekers Allowance: 2007Q04	10.3	21.0	4.0	3.3
Percentage of working age population who are employment deprived: 2008	36.4	40.0	17.5	11.6
Percentage of population aged 16 - 19 in Workless Client Group: 2006Q03	28.8	52.6	10.7	7.8
Percentage of population aged 20 - 24 in Workless Client Group: 2006Q03	32.1	64.3	14.5	12.5
Percentage of population aged 25 - 49 in Workless Client Group: 2006Q03	55.9	50.0	23.1	13.8
Hospital admissions for alcohol misuse - rate per 100000 population: 2001-2004	2340	4662	1240	722
Hospital admissions for drugs misuse - rate per 100000 population: 2001-2004	908	4075	294	127
Percentage of Households - Social Rented: 2001	90	66	43	29

(Table 1- Research Area Statistics)

Analysis

In both areas the amount of people who are considered income deprived is well above the Scottish and Glaswegian average. Area one has over 55% of people who fall within this category whilst area two has 42%. Linking to income deprivation, the next set of statistics display the percentage of 16-24 year olds who are claiming Jobseekers Allowance. In area one 10.3% of 16-24 year olds claim Jobseekers Allowance; in area two 21% of young people claim Jobseekers

compared to the national average of 3.3% and a Glaswegian average of just 4%. Clearly there is a lack of legitimate employment opportunities in both areas, particularly for young people.

The next group of three statistics link to the workless client group. This includes those out of work who are actively seeking a job; out of work but not seeking work and those who are economically inactive, i.e. people who have caring or family responsibilities. These figures demonstrate the lack of potential to gain economic capital through employment both for young people and the broader community. In area one there are less workless people within the lower age bracket than there are between the 25 and 49 age group. Nevertheless, the numbers in both age ranges are far greater than the national average and demonstrate that there are a large amount of people within this geographical area who are classed by the Scottish Government as workless. In area two the percentage of young people between 16-19 years that are classed as workless is more than six and half times the national average. For 20-24 year olds there are 64.3% who are classed as workless compared to a national average of 12.5%. This not only demonstrates the limited work opportunities available but can have a knock on effect on social and cultural opportunities.

The next two statistics (Hospital admissions per 100,000) were included to give insight into the prevalent social problems within both research areas. The first shows the average admissions per 100,000 to hospital, over the period of 2001-2004, based on alcohol misuse. Within both areas the rate was considerably higher than the national and city averages. However in area two there was nearly double the amount of admissions than in area one suggesting that alcohol misuse is a major issue of social concern within this research area. The next statistic highlights the amount of admissions to hospital based on drug misuse, another problem often found in areas of deprivation. The rate in area two for drug misuse is 32 times the national average. Although the negative impact of alcohol and drug misuse within the research areas was raised by participants in the study themselves, the fact that there are a large number of homeless hostels and addiction units within area two may partly explain the extent of the figures.

The last set of statistics shows the proportion of socially rented houses within the areas - 90.04% of households fall into this bracket in area one and 66.59% of houses are socially rented in area two. This generally gives a good indication of income levels, although in area two there are a number of private landlords who have been reported as being slum landlords (McCann, 2008), letting out inadequate housing primarily, though not exclusively, to asylum seekers or European immigrants.

The Scottish government takes account of all the multiple statistics for each area and rates them on a scale of deprivation, where one is the 'most deprived'. Although neither area was ranked as the most deprived overall in Scotland on this scale of multiple deprivation, their levels of deprivation were still extremely high, as demonstrated below.

	Area one	Area two
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	1
Current Income Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	1
Employment Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	1
Health Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	1
Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	2
Geographic Access to Services Deprivation Decile: 2009	10	9
Crime Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	1
Housing Deprivation Decile: 2009	1	1
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Vigintile (twentieth's): 2009	1	1

(Table 2- Levels of Deprivation)

Neither area was rural in location thus the geographic access to services is at the highest level (10) for area one and just below for area two (9) due to their urban, inner-city status and proximity to localised services. In every other aspect - except for education, skills and training in area two - both areas are classified as being extremely deprived on a number of levels. The levels of income, employment, health, crime and housing deprivation are all listed as being the most severe within the broader Scottish context.

These statistics demonstrate that both research areas are classed as experiencing acute deprivation and that the opportunities for young people are often limited. There are issues of alcohol and drug misuse in both areas which will undoubtedly have an impact on the social milieu of the research sites.

Providing a Subjective Picture

As will be discussed in detail in chapter five, being transparent and open about the role of the researcher, their values and biases is central to this thesis. Prior to this discussion I want to make clear that I am a twenty seven year old female from Northern Ireland who is a trained youth worker, studying in a male dominated research field. Having grown up in a violently contested society myself, but having lived in Glasgow for nine years, I undoubtedly have a particular view on the studied phenomena. As such throughout the data collection process, I kept typed accounts of my reflections and experiences within both research areas. These accounts are now used to provide a subjective, contextual narrative of the areas of research.

Area One The Physical Context

An early reflection, described my initial views of research area one.

As I walked from the train station to the youth club I tried to analyse my surroundings. The main drag seemed to have a fair few shops and pubs and was fairly busy with people. The pub had quite a few men hanging around smoking by the door and the area seemed relatively sociable and friendly. As you walked down the side street the high rise flats dominate the skyline, with their dark grey colour being really quite depressing. You have to go through a secure entry reception area to enter the gated high rise houses where you supposedly need a key to gain access, though the man on the desk didn't seem overly b'othered' with who I was. Across from the flats there is a grassy area though even from my brief analysis of the grass I could safely say it probably wasn't the safest place for children to be playing due to the

rubbish and broken glass. Within the gates there is grey. The whole area is concreted, the flats built in a grey stone and even the small gated playground looking a little worse for wear. As I entered the flats I noticed a great deal of broken glass on the ground and two men arguing. I can really understand when the teenage boys said last week they had nothing to do they weren't exaggerating. The area looked depressing, there was a lack of usable green space and for some reason the flats were enclosed by black fences (I guess for "security"). Despite the sunny day the area didn't feel very summery and it didn't help that the room used for the youth club has heavy shutters covering the windows restricting any light permeating the quite dingy room. *(Personal observation and reflection, 01-04-09, area 1)*

I soon realised the streets with pubs and shops could not be frequented by many of the young people due to territorial fighting. I noted of the smaller geographical neighbourhood where the research was focussed,

The area was extremely run down and many of the houses were boarded up, burnt out or in disuse. One of the boy's mothers told me how there were supposedly plans in place to knock down the dilapidated houses and to rebuild new houses in their place. She told me how the flats that still were occupied were in an awful state and she was hoping that they could get moved soon. She said that the high rise flats were due to be taken down but she questioned where they were going to re-house the residents of the 29 high floored flats, each floor which has about 5 flats. By my estimation that's nearly 300 flats in the two blocks plus the surrounding houses and there could easily be a family of four in each flat.

(Personal observation and reflection, 10-06-09, area 1)

Aligning with the findings of Patrick (1973) who wrote of deprivation in Glasgow:

The city's high rates of slum housing and unemployment, of delinquency and violent crime, of alcoholism and disease, are not discrete areas of deprivation but inter-connecting and cumulative forms of inequality (p. 16)

I found a wealthier set of housing next door to this area of visible deprivation.

I left the youth club a different way than I usually do and I couldn't believe the difference. The other side of the flats are a number of derelict houses. The area spreads slightly further than I initially thought and is surrounded on both sides by relatively expensive housing, on one side newly built houses and on the other side the sought after old tenements. This area is like an enclave of deprivation in a wider area of relative wealth. This is interesting as it links in with the notion that Glasgow cannot be as clear cut as a dual city of wealth versus poverty (Mooney & Danson, 1997) but rather is a patchwork quilt of difference.

(Personal observation and reflection, 03-06-09, area 1)

Although the levels of deprivation were high and the standard of housing was poor in the area, I also wrote of the way the area was treated and vandalised.

This week I also noticed quite a substantial amount of graffiti around the neighbourhood. Many of the young people who attend the club have openly written their names around the estate with the initials of the area, or the gang underneath their names. This is an interesting discovery as the young people are not writing their graffiti in a coded manner, nor are they hiding it away from the view of the rest of the community, rather they are open for everyone to see.

(Personal observation and reflection, 29-04-09, area 1)

This graffiti told a story of conflict.

Another thing I noticed as I walked to the club was that on the main street, a mere 300yards away at the most, there was graffiti on the wall with a tag underneath it different to the one the boys talked about. This may well demonstrate the closeness of the differing 'gangs' or certainly the differing areas of affiliation the young people relate to.

(Personal observation and reflection, 27-05-09, area 1)

The Social Context

Although the social relations will be discussed throughout the evidence chapters, these recordings give an insight into some of the social problems apparent within area one. This reflection demonstrates the problematic family relations apparent as well as the issue of alcohol and drug misuse,

...the talking of drugs seems to be common place; this week the boys were taking the piss out of each other over who their dad was with one saying to the other, “no sorry not your dad but that man who gives you Rangers tickets,” to which the rest of the boys laughed. There was also comment made about one boys dad being a drug addict by making reference to the use of tin foil. I am assuming that this joke was made in relation to the use of tin foil when taking heroin.

(Personal observation and reflection, 22-04-09, area 1)

I recorded:

Another thing the youth workers were discussing was the drug problem in the local area. Two of the youth workers were saying how they found a needle when they were walking round the area the other day. They were also saying how they couldn't believe the amount of drug addicts sitting out around the flats during the day. They said they were shocked at how wrecked people were with the kids all running about outside. The issues of alcohol and drugs has been mentioned repeatedly by the youth workers and the young people spoke about it in their interviews and also when slagging each other in the club, it seems this is certainly a huge issue that is having an impact on the broader community.

(Personal observation and reflection, 22-07-09, area 1)

I further noted the discussion and normalisation of the illegal economy in the area:

Another instance which was discussed was the stealing of bikes. Apparently two of the local boys have stole at least twenty-four bikes recently and are making a fair amount of money selling them on. Interestingly this again relates to the underground economic trade that is so prevalent throughout many communities. The young people when standing outside the club were speaking openly about the stealing of bikes as they questioned another young lad where and who he got his new bike from.

(Personal observation and reflection, 26-08-09, area 1)

Despite the prevalent social issues in area one I also wrote about the close relations within the community and how most residents seemed to know each other.

It was good weather this evening and as such the youth organisation decided to inflate a huge football pitch on a grass area in the central part of the estate... A huge amount of people from the neighbouring houses came out and there were about thirty children and young people queuing up to play on it. What was amazing about the use of such a piece of equipment was that everyone who came out to watch or play on it all knew each other. No matter the age, from young two year olds up to adults and grandparents everyone knew each other's name and looked out for each other's children. The sense of excitement and togetherness that this bouncy castle brought was amazing. One woman told me that, "If they had something like this twice a week this scheme would be a better place."

(Personal observation and reflection, 10-06-09, area 1)

The social context of area one was complex. On the one hand a bleak picture emerged with high levels of alcohol and drug misuse. On the other, when local community events were put on many residents were keen to engage with them. It was also clear that most people knew each other within the community, demonstrating a form of bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000).

Area two

The Physical Context

Area two was geographically larger than area one. I wrote of the area:

This area has a large number of residential houses and does not have the tower blocks apparent in area one. The youth project is situated in a small building on the edge of the area. Across the road from the youth project is a hostel for homeless people, most of who have alcohol and/or drug addictions. Going into the area there is a small park which is surrounded by houses on all four sides. The park has a small play area for children and a mini football pitch and basketball court. Much of the residential housing surrounding the park, and the streets to the left of the park, are apparently occupied by predominantly white residents. This area actually looks quite looked after, though I have noticed bit of rubbish dumped on the street and strangely loads of dog dirt everywhere!

(Personal observation and reflection, 25-08-09, area 2)

However, I soon discovered this geographical space was segregated and separated out. I recorded on this early visit:

We began, armed with a folder of information leaflets and sign-up sheets, by walking through the small nearby park. The park seemed well used by young people of differing ages, with the smaller kids playing in the playground, some boys playing football and some older young people hanging about the benches. As all the young people seemed engaged in activities or were not open to talking we carried on through the park.

The next street we walked down was in complete contrast to the one we had just come from. The whole street was filled with ethnic minority shops which sold a range of eastern foods. I was absolutely gobsmacked at the amount of people standing on this one long road and of how it so starkly contrasted to the other two streets we had walked down. I felt like I had been transported to a different country altogether and have honestly never

experienced a street of this nature anywhere else in Glasgow. There were a range of shops some selling fruit and vegetables whilst other were mini supermarket corner stores, all of which had signs in a range of languages and most of them offered international calling cards. There were a huge amount of people standing out on the streets in groups. The groups of people seemed to be roughly split by ages.

(Personal observation and reflection, 25-08-09, area 2)

The area did have a number of shops, restaurants and pubs, which the young people could access, unlike the situation in area one.

One interviewee even said to me, “Why would I leave this area, we have everything here, McDonalds, KFC and pubs.” These men are quite localised within their areas and don’t feel the need to go out with these small defined areas. I wonder if this is more about lack of opportunity or fear of the unknown in other areas.

(Personal observation and reflection, 05-05-10, area 2)

Although area two has high levels of deprivation, the young people were not as isolated as in area one.

On initial inspection the housing in area two seemed adequate. However, with a small amount of localised knowledge it became apparent that there were problems with slum housing, particularly that occupied by the recently arrived ethnic migrant groups within the area. There are also high levels of economic deprivation within the area, with a large proportion of the population being unemployed.

The Social Context

Physically the area was quite divided based on differing racial identity, which obviously had an impact on the social relations. I recorded:

Physically the group of slightly older boys sat together on the fence, whilst a group of older people (possibly parents) stood in a group together while the younger children ran about playing with each other. In a sense everyone was on the street together but people were gravitating towards the age group they may have most in common with. Nevertheless, all the people were connected or knew each other and in some way were looking out for each other. The sense of community, bonding social capital or just neighbourly interaction was more prevalent here than I have witnessed throughout my time in Glasgow. In some sense, as a colleague said to me, this was a street based community baby-sitting service. This community of people were all looking out for each other. They all trusted each other and were socialising in a public space.

The youth worker informed me that the broader local residents were getting annoyed at the Roma's behaviour such as late night singing and hanging about the streets. However these actions are not only cultural but are forced upon the Roma people due to poverty and thus lack of space within their houses. Many of these people live in sub-human slum housing, where there are so many people squeezed together in the house there is not room for them all to stay indoors during the day and evening. I did also notice that the area is covered in litter and discarded pieces of furniture etc. The youth worker informed me that this was another issue that is upsetting other residents.

(Personal observation and reflection, 25-08-09, area 2)

Again, as area one, alcohol and drug misuse was continuously noted and discussed throughout the data collection process:

A young man came into the youth club and I was shocked at how wasted he looked. It later turned out that he had been taking a concoction of alcohol and valium, which was common amongst these young people. The young man looked as if he had had a stroke. His face was completely paralysed down one side and he was slurring his words and wasn't coherent in anything he was saying. I actually found this quite upsetting as his friends

didn't even react when they seen him in this state. This over consumption of alcohol and drugs is completely normalised and it's really quite frightening.
(Personal observation and reflection, 08-09-09, area 2)

I also recorded the illegal trades which were evident whilst I was in the area:

I was fascinated with how open the guys were when talking about drink and drugs and not only that but selling drugs in front of me. I also heard one of the men trying to sell a knife to one of his friends. This was all done very obviously in front of me.

(Personal observation and reflection, 05-05-10, area 2)

Another time I wrote:

I also witnessed a man trying to sell perfume to another guy on the street. I suspect the illegal economy must be rife in this area though to get sidetracked in that would be nonsensical. It is suffice to say that in many areas of poverty the illegal economic trade is normalised and becomes seen as a means to make a few extra quid.

(Personal observation and reflection, 25-08-09, area 2)

Despite these problems, I again, as was the case in area one, reflected on the sense of community:

Unfortunately on the way my bank card got stuck in the machine but luckily one of the guys I was with went to a shop, asked for a pair of pliers and managed to extract my card. This was interesting as the shop, despite being a reasonably sized supermarket, had no problem in lending us this equipment. This may be that it is a working class community and as such people know each other and are helpful to each other, or more likely as it was to do with a cash machine they took pity on us and tried their best to help us out with retrieving the card.

I often think that in economically deprived areas, there is a sense of community and helping each other out. I remember as a kid going to the local shop to get cigarettes for my childminder and although I was only seven or eight they served them to me without a problem as they knew my childminder and knew that they would all go to her. This level of knowing local residents is of interest to this research and I have discovered that many people suggest that if you know the young team then they wouldn't be cheeky or aggressive towards you. Maybe this is part of the agreement, maybe there is the need for the local residents to know the young people in the area, and thus there would be no fear or intimidation from them. However this does not prevent the fighting and many of the community residents seem to just accept this as the norm for young males to be involved in.

(Personal observation and reflection, 11-03-09, area 2)

Socially area two faces similar problems to those in area one. Again, alcohol and drug misuse was evident and undoubtedly had a negative impact on the young people within the areas. In both areas there was normalisation of the illegal economy. However, in both areas I felt there were social reciprocal relations apparent which resulted in people knowing each other and providing support and aid at particular times of need.

Physically the areas differed. Area one was considerably smaller and dominated by large high rise flats. Area two, in contrast, was geographically larger and the housing was predominantly traditional sandstone tenements.

The reflections and statistical evidence are provided to give the reader a contextual framework to the study. The areas where the research was carried out can be kept in mind throughout, but importantly it is the views of the community residents and youth gang members that will provide qualitative insights into the nature of agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. Prior to those views a literature review and analysis of relevant research is presented.

CHAPTER TWO

Gang Definitional Literature

Introduction

In 2008 Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill from the Scottish government claimed:

There are 55 gangs in Glasgow, involving around 700 young men aged 12-23, the majority of whom have a history of offending and violence. Alcohol abuse is common and many carry a weapon on a regular basis. The impact on the local community is significant (MacAskill, 2008).

MacAskill is a politician, not a researcher, so he does not define what a ‘gang’ is, or the impact, beyond stating that it is ‘significant,’ within Glaswegian society. He does not elaborate how gangs are counted and defined, and is not critical about the way statistics are used and disseminated by key public figures within Scottish society.

This chapter provides an overview of the various definitions of the term ‘gang’; how is it constituted within theoretical and empirical studies and how the term will be used throughout this research. This overview will draw on gang, sub-cultural, moral panic and deviancy literature, to provide a basis for a working definition that will be used in this research.

Prior to engaging in the ‘gang debate’ it is important to acknowledge the controversy surrounding the concept. The term is applied to a range of diverse behaviours and structures, including youth street gangs and adult criminal gangs. As Goldson (2011) notes:

Semantic slippages between terms such as ‘peer group’, ‘informal peer group network’, ‘fluid and transitional youth group formation’, ‘street-based

group', 'delinquent peer group', delinquent youth group', 'gang', 'criminal gang', 'organised criminal group', 'organised crime network' and 'crime firm' obfuscate meaning, create confusion, produce contrasting and contradictory findings and impede coherent analysis (p.9)

This study argues the need for a clear conception of what a gang is in order to assess the agreement between a youth gang and their broader community.

Overview of Gang as a Concept and Term

According to Decker and Van Winkle (1996), Sheldon (1898) is credited with firstly using the term gang. Analysing the social activities of young American children he found that when left to their own devices they are likely to organise themselves, suggesting this is due to the downward reflection of American democratic institutions. He found girls not only see societies organised by adults in a positive light but when they self organise it tends to be into societies that promote sociability. In contrast, young boys are more primitive and get involved in clubs that can demonstrate physical superiority. The leadership of these groups will often be adopted by the boy who is physically the strongest or the most athletic.

Sheldon (1898) suggests boys who are deprived of the 'natural' outlet- athletics, may revert to institutions of savagery. Although the notion of boys turning into savages is dated, it provides a historical context to gang studies. This initial usage of the term highlights the negativity which surrounded the concept, where young males are viewed as savages and dangerous; a connotation which has been reproduced in recent times (particularly in certain sections of the media).

Current definitional work has been dominated by the Eurogang program where a group of researchers who in trying to combat the terms eclectic use have settled on one definition for street gangs. "A street gang is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity" (Gemert & Fleisher, 2005, p.12).

This definition establishes youth, durability, and illegal activity as key identifying features of a street gang. They also note that youth gangs tend to be visible in public spaces, on the street. The definition has been widely adopted in recent UK research (Aldridge, Ralphs, & Medina, 2007; Deuchar, 2009b), although all of its conditions have been disputed. FitzGerald (2008) for example, critiques the notion of ‘durability’, as many groups of young people, even gangs, are fluid and changeable. Other conditions will be discussed in the next section.

Illegal Activity

One distinctive feature of this definition is the involvement in illegal activities as a means of maintaining the group’s identity. However, ‘illegal activity’ encompasses a broad range of actions. Arguably, gang fighting may constitute the group’s identity, although White (1999) finds that many young people, despite what the media may imply, are not systematic law breakers. Criminal acts are incidental to the activities of the group when ‘hanging out’. The young people are not inherently anti-social rather their main focus is social activity, friendship networks, peer support, personal identity and self-esteem, instead of acts of crime. Although young people may visibly engage in group offending the relationship between the law and gang membership is complex, he explains: “While youth offending cannot be equated with gang activity, nevertheless, membership of a gang can play a major part in criminal engagement” (White, 2007, p. 18).

Gemert & Fleisher (2005) describe that while co-offending is often reflected in criminal statistics, their research on a Moroccan gang in the Netherlands suggests that much of the illegal activity tends to be done individually or in pairs and is not performed as a group activity. Nuisance behaviour is often carried out as a group activity and it is typically this behaviour that can cause altercations with the wider community.

The Glasgow Violence Reduction Unit, which set up the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) to focus on the reduction of gang violence across Glasgow, notes, “If an individual within a gang commits an act of violence,

enforcement is focused on the whole gang” (CIRV, 2009, p. 5). A young person cannot then disassociate themselves from the gang and could potentially get persecuted for actions that they as an individual were not involved in. This also suggests that the authorities have also used particular criteria to identify which young people they class as being in a gang. If the authorities think the young person is in a gang he/she will be targeted for any violent act that occurs within their community even if carried out by another young person who has been labelled as being a gang member.

Unlike CIRV (2009), who specifically name violence as the illegal activity to be focussed upon, Lien (2005) differentiates between violence and crime yet suggests that both are key definitional attributes. “When it comes to the concept of gang, the core, threefold meaning must include the attributes of crimes, violence, and youth” (Lien, 2005, p.32). This definition views crime as a group activity, it negates the possibility of having adult criminal gangs and also fails to encompass place or space, suggesting a gang could be trans-local.

Mays (1956) finds it useful to differentiate between delinquents and criminals. The former are young people who temporarily get involved in illegal group activities as a means of expressing conformity to the neighbourhood traditions; the latter, the criminals, are fewer in number and their behaviour is a type of protest against their poor family relations. However, Jankowski (2003) suggests that focussing on crime in itself is unhelpful as other groups of people engage in crimes but are not classified as gangs or criminals. He uses the example of a college fraternity committing crimes in one territory, the frat house, yet not being labelled a gang.

If crime is to be used as an identifying factor then it is important to have some means of assessing whether the crime is actually ‘gang related’ or if it is an individualised act (Hallsworth & Young, 2008). The fact that ‘the gang’ is blamed for urban violence means that the conclusion is often that suppressing the gang will end urban violence. This suggests circularity in the usage of the term; if gangs and urban violence are synonymous then by definition gangs should be eradicated. This conclusion is too simplistic and fails to acknowledge the variety

of complex reasons for urban violence and the social value of youth gangs to their members. Hallsworth and Young (2008) argue that the problem of urban violence has always been a greater issue than solely the existence of the gang.

Far from helping drive our understanding of urban violence forward, the gang gaze has acted to mystify the problem by making it one of bad people who make bad choices where these people typically derive from marginalized ethnic groups (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p. 191).

Social Context

Thrasher (1927) links gangs to space arguing that the increase of gangs in Chicago was a consequence of deteriorating neighbourhoods, shifting populations and industrialisation. Fagan (1996) similarly notes, “Where ever neighbourhoods in large cities were in transition, gangs emerged” (p.40). In both research areas there are high levels of deprivation equivalent to the notion of deteriorating neighbourhoods. For this research space and place must be assessed in the formulation of a definition of a youth gang.

Mays (1956) also notes the importance of the environment and social traditions.

The gang or group meets the needs of the individual boy in a variety of ways, furnishing opportunities for display and providing occasions for earning the respect and affection of his contemporaries. The content of the group’s activities is largely determined by the environment as its ethics are regulated by social traditions (p. 149).

This acknowledges the positives of gang identification and provides reasons for involvement in such a grouping. However, the activities that the group are involved in are not defined and so this description runs the risk of classifying any social group as a gang. Mays (1956) finds that young people do not necessarily engage in delinquent activities but would rather engage in group activities that provided the same satisfaction, respect and affection, e.g. football.

Jankowski (2003) furthers the notion that the majority of activities are determined by the environment and social traditions arguing the gang is made up of individuals who espouse the views of mainstream society and classifying them as deviant risks overlooking this. This suggests that the broader community should also be analysed when researching youth gangs.

Jankowski's (1991) definition of a gang suggests a structured social form, arguing they are

...more than loose temporary associations. They are collectives in which the interactions of individuals, both leadership and rank and file, is organized and governed by a set of rules and roles. In short, they are organizations. Unlike other organizations, though, gangs function without a bureaucracy and this has tended to obscure their other organizational characteristics (p. 314).

He (Jankowski, 1991) argues the gang's main concern is to maintain the recruitment of members and to provide leadership, roles and rules. He refers to organised, established gangs that have a fixed entity, with strict leaders; not something which chimes with much of the British, European or Australasian literature on gangs (Aldridge, et al., 2007; Deuchar, 2009b; Hallsworth & Young, 2008; White, 2007).

Youth

Fagan (1996) disagrees with using age as a defining feature suggesting gang members are no longer confined to young adolescents but rather are diverse in age and some gangs even have entrepreneurial goals as opposed to ethnic solidarity or neighbourhood defence (Fagan, 1996, p.41). He also asserts that gangs have constantly evolved to respond to their contemporary social, economic and cultural realities and thus have become a durable and lasting feature of US adolescent life (Fagan, 1996). His concern is that the gang may be seen as an alternative career path in areas where employment and other social roles are in decline.

This thesis sets out with the premise that the focus would be on 'youth' gangs but at the same time it would be too simplistic to make a clear cut age categorisation as to what constitutes youth. Rather, the data will be analysed to see if age is a defining trait of the gangs within the research areas, or whether it impacts on when people no longer associate, self-identify or are labelled as gang members by others within or outside the community.

Sub- Cultural Literature

Much of the past British literature focussed on sub-cultural groupings as opposed to specifically discussing gangs. This sub-cultural research, established by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, drew on Marxist interpretations and emphasised how subordinate groups were resisting dominant culture by creating their own meanings.

Albert Cohen (1955) defines sub-cultures as cultures within cultures. He criticises the purely functional approach to culture current in the sociology of his time which suggested that culture is just learned behaviour shared with others. Culture for Cohen (1955) is not just 'social heredity' but is created as well as carried. Downes (1966) drawing on this work analysed statistical surveys, as well using informal observation in one area of London, and concluded that in England the type of gangs described in American literature did not exist. There were street corner groups who had loose friendship ties, were linked to a particular territory and claimed the futility of work. These young people actively disassociated themselves from the middle-class aims by engaging in deviant behaviour. However, while resistance towards the dominant middle-class norms may be apparent, this would not fully explain why some young people engage in deviant acts whilst others do not, despite being from similar economic circumstances.

While Downes (1966) emphasises the importance of territory, Hodkinson (2005) argued that the sub-cultures he studied, i.e. Goths, often labelled as a group, are trans-local and do not identify with one specific area. Bennett (2000) agrees with Downes' finding that sub-cultural groupings can often be localised. The

difference may need to be explained by the particular sub-cultural grouping being researched as not all groups of young people are comparable. Nevertheless, recent research carried out in the same city as this study (Deuchar, 2008, 2009b) indicates that identification with a particular geographical space is often a defining feature of the youth gang.

This raises a clear differentiation between youth groups and youth gangs. Goths as discussed by Hodkinson (2005) rarely self-identify or are stigmatised as youth gangs. They are a group whose solidarity is often based on cultural symbols such as clothing and music. In contrast Deuchar (2009b) is discussing young people who not only self-identify, but are actively recognised, as being a youth gang. Thus there is a distinction between youth gangs and youth sub-cultural groupings which will become more apparent when the youth gang is defined in this thesis.

Jenkins' (1983) work in Belfast found some groups of young people were more localised than others. He divided his research group into three distinct categories- "the lads", the "ordinary kids" and "citizens." The first were the most rebellious, rejected middle class aspirations and tended to take on menial jobs. These young men's lives were localised and they partook in activities such as drinking alcohol in friendship groups and engaging in various offending behaviours. The second group, the ordinary kids, were less rebellious and though engaged with some of the activities of the lads, were also recognisable by a greater fashion sense. Thirdly there were the citizens, who were seen as upwardly mobile, accepting the structured leisure activities on offer and attended church religiously. Ilan (2007a) similarly notes in his ethnographic research in an inner city area of Dublin: "Working-class culture contains a spectrum of cultural orientations which influences social mobility and involvement with criminality" (p. 23).

Subcultures and the Concept of Moral Panic

In his study of Mods and Rockers as subcultures Stanley Cohen (1973) produced a ground breaking piece of work, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics.* He defined moral panics as the over exaggerated fears of a situation that are seen to have a moral element. He explains:

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or groups of persons emerges to become identified as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking editors; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnosis and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight (S Cohen, 1973, p. 1).

Folk devils are created out of this over-exaggerated fear and become the scapegoats or targets of this prejudice. Cohen (1973) argued that subcultures, like the Mods and Rockers, or arguably youth gangs in Glasgow, were established as a resistance to dominant capitalist incorporation. His work also engaged with the media's interpretation of youth subcultures and showed how it served to perpetuate this moral panic and to seek out folk devils.

Despite his success in creating two household concepts his theories have been challenged. Ben-Yehuda suggests that Cohen's (1973) work was originally written in a time which "...assumed a more or less monolithic moral culture. But what happens to moral panics in multi-cultural societies where morality itself is constantly contested and negotiated?" (2009, p. 2). McRobbie and Thornton (1995) agree suggesting that in the original depiction of moral panic, society and societal relations were seen as fundamentally functionalist. They argue:

This leads us to query the usefulness of the term 'moral panic' – a metaphor which depicts a complex society as a single person who experiences sudden fear about its virtue. The term's anthropomorphism and totalisation arguably mystify more than they reveal. Its conception of morals overlooks the youthful ethics of abandon and the moral imperatives of pressure groups and vocal experts (McRobbie & Thornton, 1995, p. 189).

For McRobbie and Thornton (1995) society and the media are multi-faceted and cannot be lumped together as one versus the other. They suggest that far from the original implication that young people were victims by being labelled as folk devils, many now embrace the concept and seek out this status. Similarly the media, represented as a medium of perpetuating social control, is embraced and used as an intrinsic aspect of certain subcultural behaviours, i.e. youth groups may use the media and the sense of moral panic as a way to be recognised or gain publicity.

Garland (2008) reiterates this point suggesting:

In the early 1960s, when the events described by Cohen took place, a relatively cohesive establishment and a narrowly focused mass media could give the impression of a unified public reaction. In the decades since alternative youth press, the existence of counter experts who contest alarmist claims, and activists willing to speak out on behalf of targeted folk devils, make consensual expressions of concern much more unusual (p. 17).

Nevertheless, arguably these counter experts do not gain as widespread credence or acknowledgement as the claims made against the labelled 'folk devils'. Jock Young's recent work argues that moral panics are still prevalent noting the reaction to teenage pregnancy as one example. He suggests, "...the overtypical is the presumption of the normal, it is the stereotype of the normal just as the atypical forms the stereotype of the deviant" (Young, 2007, p. 113).

A moral panic often portrays the most extreme instances as the norm which results in negative consequences for those being depicted as 'folk devils' (S Cohen, 1973). Although there has been increased media attention surrounding gangs it will be important to decipher whether there is a disproportionate community response to the activities of the young people and whether this has had an impact upon any agreement between the youth gang and their local community.

Ben-Yehuda (2009) suggests, that it must be remembered that society, as well as the media, is multi-faceted thus encompassing multiple views about young people and their activities. It is for this reason that this study aims to draw from a broad spectrum of views as opposed to suggesting that there is one relationship between a monolithic society and a victimised youth group (the gang). This does not mean that generalisations cannot be drawn from the collected data but rather the data collection should give voice to a range of views within the communities being studied.

Heir (2008) argues that there is no unified, reliable way to actually measure what a moral panic is, thus leaving criminologists to make judgements based on their own normative values. Garland (2008) also notes that moral panics are not randomly selected but rather are linked to personal fears and unconscious wishes. The term moral panic almost always is an outsider's term and one which seems to be rarely used as a self-description by the participants; although as this is a sociological descriptor this is not surprising. Garland notes that there is an ethical attribution to the use of the term. Although as a moral panic in its conception is an illegitimate attribution of threat under which certain groups are stigmatised and repressed this is not surprising.

A further twist to the moral panic debate is Waiton's (2008) work on the societal reaction to anti-social behaviour as being amoral rather than a moral panic. He notes:

This form of panicking is 'amoral' in the sense that it is not grounded in any wider moral (or indeed political) ideal, but rather within the more vacuous prism of safety-and it is the very loss of these ideals that lay the basis for the myriad panics that exist today (Waiton, 2008, p. 11).

The notion of moral panic could illuminate elements of the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. If a group of young people have been unfairly stigmatised, labelled and repressed based on an illegitimate ethical attribute, then this could impact deeply on the relations between the youth gang members and their communities. Potentially it could happen that although there is

no youth gang in the area the sheer fact of moral panics and stigmatisation can create a false narrative of their existence. Thus the notion of folk devils and moral panics may be crucial to the definition of a youth gang and to the nature of any agreement with the community.

Deviance Literature

Another aspect in analysing subcultures is through the lens of deviance. As noted above, many of the definitions of youth gangs incorporate the notion of crime or deviance. Mays (1956) suggests that when studying delinquency you can either adopt an individualistic, psychological or sociological approach. To understand the delinquent behaviours of occasional offenders within this study the sociological approach seems more relevant as it encompasses how gangs relate to their local community. The social setting within which delinquency occurs is crucial in examining how environmental and personal factors interact. Mays (1956) analysed the lives of delinquent boys within society rather than within a social vacuum. He provided information about the boys' neighbourhood and detailed the patterns of delinquency, demonstrating how certain actions are classed as delinquent once highlighted to the state. This is of crucial importance to this study when defining what a youth gang actually is. If Mays (1956) is correct, the actions of the young people may not have changed significantly but may now be classed as delinquent in the light of a renewed policy focus from the state. Again this suggests that one element of a gang being defined as a gang is recognition or focus from others, generally those with more power, be this the community or state authorities.

Becker (1964) viewed deviance as an interactive process which involves both deviants and non-deviants. Consequently, rather than this study solely carrying out research with young people who are involved in gang activity, there is an attempt to incorporate the views of people that they have relationships with. Becker (1964) argues, "one cannot exist without the other; indeed, they are functions of one another in the strict mathematical sense of quantities whose value depends on the value of the other quantities" (p. 2).

This suggests that deviants are reliant upon community members and vice versa. Becker (1964) focussed upon the inter-reliance of differing sections of the community upon each other; thus if the gang did not exist other structures would replace them and change the working dynamics of the broader community. Critically, the interest is not solely on deviants but the process by which they are defined as such by society (Becker, 1964). The process, by which definitions arise and are used, named labelling theory, is described below:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an “offender.” The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label (Howard S. Becker, 1964, p. 3).

By viewing deviance as a product of interaction with others, there is an underlying assumption that changes to the interaction may bring about changes in behaviour. When studying any social problem we must ask who defines it as such, that is, “...how abstract definitions are mediated through the everyday encounters between the deviant and society” (Stanley Cohen, 1971, p.18).

A gang is not a gang unless others acknowledge, or recognise, the gang as such. Nevertheless it is consequentially, simultaneously or retrospectively necessary for the individual to identify as a gang member, creating a secondary level of deviance. Groups do not exist independently of other groups, as the very title of this research implies. This means that group, or gang, identification and the *labelling*, or what Jenkins (2008) calls the *categorisation*, of groups by others, does not necessarily occur in a predefined sequence; groups can be a result of categorisation or vice versa.

This sociological view argues that people who are classed as deviant are attributed such a label generally because of just one act in a multiplicity of other acts, most

of which conform to society's rules or norms. Erikson (1964) notes that as it is just the one act that has resulted in the person being classed as deviant, "...the community screen may be a more relevant subject for sociological research than the actual behaviour which is filtered through it" (p. 12). Arguably then the research should study both, the community screen and the behaviour classed as deviant. Following the advice of Becker (1963; 1964) and Erikson (1964) it is important to ascertain the views and actions of the community members towards the youth gang and to decipher how these activities impact upon the existence of the youth gang within the studied areas.

Defining from the Internal/External

Jenkins (2008) asserts that the internal/external dialectic means that group identification and the categorisation of a group feed upon one another. Collective identities also need to be accepted by others to be adopted. "As a consequence, identifications are to be found and negotiated at their *boundaries*, in interaction with others" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 44).

Although these may be territorial boundaries neither Cohen (2007) nor Jenkins (2008) suggest this is a necessary requirement, but rather can be symbolic boundaries. Jenkins (2008) notes that the difference between the nominal identity and the virtual identity is important. The name of the identity in comparison with the experience of it can both change at differing times. For example, a gang within one area may maintain the historical name of the gang but the experience of that identity may well vary and shift. Thus the categorisation and the consequences of identification become important as they can impact upon the groupings identity.

In essence, the same process can be applied to the youth gang as a small community within the broader community. The boundaries are permeable and the boundaries can be different depending on the community. The boundaries are primarily symbolic and constituted by people through interaction. Through these transactions a balance is negotiated between the group identification and the categorisation carried out by others, again encompassing the internal and external.

Cohen (2007) notes that although a community implies commonality it does not automatically define behaviour. “The triumph of community is to so contain this variety that its inherent discordance does not subvert the apparent coherence which is expressed by its boundaries” (A. P. Cohen, 2007, p. 20). In terms of the potential agreement then, if the youth gang are recognised as a part of the community, there may be disagreement internally but externally the outward appearance, as well as boundary formation is maintained.

Jenkins (2008) suggests that identification in itself does not determine behaviour. The links between identification and interests are more complex than this. Thus a young person being in a gang does not necessarily mean s/he will automatically act in a certain manner. However, others will expect certain behaviours if identified with a particular group, as this may be part of the categorisation of the group by external people. For example a young person may identify with a local gang and the police may acknowledge the existence of this gang. However the sheer fact of identification does not mean that the young people will definitively act in a certain manner notwithstanding the fact that the police may expect anti-social behaviour due to the perception of gang identification.

Jenkins (2008) notes the distinction between primary and secondary deviance. Primary deviance is the act of being deviant whereas secondary deviancy is the internalisation of the identity of being a deviant, produced through labelling and the generated identity. Becker (1963) emphasises the secondary act, when a person is labelled deviant they subsequently self-identify as such. Jenkins (2008) argues that though this clearly demonstrates the potential consequences of identification and categorisation it fails to acknowledge a) that some can resist this external identification and b) why the deviant act occurs in the first place. Nevertheless, this process highlights the internal/external dialectic of individual identification. Jenkins (2008) notes that

...the labelling perspective provides the basis for a *general* model of the external moment of individual identification, there is every reason to suppose that positive, valorised identities may be internalised in the same or similar

ways, as negative, stigmatising identities: they too are labels and they too have their consequences (p. 98).

Self-perception as a deviant, or in this case a gang member, does not mean the identity will 'stick'. The labelling process may need to happen over a period of time which results in consequences for the labelled person. Young (1971) relates this to the process of police amplification of the deviance of those classified as deviant. He identifies differing ways in which an act can be labelled as deviant. Initially the police, once they decided on an object of their attention, assume a role of moral indignation towards the person they label as deviant. Second, if the group are seen as threatening the interests of a powerful group in society they can be seen as deviant. Third, a "...powerful group seeks to curb the activities of another group in their own better interests. They define them as a social problem and demand that action be taken to ameliorate their situation" (Young, 1971, p. 31).

Young (1971) argues that as the actions of the authorities are based on stereotypes, the focus on deviancy is stronger. This results in increased isolation and alienation of the deviant group, encouraging them to act more defiantly. In turn, society takes stronger action against the identified group and a spiral of deviancy amplification occurs.

Can it be Defined?

Despite numerous attempts at defining the term gang there are problems with the variety of uses and the fact that these usages are seldom uniform (White, 1999). Thrasher (1927) differentiates between entrepreneurial gangs and fighting gangs, whilst Cloward and Ohlin (1960) differentiated between criminal subcultures - those who have access to an organised, adult criminal community; conflict subcultures - those who do not have access to the same criminal subculture and have no access to lawful or unlawful success, often leading to gang violence as a release for anger and frustration; and retreatist subcultures - where no lawful or unlawful success is available some working-class young people will retreat from

society often finding escapism in drugs. Hagedorn and Macon (1988) find that the gangs they studied were nearly all “fighting” gangs. Fagan (1996) identifies four types of gangs- partying gangs, social gangs, delinquent gangs and youth organisations. This small selection of categorisations serves to exemplify the inconsistencies in gang research and the difficulty of drawing comparisons between different accounts.

White (1999) discovered that “By and large, it can be concluded that most bands of street-present young people in Australia are not “gangs”, but groups” (White, 1999, p. 38). These groups are not fixed but are transient groups of young people with no one static entity.

The literature suggests that the actions and aims of the grouping may play a part in differentiating between what is a group and what is a gang. If young people are willing to engage in behaviours that constitute and continue the identity of the gang, then there is an active decision to maintain its presence within the community. Thrasher (1927) and Hagedorn and Macon (1988) found most of the gangs they studied, were fighting gangs. The activities that the young people engage in, i.e. fighting with others, if done as a means to promote the gang’s identity rather than to address an individual grievance, will have a significant role in the proposed definition.

Decker and Winkle’s (1996) detailed account of gang studies, like others, (Jankowski, 1991; White, 1999, 2007) acknowledges the inconsistent use of the term. In particular, they distinguish between youth involvement in street crime as compared to adult involvement in organised crime. Hallsworth and Young (2008) concur. Their trawl of data within England and Wales found that, “...gang membership in the UK is no more than 3-7 per cent of the youthful population.” (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p.178) Their work in Hackney in London finds that much of the ‘street-level’ violence was low level and was connected to peer groups as opposed to gangs (Hallsworth & Young, 2008). These peer groups were defined as groups that did get involved in delinquent behaviours, but whose identity was not defined by this involvement in crime and delinquency. They

discovered that to use the term gang in this area misrepresented the actual situation.

To corral all of this into descriptives such as ‘gang wars’ or ‘gang culture’ was wholly to misrepresent a complex, multi-layered situation. Invoking the term gang added little to our understanding of violent street life though it certainly did obscure its complexities (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p. 181).

The deviancy literature and work on labelling also demonstrated the importance of the internal/external dialectic, where others can label actions or behaviours as gang related when they may not be viewed as such by all involved.

Thus it is necessary to establish clear differentiation between youth groups, youth gangs and organised criminal gangs. This again supports the need for a youth gang definition which is relevant to the area of study. By corralling all youth groups under the title of youth gangs there is a danger that as the impact of the terminology grows, many young people may start seeing themselves as gang members when they have not previously done so. FitzGerald (2008) writes of this danger:

With this goes the more general danger of large numbers of young people having once been identified as gang-involved or at risk of becoming gang-involved finding it difficult to move on, even though they may want to (p. 9).

The gang label is applied to “messy complexities” (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p. 183) that are too complex for simplistic labels. The term gang is not simply a descriptive label but is saturated with meaning. “The term gang signifies not this or that group out there but a *monstrous Other*, an organized counter force confronting the good society...” (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p. 185). Many of the young people they spoke to (Hallsworth and Young, 2008) rejected the gang label. They found the term was often used to label all young people living in a certain area or neighbourhood.

Although the “messy complexities” are acknowledged there must be some framework to illuminate the particular elements of the ‘mess’ that this study aims to discuss. As such, the definition sought for this study does not aim to answer the whole variety of behaviours often classified within the one term of gang, rather it attempts to provide a working definition for this particular place, space and time in which the research is being conducted. This is not to discredit the historical roots of this term and concept but to draw insights and guidance from them to aid an understanding of the “messy complexities” (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p.183). As Pitts (2010) argues:

This vagueness about the phenomenon to be investigated is not uncommon in contemporary gang scholarship but for the social scientist, such ‘messiness’ should be a starting point, not a conclusion, because ‘messiness’ is what social scientists are required to explain (p. 166).

Ball and Curry (1995) suggest part of the problem with defining a gang is the “...different definitions of *definition*...” (p. 227). They analyse a range of ways theorists and researchers define certain phenomenon. This research aligns with the implicative method of definition.

The implicative method of definition directs theory toward an emphasis on the way in which the gang fits as a natural part of the everyday life of a community. It encourages an *emic* methodology that tries to see through the eyes of the gang rather than an *etic* methodology that examines the gang through the lens provided by official data (Ball and Curry, 1995, p. 230).

In order to clarify the meaning of this term, the views of the young people who identify with gang membership have been sought, as well as the views of community members. Drawing on existent literature these are combined to create a working definition. Although the proposed definition may be drawn upon by other gang studies, the context and process of creating this definition is unique to this research. It explains the views from this data collection process and should not be used indiscriminately without empirical support and reflection on the specific context.

Conclusion

There are many lenses through which to view the concept of 'gang'. These include deviancy, crime, moral panic, location, group dynamics, subcultural theories, age brackets and class basis to name but a few.

The most cited definition of a youth gang in recent times is by the Eurogang program, (Gemert & Fleisher, 2005) although this is not without problems. The notion that a street gang is durable can be debated, as can the notion that illegal activity performed in a group is an integral part of the group's identity. The main criticism however is that within this definition there is no space for the gang to be a social construct, an entity that has been classified as 'deviant' by the broader community or society; a group of young people who have been singled out for one type of behaviour which has been deemed illegal.

Similarly the definition asserted by Lien (2005) does not include organised crime syndicates, of black market enterprises, (e.g. drug gangs), or protection rackets or even of alternative societal gangs such as biker gangs. Decker and Van Winkle (1996) do suggest the importance of differentiating between youth gangs and adult involvement in organised crime but do not provide a concrete definition of a gang. Stating that youth gangs are different from adult gangs is important, but is not enough, and does not provide a working definition that can be used as a basis within this study.

It is apparent that there is little consensus in the usage of the term, or even whether the term should be used at all. Nevertheless, it is clear that the term has meaning; as a construct, a classification and a grouping of particular behaviours by specific people within a certain space; it is not a meaningless phenomenon that should be ignored. Moreover, it is a term that is acknowledged by the community, and/or by broader society and also it is also acknowledged by the gang members. Nevertheless this power dynamic is not equal. If a young person denies involvement in a gang this doesn't necessarily prevent them from being

labelled as a gang member by the broader community, the authorities or by other young people.

The literature often suggests that there should be involvement in some form of illegal activity to constitute a gang. Arguably though, while illegal activity such as drug sales can have personal advantage for individual young people, it may not constitute the gang's identity.

Hagedorn and Macon (1988) discovered that many of the gangs they studied were fighting gangs. This activity of fighting is an example of how the gang can assert their identity and/or status over others. Being seen to fight may also result in others reaffirming the gang's identity. Fighting may take place with others from differing areas or with people within the same geographical space. This action, which can be classed as illegal in certain contexts, can result in broader society classing the activity as deviant or as gang behaviour. It simultaneously can project a uniform identity on a group of young people. What seems important is the reason behind the fighting. If the action of fighting is carried out as a means to protect or reassert the gang's identity then it may be a defining trait for a youth gang.

Aldridge et al (2007) in 'the research city', an undisclosed city in England, discovered that violence was spoken about on a daily basis and was normalised by many of the young people. The gangs themselves were not specialists in violence but the symbolism and rhetoric of violence played an important role. This suggests that physical portrayals of identity, or reaffirmation of boundaries, need not occur consistently but there is the potential that they are re-asserted if deemed necessary. The symbolism of violence discussed by Aldridge et al. (2007) suggests the requirement of outward symbolic acts to emphasise the existence of the gang. This may be in the form of graffiti, where there is a tag that allows others to know there are young people who identify with a gang label in a particular area. The symbolism may also come from simply being visible to others in the street. This is not just congregating in the street but has to be coupled with certain behaviours which are interpreted by others as being deviant or behaviours that are deemed by others as being typical gang behaviours. Other

types of symbolic behaviour may be the use of a name, appointment of leaders and the negotiation of rituals or rites of passage for entry to the gang. However some UK studies did not find these characteristics of a gang and rather suggest, counter to Jankowski (1991, 2003), that the grouping is based more on friendship ties than on formal associations (Aldridge, et al., 2007; Deuchar, 2009b).

The gang, having constructed a self-identity, and having been recognised as a gang by others, has a relationship or engagement with the community in which it is situated. A key part of the construction of a gang is that they are acknowledged as being a gang by others. For Jenkins (Jenkins, 2008), “first, identity is a practical accomplishment, a process. Second, individual and collective identities can be understood using one model, of the dialectical interplay of processes of internal and external definition” (p. 46).

A definition

Thus drawing on aspects of literature and initial empirical data, a working definition is suggested as -

A youth gang is a social process in which a named grouping of young people actively identify with a defined geographical space, is willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means and is recognised by others.

Although any definition proposed will undoubtedly be a source of controversy, not attempting to define or engage with the term potentially gives rise to confusion, or to the assumption that the term is meaningless. This study argues that the term gang is not meaningless but provides a set of constructions within which these young people, and their communities, live their lives.

To the view that, “a youth gang is a social process...” and not ‘an event’ then Jenkins (2008) adds to this that it

[I]nvolves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on: a multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectives. It is a process – *identification* – not a ‘thing’. It is not something that one can *have*, or not; it is something that one *does* (Jenkins, 2008, p. 5).

Identity should be seen as a process: it is not static or fixed. The identification process can be consequential, simultaneous or even retrospective given that even when someone dies, or a group ceases to exist, their identity may remain more or less as it was in life. By acknowledging that the gang is a social process there is a recognition that it can change depending on time, place, space, culture or interpretation.

To explore the definition further: “...in which a named grouping of young people...,” it claims that a young person on their own cannot be constituted as a gang. A group of young people who are simply coming together to socialise in a public space does not fulfil the definition as this group “actively identify with a defined geographical space.” The fact that the grouping is named is also significant. Symbolic representation of the gang can take various forms but often the “...grouping of young people...” need a label or tag to self-identify with and to be recognised by. Thus the youth gang need to have a recognisable collective identity, communicated through symbolic apparatus, arguably most commonly through a name or names. However as other groupings have names; this is just one part of the self-identification, recognition and constitution of the gang.

Similarly the process of self-identification with the area and the gang are important. For the purposes of this research it is held that there should be some self-identification with the gang from the young people as opposed to it being solely a label placed upon young people by the authorities or other external commentators. In other words there must be subjective identification rather than merely objectification of the young people. This does not mean that the identification has to be completely current, but so long as there has been a relatively recent self-identification with the youth gang, this would be valid for

this research. Without any self-identification there is a danger of buying into a constructed, objectified stigma, which has been devised and defined by others, (generally those with more power) and imposed on groups of young people.

They are a group “...who at times is willing to affirm and defend this space...” This is not to suggest that this group fight continuously but rather they are willing to and have fought with other people from outside their defined area. While this may be territoriality based it is linked to reaffirming the gang’s identity to people seen as outsiders. This can be carried out in a physical way, e.g. street combat, or in a symbolic way, through graffiti, visible presence or using social networking sites under the gang title. This ability to not only use physical means but also symbolic means encapsulates the variety of ages that can be involved in the wider gang. Some young people, particularly those at a younger age, may not engage in physical combat but rather may throw stones, write tags or identify with their area without necessarily engaging in fighting. Arguably though if a group of young people were solely to engage in a symbolic means and were not willing to engage in physical conflict then they would be a group of young people rather than a gang.

To be “...recognised by others:” indicates that people outside the grouping see them as a gang. This is not necessarily a positive reaffirmation of the group’s identity. The police may label young people as a gang, whilst the young people themselves don’t necessarily acknowledge that label. Other young people may label an individual as a gang member even though s/he may not identify as such. Community members may see a group of young people and assume they are a gang even if they don’t behave in any particular manner. The recognition gained from others does not necessarily have to be positive, rather it may be from police officers who are trying to eradicate the behaviour, other gang members who are wanting to fight with the labelled gang or community members trying to prevent youth identifying with the gang in their area.

Thus the definition is two fold. The young people should identify with a defined geographical space whilst maintaining the willingness to engage in symbolic and physical means to defend this space and be recognised as existing as a gang by

others. If the youth gang member was not willing to engage in these actions then they are a social grouping. Equally if the young people are willing to engage in these behaviours but only as a mindset rather than a reality, or if the gang is not recognised by anyone else, there is no social interaction, thus no social entity – the gang.

Having established a working definition for a youth gang:

A youth gang is a social process in which a named grouping of young people actively identify with a defined geographical space, is willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means and is recognised by others.

I will now examine the existing literature that relates specifically to the concept of agreement.

CHAPTER THREE

The Literature on Community Agreement

Introduction

This chapter explores literature specifically relating to the concept of the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. This includes the formation, development and existence of gangs within particular neighbourhood contexts, whilst also demonstrating the differing localised relationships between youth gang members and their local communities. While the previous chapter explored the nature of a youth gang, this chapter analyses literature that directly relates to the core research question and provides insights into the community/gang relations.

Providing a background to this study necessitates the examination of a variety of historical literature. Following this, American based literature, which specifically focuses on the relationship between gangs and their broader communities, will be examined. Given the vast wealth of literature on gangs within American research, the concept of agreement is discussed in greater detail than in British literature. The British and European literature investigated provides a localised context to this study.

Historical Literature

In a very early contribution to the subject, Sheldon (1898) cited many newspaper stories of ‘dangerous gangs’ and noted that in large cities these gangs had gone beyond being simply a nuisance to being more of a danger, “Entire neighbourhoods are so terrorized that no one dares to testify against the gang” (Sheldon, 1898, p. 441). For Sheldon (1898) gangs harassed their neighbourhood and residents were fearful of gang members. This sets the community/gang

relationship as one of fear and an imbalance of power with gang members imposing their will through both the use of, and the threat of, violence.

Writing of England Sheldon (1898) cites the London Daily Times from 1898, which referred to youthful ruffians committing assaults and acts of violence, sometimes using pistols as weapons:

These London gangs are more brutal and daring than the similar organizations of New York. Nearly every district has a gang of its own which terrorizes the neighbourhood and fight among themselves. Each of these gangs, whose members vary in age from thirteen to twenty years, has its bosses, whose authority is recognized and whose commands are implicitly obeyed (Sheldon, 1898, p. 441).

The gang is described as a structured, age specific, violent structure with leaders, a somewhat different definition than the one proposed for this research in the previous definitional chapter. More recent studies conducted within the UK and my own research findings find this structured entity does not resonate with the existent work carried out on Glasgow.

In relation to the police he suggests that, similar to the New York toughs, the London gangs fear the policeman as they do any "...resolute, able bodied man" (Sheldon, 1898, p. 442). On the other hand,

...in numbers they apparently dread nobody; thus it is that the police have a difficult and dangerous task when they have to stop such young ruffians from battering one another about and terrorizing the peaceful members of the community (Sheldon, 1898, p. 442).

This structured, hierarchical and negative portrayal of the gang has been debated by other authors. It is worth bearing in mind that these evocative statements are drawn from newspaper reports which may be sensationalist or misrepresentative of the truth. Nevertheless, this view provides one historical account of the tensions

between youth gangs and their local communities in Britain in 1898 and reflects that the 'moral panic' framing of youth gangs is by no means new.

Andrew Davies (2000, 2007a, 2007b) has provided a detailed account of Glaswegian gangs in the 1920s and 1930s through the use of oral histories, analysis of old newspaper articles and criminal reports. This work is a modern historian writing of Glasgow gangs in the past and therefore cannot be assumed to resonate with the current experience of communities or youth gangs in Glasgow today. Nevertheless as discussed below it serves to provide an historical context, specifically in a Glaswegian setting, to an understanding of the agreement between youth gangs and their broader community.

Davies (2007a) argues that contrary to many modern popular reports on Glaswegian gangs, in the past they did not only fight each other, leaving other citizens alone, but terrorised and intimidated other members of their local neighbourhoods. He suggests that popular memory, and various reports, have served to cement the misrepresentation that past Glaswegian gang members were, "...guardians of the neighbourhood, upholders of a moral code which offered protection to the community's more vulnerable members" (Davies, 2007a, p. 407). The fact that there is a constructed narrative of the gang as protectors within the community is worth questioning within this current study. The notion of a unified moral code that is established within the community, as well as the protection of those deemed vulnerable, is also clearly relevant to aspects of the agreement considered within this research. Despite Davies suggesting these are misrepresentations, this literature not only confirms the existence of the gang within a Glaswegian context, but illustrates how stories and narratives of the gangs are passed down generationally.

Davies (2007a) notes that Glaswegian gangs provided a focus for broader anxieties. They were used as a scapegoat for the wider social, political and economic climate of the '20s and '30s. The police responded by trying to control panic, and instil confidence in the community by asserting that the issue of gangs was under control.

[E]veryday relations between the police and the urban working classes were characterised by a sometimes uneasy truce. Order on the streets was maintained by a combination of respect for, and fear of, the police, and new constables were taught how to wield a truncheon to disperse crowds of drunks on Saturday nights and to restore order when communal violence erupted between Protestants and Catholics (Davies, 2000 p. 41).

This “uneasy truce” hints at a tacit agreement; a way of getting on and a form of social interaction which while not fully agreed to by either party, was a way to maintain the relative peace or general running of daily life. It also suggests that the relationship between the police and the urban working classes is inherently negative and confrontational. He notes, that

...the police were unable to prevent gang violence from erupting. Gang conflicts were too firmly embedded in the culture of Glasgow’s working-class districts, and ranged over such wide areas of the city, that the police were unable to mount constant surveillance of all of the potential trouble spots (Davies, 2000 p. 57).

Davies (2007) argues that rival gangs fought each other on the streets along both sectarian and/or territorial lines. They had an unwritten agreement that information would not be passed to the police. “Of course, those injured in gang fights frequently knew the identities of their assailants, but even bitter adversaries were shielded from police attention” (Davies, 2007a, p. 416).

Davies (2007a) argues that gang violence was a common occurrence in the 1920s and 1930s, with gang members striving for better status and reputation by getting involved in street fights. He argues this while rejecting the possibility that law enforcement became more focused on this type of behaviour thereby increasing the amount of recorded gang violence.

Pearson (1983) analyses the cycles of fear that periodically appear through history. Through time there have been periods where young people in particular have been blamed for increased crime and a general decline in moral standards.

He notes that the common people; the working class, are often blamed and stereotyped as living in times of liberty and luxury more prevalent than in past years. These periods of stereotyping often occur when there are more general feelings of anxiety within society. Pearson also adds a word of warning, saying that whilst it is important to place things in an historical context, it is equally important not to suggest that such fears were irrelevant or that criminal acts did not take place. He concludes:

If this long, connected history of respectable fears tells us anything at all, then it is surely that street violence and disorder are a solidly entrenched feature of the social landscape. Hence, they are going to be much more difficult to dislodge than if we imagined that they have suddenly sprung from nowhere in the past twenty years or so; or since the war; or because of the arrival of black people in Britain; or because of recent changes in the law; or as a result of 'new-fangled' educational philosophies, or television violence, or any other symptom of 'permissive' modernity (Pearson, 1983, p. 242).

Whilst both Davies (2000, 2007a, 2007b) and Pearson (1983) provide a historical context to the relationship between youth gangs and their local neighbourhoods, it is necessary to analyse contemporary literature to provide further insight into this question and particularly to examine how elements of the reported relationship can be translated into both implicit and/or explicit aspects of the agreement(s). While this thesis will not attempt to analyse every gang study, there is a need to review the literature that directly relates to the relationship between youth gangs and their local neighbourhoods with an emphasis on identifying aspects that impact on any agreement between youth gangs and local communities. It is for this reason that I consider the US literature which serves to give a detailed and rich account of youth gangs in this context.

American Literature

Early Gang Studies

Thrasher (1927) wrote one of the most famous books on gangs to date. His in-depth study of groups in Chicago found there were 1,313 gangs operating within that city with a massive 25,000 members. His methodology included personal observations, life histories of gang members, personal documents from gang members and observers of gangs in varying roles, as well as court records and census data.

Thrasher (1927) found gangs to be most common in areas characterised by deteriorating neighbourhoods, shifting populations and the often chaotic mobility and disorganisation of the slum. A more recent writer, Fagan (1989), also found that Chicano and Mexican gangs began in California as a result of high levels of immigration after the Mexican Revolution and have continued “to be cultural institutions in Latino communities” (Fagan, 1989, p.634).

Thrasher (1927) asserts that young people would leave the gang life once the possibility of employment arose. Gang involvement was a phase that was generated due to the disorganisation of society. The gang was an organised structured entity for young people during their pre-employment years. He identified three stages of a gang creation: the first is a group with little leadership and may be short lived in duration; the second is when they become consolidated through conflict and/or self defence which plays a significant role in uniting members; and the third is when they become a part of the neighbourhood and adopt legitimate roles in society. He found gangs to be constructed through spontaneous group activity by young people whose status was strengthened by conflict. Fighting may be as common between group members as between them and other groups. Violence played a large role in integrating people into the group, whilst threats from other gangs generated heightened solidarity between gang members. Although some of the groups took part in illegal activities he found that most gang members also had legitimate roles within society (Thrasher, 1927).

Thrasher's (1927) study, although well cited, is also often criticised. Hobbs (2001) complains that "virtually every possible youthful lower class street collaboration, 'from loose knit groups of drug users and institutionalized sports clubs to violent groups of street pirates', feature in the study" (p. 205). Thrasher (1927) is also criticised for suggesting young people would mature out of the gang. For Hagedorn (1988) though this may have been true during times of relatively high employment it is less likely when there are few job opportunities. Thus for black and Hispanic communities, with limited employment opportunities, maturing out of the gang becomes very unlikely.

Another critic of Thrasher's (1927) findings was William Whyte. Whyte's 'Street Corner Society' (1943) was an ethnographic piece of research on Cornerville. This study, which focussed on social order and organization, found there existed a hierarchy of relations built on reciprocal obligations within the community. Contrasting the findings of Thrasher (1927), Whyte (1943) found that social disorganisation was not the main reason for deviant or criminal activity. Rather the organisation of the study area could be differentiated from the organisation of the broader society. The relations within the area of Cornerville were based on mutual obligations and, as part of this, deviant activity was normalised. In essence it was the local community who normalised deviant activity which allowed the street corner society to exist, notwithstanding that the latter stood in opposition to the broader, external societal norms.

Suttles (1968) also conducted ethnographic research, working in a boys club in Chicago to provide access to the community. He noted that the supposedly elusive street gang was not hard to reach but rather made themselves known to the neighbourhood. Suttles suggests that while gang activities may have been accepted, it was only if they were confined within a clear set of locally defined standards.

These studies suggest that though the gang exists and has a relationship with the community, the community create the boundaries within which the gang act and normalise behaviours to allow the gang's actions to occur. These findings are in

marked contrast to Sheldon (1898) who portrays the community as relatively powerless.

Normalisation of Violence

Decker and Van Winkle (1996) focussed on the family life of gang members. They carried out three years of ethnographic research and interviewed gang members and their families. They showed how deviance was normalised among urban youth and how becoming a gang member offered informal protection from violence, showed a distance from formal institutional ties and confirmed the deviant identity.

Decker and Winkle (1996) theoretically frame their study through the lens of threat. This framework explains the origins of gangs as well as the reasons for joining gangs. Threat is both an interactive process and an outworking of perceptions, which leads to a type of behaviour and explains the growth in existing gangs. They suggest that the threat of violence, either real or perceived, increases solidarity between gang members and can also facilitate the gangs' presence in differing areas; if others fear the gang they can easily gain a foothold in another area. This increased level of solidarity suggests a corresponding increase in the identity of the gang. Reciprocal violence with other gangs not only strengthens ties but encourages membership recruitment, arguably for protection and security. Importantly, threat is sometimes felt by those not involved in the gang given that when gangs are involved in violent retaliation with each other, other individuals in society can feel threatened, unsure of when another attack may occur. Decker and Winkle (1996) also find that the disapproval from external people, those not within the community, results in gang members becoming isolated and alienated from legitimate institutions, i.e. school and the labour market. They explain, "life in the gang is an existence characterized by estrangement from social institutions, many neighbourhood groups, and, ultimately, conforming peers and adults" (Decker & Winkle, 1996, p. 24).

This isolation results in the young gang members being excluded from adopting legitimate roles. This marginalisation is also faced by 'symbolic' members, those

who fit the negative stereotype of gang members. Decker and Van Winkle (1996) found that this process of negative stereotyping has consequences for those considered on the margins of society, making gang membership an even more viable option for excluded youth who feel that they have little, or no, alternatives. Nevertheless, they are careful not to imply that gangs are just reactive to circumstances but at times can proactively generate threatening behaviour and the fear of such behaviour, going to other neighbourhoods and deliberately seeking trouble.

Community Tolerance

Horowitz's (1987) study of community tolerance of gang violence focuses on one community in Chicago. Data was collected over a three year period through participant observation techniques whilst the researcher lived in the area. Although she focuses on gang violence, the issue of communal relations are still relevant to this study.

[G]ang members are not outsiders but are members of family networks in which they behave appropriately. I show the tolerance varies in degree and may be fragile, but that it is generally maintained through active negotiation between community residents and gang members (Horowitz, 1987, p. 437).

Horowitz (1987) finds violent actions of gang members are actively negotiated and mutually understood by them, the adult members in the community and the non-gang youths. Although some residents may not know a lot of what goes on within their neighbourhoods, others may, but can fail to acknowledge the extent of their awareness in order to live under the pretence of blissful ignorance. Whether implicit or explicit, an understanding of the rationale for actions, or explanations for the nature of the violence, may also make community members more tolerant than outsiders would be.

The process of negotiation can also be analysed through the lens of agreement. Horowitz (1987) finds: "...the people I studied- Chicano gang members, non-gang youths, and adults on 32nd Street- routinely collaborated to maintain a sense

of order and mutual tolerance in their community” (p. 438). However, when this accommodation fails, violence openly impacts on the rest of the neighbourhood.

People become baffled, upset, and shocked when the routine flow of events is disrupted and they may focus their fear and outrage towards the source of this disorder. Just as tolerance is embedded in a cultural and social order that is continually negotiated, a breakdown of this negotiated order can lead to intolerance of gang violence (Horowitz, 1987, p. 438).

Horowitz (1987) analyses the levels of tolerance through the cultural framework of honour. There is an acceptance that if a man’s honour is questioned in public then he has the right, indeed is expected, to resort to violence as a response. This criterion is accepted by the gang members and the community residents. However the gang members accept that there are times and places where they must act in a certain way to maintain the courtesy and etiquette expected by community members in particular situations, e.g. a wedding or birthday party.

The ability to understand varying audience definitions of gang violence allows gang members to adjust their conduct towards the audience found in a particular setting. In return, by defining gang violence within a framework of honor, community members are able to understand such violence and to construct partial basis for its toleration (Horowitz, 1987, p. 441).

Horowitz (1987) found that many parents did not approve of the fighting nor would they admit that being a gang member was good for their son. However, she found that most of the parents would class violence, and sometimes deadly violence, as an acceptable, justifiable response to defending their family honour. Many of the parents thought that their sons would grow out of the gang violence and Horowitz found that a number of the young men themselves viewed the gang violence as less acceptable, and would only tolerate it rather than approve of it, as they got older.

Horowitz (1987) argues that non-gang youths relate to gang members within a framework of positive toleration. She asserts, as Aldridge et al. (2007) also

found, that the segregation between gang members and non-gang member youth is often tenuous and if gang members redefine the relationship or identity of non-gang youth, then the differentiation becomes more problematic.

Horowitz (1987) also acknowledges that ‘outsiders’ often have a different view than many of the community members:

For teachers and other outside “helping” personnel, the meaning of the youth’s violence is obscure. Young people are feared and violence is not understood and never develops as expected; there is no presumption of order. Law enforcement officials and the public often regard gangs as a symbol of disorder (p. 447).

She concludes that it is debatable if the community members’ negative tolerance is through choice or if it is an indication of powerlessness. Although the family often do not approve of gang violence she found, “...to call in outside agents (police) to control gang violence is not a viable solution because to question publicly a son’s moral character is to question the honor of the family” (Horowitz, 1987, p. 449).

In essence then, gang members are not completely isolated from the adult world but nor are they completely integrated. The nature of their relationship to the adult world is clearly important in order to identify aspects of the agreement with their local community.

Negative Community Relations

In contrast Hagedorn (1991) found that the gangs he studied in Milwaukee were beginning to elicit negative reactions from both the law enforcement and community members. Hagedorn (1991) found that gang members returned the hostile feelings of the “respectables” - the older community members. He discovered that two thirds of the black gang founders said the gang was not about helping the broader black community at all. Due to many African American young people getting bussed to school outside their local community, the founders

of the gangs reported that many of their gang members were not local to one neighbourhood but rather met from differing neighbourhoods on the school bus runs. Hagedorn (1991) found that residents reported a lack of community institutions to turn to within their area.

Consequently, when the gang hung out on neighbourhood corners, they were not seen by residents as just the “neighbors’ kids” messing up. “I’ll tell your Mama” did not work when no one knew who “mama” was or where she lived. Informal social controls were ineffective, so calling the police became the basic methods to handle rowdiness and misbehaviour as well as more serious delinquency. Hostility between the gangs and the neighbourhood increased with each squad car arriving on the block (Hagedorn, 1991, p. 533).

They also found that residents knew their actual neighbours and quoted this as being one of the best things of living in that area. Despite this more than 50% of residents said they would move if they had the opportunity. Although neighbourliness was viewed as a positive attribute to the area, the negatives included drugs, violence and gangs (Hagedorn, 1991), with the relative anonymity of gang members possibly aggravating negative attitudes.

Structural Importance and the Relationship with the Broader Community

Sanchez-Jankowski’s (1991) *Islands in the Street* gained access to gangs through community institutions. The title of the book symbolises the various findings in his (Jankowski, 1991) study of gangs. The isolation, yet self-dependence of an island, resonates with many gang members, the relationship between the island and the ocean, the gangs are defined by the communities they are located in and vice versa, and it is noted that islands (gangs) are not singular but are found across the United States.

Jankowski (1991) argues that although the term gang has generally been associated with negative connotations; a young person is a rational actor who

chooses to be a gang member, as the collective benefits are considerably better than being an individual without gang affiliation. He suggests that the individual gang member has never been understood fully and is often viewed as a lower class individual with little intelligence, no drive for work or as having psychological problems – a depiction that contradicts his own findings. These young people have very often grown up in an area where aggressive behaviour is seen as acceptable not pathological. He finds that the drive for economic and social capital often makes many of the gang members energetically try to achieve the ‘good life’ through alternative opportunities to legitimate employment. He also finds that to posit family issues as the reason why many young people join gangs is a gross over simplification. Rather each individual has varying reasons, but fundamentally the decision depends on an individual assessment as to cost-benefit and what is deemed good for the individual at that time. This cost-benefit framing can also offer insights into the nature not only of gang membership but also into aspect of the agreement.

Organizational Structure

Like Thrasher (1927), Jankowski (1991) emphasises the organizational element of gangs. He suggests that many overlook this important element of Thrasher’s work and notes:

I believe that one of the reasons that society does not understand gangs or the gang phenomenon very well is that there have not been enough systematic studies undertaken as to how that gang works as an organization (Jankowski, 1991, p. 5).

Jankowski (2003) criticises most studies of gangs for underestimating the connections between the structural conditions of society and the gang’s behaviour. He suggests that the majority of studies focus on seeing gangs as groups of individuals who have negative attributes or as a group of individuals who act in a deviant way. He notes that

...because of the structural character of the gang in contemporary societies, they are disproportionately comprised of people from low-income backgrounds who want what everyone else wants in the USA and are prepared to get it by whatever means necessary (Jankowski, 2003, p. 192).

This aligns to Merton's (1938, 1957) strain theory where

...aberrant behaviour may be regarded sociologically as a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realizing these aspirations (p. 134).

For Jankowski (1991) anyone who wants to understand a gang must also examine their communities. The gang is not isolated from the community but rather is seen as a formal organisational element that is part of the community. Jankowski adopts a functional approach arguing that gangs operate as any other organisation within a low-income community. He notes, "In 84 percent of cases that I studied (31 of 37 gangs), the gang and the community in which it was active had established some type of working relationship" (Jankowski, 1991, p. 179).

A number of reasons as to why the community would want close ties with the gang were noted. Firstly, some adults identified with the gang and thus encouraged the younger generations to join. This sense of tradition was particularly found in Chicano gangs in Los Angeles (Jankowski, 1991). In this situation there is more than a working relationship, rather the community are proactively encouraging and facilitating young people to join and create gangs. This tradition was also found to be prevalent amongst Irish communities, where to join a gang was to contribute to the maintenance of Irish ethnicity and group advantage as exhibited in disadvantaged circumstances (Jankowski, 1991, p.181).

Jankowski (1991) identifies two other psychosocial reasons that adults may support young people's engagement in gangs. The first is the "resistance component" (Jankowski, 1991, p. 181), where adults empathise with the feelings and frustrations of the young people as they have experienced them as well. "Thus they identify with the gang because they are sympathetic to the members'

attempts to resist their poor socioeconomic position” (Jankowski, 1991, p. 182). The second is where a small proportion of parents, frustrated with their own lives and the experiences, find some comfort in the fact that their children are facing the same systematic difficulties.

More functional reasons were also discovered as to why the local community may support the existence of a local gang. The gang could provide certain services to the community, such as - protection from physical violence or to protect the community from strangers who could be perceived as a threat. Jankowski (1991) found that the community residents often recognised that the gang could provide protection more effectively than the police, although it is debatable if law and order had been tested or whether using alternative means to deal with threat had just become the norm in certain communities, particularly those communities with a tenuous relationship to institutional ‘law and order’ mechanisms.

Gangs’ Interest in Maintaining a Close Relationship with the Community

Jankowski (1991) identifies four main functional reasons why gangs work on maintaining close ties with their wider community. The first, and most crucial, is that the community can provide a safe haven for gang members. They can protect them from the police and thus allow them to continue their illegal economic activity. The second factor he discovered was the issue of recruitment. It is important for the gang to maintain a good working relationship in order to encourage younger people to join. Thirdly, the local community provides essential communication networks to the gang members, contacting them if there is any sign of police presence or chance of a raid. The community can also provide, or retain, information about what they have witnessed in the community and as such can aid the gang to be aware of broader community circumstances.

In every gang studied Jankowski (1991) observed the gang members wanted to be viewed by residents as being helpful and responsive. The gangs were often found to have little patriotism towards the United States or the nation in general, but had a huge sense of loyalty and association with their local community, wanting to be

seen in a positive light by local residents. Finally Jankowski (1991) found that the gang members clearly understood their status in relation to their community and noted that it was the community who granted that status, thus pragmatically “...the best way to attain this status is to be helpful to the community” (Jankowski, 1991, p. 200).

After acknowledging that both the community and the gang gain from having a working relationship Jankowski (1991) notes, “...in the process of realizing both functional and psychological interests, a bonding occurs between the gang and the community that builds a social adhesive that often takes a significant amount of time to completely dissolve” (p. 201).

The Breakdown of the Working Contract

Jankowski (1991) finds that the working relationship is built upon reciprocity and is only broken when the gang undermine the contract. Even if the community undermines the contract first, it is the gang that needs the community more. “Since the gang needs the community more than the community needs the gang, without the community support the gang will wither away” (Jankowski, 1991, p. 211).

If the gang members were involved in undermining the agreement then the community may remove protective cover and take away the ‘safe haven.’ Subsequently, the community may begin to provide the police with information, and there is the danger that the community could be increasingly open and vocal in their opposition to the gang. This could occur if the gang no longer performs the tasks required by the community, or if the community members feel the gang is out of control, i.e. the leadership can no longer maintain authority over the rest of the gang. However, outsiders to these communities, who do not stand to gain from working with gangs, will rarely understand this relationship (Jankowski, 1991).

There is an opportunistic element as well. Community organisations, Jankowski (1991) finds, are aware that having the co-operation of the gang members in some

of their programs is important for them to gain funding. Similarly some law enforcement agencies know that they must attract gang members onto their anti-gang programmes to ensure funding. The media use gangs to sell papers and stories. Even government officials were found to find it helpful to have a working relationship with gang members in order to appear to be doing a good job in their constituency area. The one institution not mentioned by Jankowski (1991) is academia. Arguably academics can similarly build careers on researching gangs and their culture.

In conclusion Jankowski (1991) finds a highly structured gang which has concrete agreements with the local community.

[T]he gang establishes an understood social contract with the community. If it is successful in meeting its obligations under this contract, the community provides it with certain services [*both implicitly and explicitly*] that ensure its ability to exist and carry out its own business operations (Jankowski, 1991, p. 211).

This is an important conclusion with regard to the subject of this thesis and the concept of the social contract resonates with the concept of agreement, in that it potentially could be implicit or explicit.

Social Control Framework

Zatz and Portillos (2000) researching in Phoenix conducted thirty three semi-structured interviews with self-identified current or past gang members and a further twenty interviews with community members, including a priest, neighbourhood activists, a social worker and a police representative. The neighbourhood, though extremely deprived, was surrounded by a wider society that was reaping the benefits of a huge economic boom.

Theoretically the researchers draw on the work of Bursik and Grasmick (1993) who use a social control framework to categorise community based social control

into three levels - private, parochial, and public. The private level of social control relates to the relations between family and close friends, whilst the parochial relates to churches, schools, community groups, local business and finally, the public relates to those forms of social control that are external to the community, e.g. police.

Zatz and Portillos (2000) argue gang activity is most likely to emerge “in areas in which networks of parochial and public control cannot effectively provide services to the neighborhood” (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993, p. 141).

Hagedorn (1991) also uses a social control framework and notes the importance of strengthening neighbourhood social institutions. “This militarization of our neighborhoods is inevitable unless community residents and public officials can be persuaded that alternative policies are plausible and can be effective” (p. 533). It is not working people, Hagedorn (1991) suggests, that categorise underclass neighbourhoods but rather the lack of effective social control within these neighbourhoods. He concludes, “The research in Milwaukee is consistent with the basic tenet of social disorganization theory, that the lack of effective institutions is related to crime and delinquency” (Hagedorn, 1991, p. 538).

Similarly Curry and Spergel (1988) find, when analysing community level data on two areas in Chicago, that gang homicide rates are very distinct from delinquency rates and that they occur in different communities. Gang homicide links more to traditional social disorganisation theory, whereas delinquency rates link more to areas with high levels of poverty. They see social disorganization as a weakening of social control that disrupts a stable social and cultural life.

Zatz and Portillos (2000) found community views on gangs were extremely diverse with some seeing them as, “...social parasites that must be routed from the neighborhoods” (p. 380), to seeing them as a normal part of adolescent life. However, nineteen out of the twenty adults interviewed criticised biased media reporting on their area and particularly highlighted the exaggeration of gang violence. Many residents noted that much of the violence actually happened

outside the boundaries of their area despite being reported as occurring within their community (Zatz & Portillos, 2000).

There was also a contradiction in how the role of the gangs was viewed. Many of the young people interviewed saw themselves as protectors of the community. In contrast they saw the police as external and abusive towards the community. Although much of this protection may have simply been preventing other gangs from entering the neighbourhood they find, "...the youths are adamant that protection of the community is still one of their primary responsibilities. In this sense, they are an integral component of parochial social control" (Zatz & Portillos, 2000, p. 382).

Despite gang members seeing themselves as protectors, the residents commented that they were now in more danger of getting attacked as a part of a drive by shooting than was the experience in past generations. Some local residents viewed the gang in a negative light and blamed them as being the main reason for lack of business and investment in the community (Zatz & Portillos, 2000).

The police were one of the main visible forms of public control and perceptions of them were as varied as views on the gangs. A substantial portion of community members were willing to work with local police to remove gangs and crime, whilst others felt the police and other authorities were unable or unwilling to protect them (Zatz & Portillos, 2000).

Zatz and Portillos (2000) find that if adults were members of families who belonged to multigenerational gangs then they seemed to be more accepting of their children's involvement in gangs. The contrast was summarised by Zatz and Portillos (2000):

Thus, for some adult men in the community, gangs are perfectly normal, acceptable parts of life. They take pride in their children following in their footsteps. Other adult men abhor today's gangs. Key factors accounting for these differences of opinion include the extent to which the men hold

traditional Mexican values, the length of time they have spent in the United States, and educational achievements (p. 385).

Similarly they find that men were more unlikely than some women to reach out to parochial support structures such as priests, schools or community organisations.

Puntenney (1997) interviewed mothers in an inner-city urban housing development to get their views on gang violence and its impact on their lives. Many of the young mothers thought gang violence may be considered acceptable in young adolescents, but once they got older it was no longer appropriate. Similarly older women reported that though they may have put up with their sons' gang involvement in the past, they did not accept the current level of violence.

Like Suttles (1968), Puntenney (1997) finds that gang activity in her researched community was visible to everyone, not hidden nor secretive. General violence was witnessed regularly with the researcher herself witnessing two gunfire incidences and heard of others whilst conducting interviews.

Many of the women spoke about teaching their children safety strategies and that their fear of violence, and concern for the safety of their children, meant that they would not let their children leave the house unattended. Those mothers who didn't think their children's safety was a serious issue also often spoke about close personal relationship to a member of the gang. This highlights the power relation between the gang and mothers in this community. Those who had close relations with gang members felt their children were safe but those who did not felt the need to keep their children indoors or to watch them constantly (Puntenney, 1997). Knowledge of a gang member meant residents assumed they would protect the children in the neighbourhood, whereas if a close relationship with a gang member did not exist then the same level of trust was not apparent.

Views of Youths in the Community

As mentioned above the young people who identified with gangs saw themselves as protectors of their neighbourhoods. The young people identified strongly with

their local neighbourhood and saw themselves as an integral part of the area. Although some young people took pride in helping older residents, most acknowledged that they did not contribute much to their neighbourhood except for enforced community service which was legally stipulated as part of a criminal conviction (Zatz and Portillos, 2000). However this limited institutionalised relationship could be at odds with the more informal relationship with community members.

Zatz and Portillos (2000) find that many gang names were taken from the local barrio name and the youths were predominantly, if not exclusively, from that area and needed to be of Mexican origin to become a member of the gang. If they were from the area some young people could be virtually born into the gang but in order to be taken as a serious member they must have endured a serious beating from the other members to prove their allegiance. Thus for some young people joining the gang was not an option but a duty, a direct consequence of being born in a particular area. This contradicts the functional organisational descriptors and rational choice paradigm with regard to the explanation for joining a gang as emphasised so clearly by Jankowski (1991). They (Zatz and Portillos, 2000) also find that while many young people wanted mainstream jobs they were aware that their opportunities were limited due to the constraints of poverty, discrimination, stereotyping and lack of education.

Fagan (1996) also focuses on social control suggesting that social controls and social organisations within a community are formed due to individuals interacting with the structural features of the community. Social control is seen by Fagan (1996) as a normative process and the ethics of social interaction regulates everyday social life and encourages the community to take action in relation to any problems that may arise. This is seen as being limited by political and economic decisions made outside of the community, where

...the social organization of the neighborhoods is shaped by social and economic interactions of political decisions with residents' skills, family configurations, and cultural and lifestyle preferences. Gang formation in neighborhoods reflects disadvantages in these choices: social organizations

of adolescents that reflect constrained choices and weak social controls (Fagan, 1996, p. 56).

Fagan (1996) notes that if social investment is limited within a given area then the neighbourhood will become destabilized and there is a risk of gang formation. “Gangs can be seen as an adaptive social organization of adolescents that form in response to disadvantages in the political economy of communities” (Fagan, 1996, p. 56). This fails to acknowledge why gangs may continue to exist in the event of a neighbourhood becoming more stabilised.

He suggests (Fagan, 1996) that when an area’s manufacturing base is in decline there are less jobs for young men, thus many of the unskilled workers turn to drug selling as providing a viable alternate economic income. This results in an ongoing process of gang involvement and drug selling, where the roles of “old heads” (Anderson, 1990) become redundant and new “old heads” become the prominent role models. As drug selling expands in areas of few labour opportunities the process becomes normalised and even institutionalised within communities (Fagan, 1996). As these intergenerational relationships change and shift, the informal control and socialisation of young people is affected. Fagan (1996) notes that as employment diminished and older residents became more passive many traditional forms of informal social control were weakened resulting in youth groups forming into loosely structured gangs.

In earlier eras, social interactions were organized and reinforced by economic structures. With the advent of drug economies in neighborhoods isolated from other economic and social influences, work and social interactions were now organized around these criminal activities, enforced and regulated increasingly by violence. Social controls in weakened neighborhoods were overwhelmed by the volatile drug markets or violent crimes such as robbery (Fagan, 1996, p. 64).

Fagan (1996) adopts a somewhat fatalistic approach to poor neighbourhoods, suggesting:

When social norms and values develop in a homogeneously poor context, void of material and social inducements toward conventional norms, the ties of the residents to the social contract are attenuated and deviance is a logical and perhaps inevitable adaption (p. 67).

Fagan (1996) also notes, “Social and economic isolation not only may complicate efforts to escape poverty but can foster beliefs that poverty is inevitable and another life is beyond the reach of most inner-city residents” (Fagan, 1996, p. 67). He goes on to suggest that in these areas there was likely to be little social interaction outside the neighbourhood, thus social comparisons are seen through a lens of poverty. The social norms may be influenced by illegal economies and the social status of gangs is seen as positive. This suggests communities are wholly excluded and marginalised rather than mutually excluded and included as Young (2007) suggests. In conclusion Fagan (1996) notes that so long as there are recurring social crises the gang will continue to exist. He blames the broader community context for gang violence, claiming that

...the higher rates of violence between and within gangs may reflect changing community contexts where gangs are active. In socially and economically isolated communities where the exits from gang life are truncated, social controls are weak and gangs may be poorly integrated into communities (Fagan, 1996, p. 45).

This views gangs as inherently negative, as entities that are formed due to social disorganisation but are maintained due to their ability to constantly change in relation to the changing community. They are seen as standing separate to their community and not as part of the community. Essentially he argues (Fagan, 1996) that if there were no social crises, and everyone had access to economic and social resources, then there would be no gangs. Although this may be one significant factor in the creation and consolidation of gangs, others (Davies, 2007a, 2007b; Pearson, 1983) would suggest that gangs, or similar groupings, have existed throughout history irrespective of access to economic or social resource. Other authors, (S Cohen, 1973; Hallsworth & Young, 2008; S Cohen, 1973) suggest gang existence is no more than a media, moral or societal panic

over relatively common occurrences within communities, and that the external framing is important with regard to the understanding of gangs.

Impact of Social Change

Hagedorn (1991), like Fagan (1996), analyses the change in gangs in the context of broader deindustrialisation. This piece of work was part of a two phase study. The first part, in 1986, interviewed 47 of the founding members of Milwaukee's 19 major gangs. Then in 1990 the patterns of drug abuse were analysed and 37 of the original participants were interviewed and their employment, imprisonment and drug use was tracked and recorded.

Hagedorn (1991) finds that gangs re-emerged in cities across the Midwest of United States when there were reduced economic prospects for African-Americans, Hispanics and other working class people. Although many studies discussed a 'maturing out' of gang membership this was not the case when economic prospects were limited. Similarly he discovered that limited access to employment had a direct correlation with illegal drug sales, suggesting that those young people who can not access legal employment may turn to illegal means to gain economic income. In contrast to Thrasher (1927), who saw that it was a minority of gang members who would remain in criminal activities past a certain age, Hagedorn (1991) discovers that in times of limited access to employment it is actually the minority of gang members who will not turn to illegal activities, e.g. drug sales.

Anderson (1990) similarly blames socio-economic change and lack of employment as the reason why the relationship between 'old heads', the respectable, hard working family man, and young boys has broken down. Anderson argues that due to drugs and crime the old heads have lost "prestige and authority" (Anderson, 1990, p. 3). He also suggests the female old heads are negatively impacted by the changing environment.

Serving as important exterior role models, these women repeatedly and insistently told attentive boys and girls “what was good for them,” at times physically disciplining them. The few such women who remain active in the community are overwhelmed by a virtual proliferation of “street kids” – children almost totally without parental supervision, left to their own devices – and they lament the decline of the local community (Anderson, 1990, p. 4).

Concurrent with the findings of Anderson (1990), who discusses the role of the new ‘old heads’ in the community – (these may be older gang members who gained their reputation through hustling, drugs and sexual promiscuity), Hagedorn (1991) finds that many older gang members in his study also gained “...street reputation employed in the fast life of drug dealing are modelling dangerous career paths for neighbourhood youth” (Hagedorn, 1991, p.532).

American Literature Conclusions

The scope of American literature has raised a number of key questions which specifically relate to the thesis question - What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities?

The American literature highlights the structural element of gangs, with them generally portrayed as localised structured entities, which actively recruit new members and have a clear position within disadvantaged communities. Gangs were found to form in areas with multiple deprivations, in areas with increased levels of immigration and/or in areas of deindustrialisation (Fagan, 1996; Hagedorn, 1991 and Thrasher, 1927). In all these communities there was a level of engagement between the youth gang and the local community. Jankowski (1991, 2003) found that there are rational, functional reasons for the gang and the community to engage in a working contract with each other. The impacts and reasons for this contract ever diminishing depends on the community relations, but essentially the gang will lose out more than the community if it ceases to exist.

The work carried out by Decker and Van Winkle (1996) provided a framework based on threat, and they found that deviance was normalised among urban youth. It is necessary to ascertain if the same is applicable to this research and further, to question where the normalisation stems from and if the broader community have a role in this normalisation process. Horowitz (1987) suggests that in her research the community were aware and tolerated levels of violence that many outsiders would condemn. In contrast though, for Hagedorn (1991), some community members, who he labels 'respectables', were experiencing hostile relations with the gang members, thus underlying possible ambiguities in such relationships, and in any related agreements.

These studies provide insight into the varying relations between gangs and their broader communities. Interestingly, they seldom agree on whether this relationship is positive, negative or neutral. Nevertheless, they raise a number of key areas which will be explored throughout this research including the normalisation of violence, whether the community tolerates gang behaviour or if relations are hostile and negative.

While clearly there is a wealth of literature on youth gangs and their agreement with their local communities based in the United States, in contrast British literature has historically not focussed specifically on 'gang' studies but, as mentioned in the definitional chapter, has often focussed upon youth subcultures. Nevertheless, the British body of gang research is growing and this will be discussed below.

Recent British and European Studies

Prior to 2004 the consensus was that the UK gangs could not be compared to the gangs of the United States (FitzGerald, 2008). FitzGerald (2008) suggests the British gang was often considered as an adult criminal gang found in East London or Glasgow. However, this distinction between American and British studies has been shifting over a number of years and is now more nuanced.

Historical Glaswegian Literature

Gangs have been synonymous with the city of Glasgow, with a wealth of 'real life crime' novels discussing gang feuds, the history of gangs within the city and individual gangsters. Books such as *Gangland Glasgow* (Jeffrey, 2002) *Tongs Ya Bas: the explosive history of Glasgow's street gangs* (MacCallum, 1994), *Glasgow's Hard Men: True Crime from the Files of the Herald, Evening Times and Sunday Herald* (Jeffrey, 2006), *Murder Capital* (R. McKay, 2006), a number by Paul Ferris (Ferris & McKay, 2001, 2006, 2007), works on Arthur Thompson (McKay, 2004) and Tam McGraw (Leslie, 2007) have contributed to a Glaswegian narrative about gangs. There have also been books released by police such as *Real Hard Cases: True Crime from the Streets* (Brown & Jeffrey, 2006). The list of books written about Glasgow gangs is seemingly endless; many give detailed descriptions of high levels of violence, stories of double-crossings, conspiracies and dirty dealings. However, much of this literature focuses on organised adult criminal gangs and while having an impact on the perceptions of gangs both within and outside the city; they are a different phenomenon than the youth street-based gangs which are being discussed within this study. These publications are thus acknowledged as contributing to the 'gang story' but are not analysed in detail.

Davies (2007a), as an historian, uses newspapers, court documentation and oral histories to analyse the role of Glasgow gangs in the 1920s and 30s. In the East side of the city gang violence was often sectarian whereas in the South it tended to be more territorial. The majority of gang members were aged between 17 and 21, although with increasing unemployment many older men, into their 30s, played a more significant role in the gang. Davies (2000) finds gang violence was a common occurrence in the 1920s and 30s with gang members striving for better status and reputation by getting involved in street fights. He suggests the concern about Glasgow's violent street gangs in the 20s and 30s was not new citing a similar "...localized moral panic..." (2007b, p. 515) in 1906 and again in 1916.

Patrick (1973), a high school teacher, carried out a covert piece of research with a juvenile gang in the Maryhill area of Glasgow in the 1970s. After conducting 120

hours of field work he noted the existence of a structured, delinquent gang which he argued were unique and not present within other UK cities. He suggests that

...it is from this 'inter-locking network of inequalities' that the subculture of gangs in Glasgow has grown. This subculture shows in the starkest possible way how poverty, inferior education, the lack of even minimum opportunities, and a steadily deteriorating economic situation all combine to produce feelings of frustration, rage and powerlessness (Patrick, 1973, p. 170).

Although Patrick (1973) wanted the book to be read by the 'general reader' and felt the "...problem described is of more than academic importance" (p. 9) it provides an additional historical perspective on youth gangs rather than adult criminal gangs. The gang, like the South side gangs in the 1920s and 30s (Davies, 2007a), was primarily territorial and "It was the locality in which a boy lived, rather than his religion or race, which determined what gang he belonged to" (Patrick, 1973, p. 189). Patrick also discusses five main norms that were apparent within the Young Team - there was a 'no grassing' to the authorities assumption - a topic which is explored in greater detail within the evidence chapters within this thesis. Internal fights should be settled with 'square goes', with no weapons, although weapons should be available in case of conflict with outsiders. Girls should not be stabbed and waiting for someone in their 'close' was not acceptable. Finally, though violence was acceptable and should be carried out by gang members, theft or burglary was not acceptable, particularly if carried out in the gang's own neighbourhood. This alludes to a relationship with the broader community, where certain actions were not deemed acceptable if they negatively impact on the youth gang's neighbourhood.

The brief synopsis of historical research, as well as the acknowledgement of more populist literature, demonstrates that juvenile, or youth gangs are not a new phenomenon within Glasgow and that the narrative of gang culture has already been framed in the popular mind by the studies undertaken and published.

Similarly the work by Sheldon (1898), Davies (2000, 2007a, 2007b) and Pearson (1983) provides a brief, yet comprehensive, historical account of the broader gang phenomenon. It exemplifies the need when analysing what a gang is, and the subsequent agreements with the broader community, to explore the origins of certain knowledge, divisions or basis for social interactions. While this thesis is not an historical study, contextualising the social interactions being explored can provide insight into the current relationships and agreements prevalent within the two sites of study.

Contemporary Gang Studies in the U.K.

FitzGerald (2008) shows how the use of the term ‘gang’ has risen dramatically within the UK. A brief analysis of the Guardian newspaper indicates in 1997 the term was mentioned 3 times, then rose to 320 in 1999, to 765 times in 2007 and 783 times in 2008. This shows that the term itself is increasingly becoming part of the popular discourse which is promoted through increased usage in the media. Recent riots, in the summer of 2011, have re-ignited discussion around youth and gang behaviour.

Hallsworth and Young (2008) argue that since 2007 the British government has increasingly focused on the issues of ‘gangs.’ Individual academics have also begun to study gangs, moving away from the traditional focus on subcultures within the British context. Despite the increased focus on gangs and the use of the gang rhetoric, they argue, there is little evidence to suggest an increase in the ‘gang problem’ and

...far from helping to clarify the dangerous reality of violent street worlds’ ‘gang talk’, as we label this garrulous discourse, runs the risk of misrepresenting what it claims to represent, the reality of violent street worlds (Hallsworth & Young, 2008, p. 177).

Aldridge et al. (2007) have carried out one of the most comprehensive, contemporary studies on gangs in the U.K. The piece of research was conducted

over a period of twenty-six months, through participant observation and talking to gang members and their associates. They note a striking dichotomy between how people viewed gangs and what gangs actually were. Although academically they drew on the Eurogang definition, they discovered that the social use and looseness of the term muddied the waters of the investigation.

They held that differentiating between young people who were gang members and those who were former gang members was difficult as this process happened over time and was often not recognised by others. A lack of gang cultural identifiers and little difference between youth gangs and other youth networks, made it hard to distinguish members from ex-members. They state, "... we found gangs are very much like informal friendship networks whose boundaries vary according to who you ask in the network" (Aldridge, et al., 2007, p.17). This reiterates the possibility that the 'gang' is not a rigid, unchangeable entity but may be culturally dependent and contextually specific.

This research also discovered (Aldridge, et al., 2007) that gangs were not organised structures but were loose, messy, interlinked networks of young people. There was no one recognisable leader, rather the leadership was unstable, shifted or was shared. This, they found, contrasted with the current policy discourse which assumes one person is in control with the designated role of leader. Similarly there were no routine procedures to join the gang; 'joining' was little more than a shift in relationship with existing contacts.

Aldridge et al. (2007), similar to Puntteney (1997), discovered that family ties were extremely important and that many family members tried to prevent their children from getting involved in gang activities. Although many community members expressed a view that violence in their area should stop, they tended to blame the structures that forced the young people into that situation rather than demonising the young people themselves. The report also found that there were a number of grassroots organisations actively involved in attempting to tackle the issue of gangs. However despite this commitment, there were still tensions hampering progress between community groups and other external agencies. Overall they found that community ties were often strong but also problematic.

Stigmatisation of Young People and Their Views

In contrast Deuchar's (2008) work on Glaswegian gangs found that relations with the community are not always strong and the apparent decline in social and community values has led to the stigmatisation of young people: "[The]...lack of youth facilities and negative social perceptions of youth in their local community was reducing the youngsters' confidence in public spaces and opportunities for building reciprocal relationships with other community members" (Deuchar, 2009a, p. 10).

Deuchar (2009b) draws on the work of Patrick (1973), who argues that the lure of the gang may be due to "a rebellious independence against authority as a means of attaining masculinity" (Patrick, 1973, p. 170). Deuchar's (2009b) research focuses on neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation in terms of income, employment, skills and training, as well as analysing communities with large populations of asylum seekers and refugees. Through contact with voluntary youth organisations, schools and community regeneration agencies he carried out interviews with fifty young people throughout Glasgow.

Deuchar (2009a) finds that young people often had a negative view of their community although also saw being a gang member as a means of protecting their housing scheme. For some who had withdrawn from parental influence in the home, gang membership appeared to provide a type of surrogate family (Deuchar, 2009a). Deuchar (2009a) also established that the young people, although feeling confined to their own neighbourhood, would still only trust those from that area.

The young people felt stigmatised by the police and some complained of being constantly under surveillance. In contrast many young people provided positive feedback about the work being carried out by a youth facility established within one of the research areas. Klein, as cited by Decker and Van Winkle (1996), identified contradictory results: "...Klein [came] to the conclusion that gang intervention programs may have the latent consequence of contributing to the

attractiveness of gangs, thereby enhancing their solidarity and promoting more violence” (p. 10).

Mays (1956), nearly fifty years ago, recommended that facilities to provide these activities should be prioritised. However, he also notes that the lack of cohesive work from different services was having a negative impact on the communities, in addition to the fact that youth clubs were facing funding issues and accountability based on the number of attendees. This limited their potential to make a long term effective intervention with local young people, a phenomenon that is in danger of being repeated.

Deuchar’s work (2009a) gives a detailed insight into the views of young people who identify with gang membership. It provides current, up-to-date information on young people’s views of gang violence, territorialism and community relations. However it is also crucial to analyse studies that provide an insight into the community members’ views of youth gangs.

Community Relations

Lien’s (2005) work, based in Oslo, claims that there is a strong connection between youth gang members and the society at large:

They have a multitude of connections among the police and in the welfare system, including to youth workers, social workers, teachers, bureaucrats, and even politicians and journalists. They are not marginalized in a conventional way but rather are linked and connected to influential elites (p. 45).

Lien (2005) states that gang members have an ambivalent relationship with agents of the welfare state. On the one hand they fear the police and child protection officers whilst on the other know that these people can be important when they get in trouble. She concludes: “The problem is not that the gangs are disconnected

from the structures of power and fame; rather, it is that they are too well connected to specific parts of it” (Lien, 2005, p. 47).

Ilan (2007a) in his work with the ‘crew’, a group of young males from an urban area of Dublin, finds they were “... branded a nuisance by the organs of community leadership, yet there is tacit support for their activities by others in the community who purchase stolen goods from them” (p. 107). This point makes it clear that the community views of young people, or youth gangs, are neither unanimous nor uniform but can change depending on the visibility and impact on the residents’ day-to-day lives. Ilan (2007a) recognises that the offending of ‘the crew’ took place in a complex socio-cultural environment, where some community workers suggested the gang were ‘scapegoated’ for minor offences when others in the area commit more serious offences. Nevertheless he also notes that the actions of the gang are often in public and thus contrasts with the “...newly acquired mantle of respectability as well as the quality of life of residents...” (Ilan, 2007a, p. 107).

Ilan (2007a) interestingly finds that these young men have little connection to their area; rather it is just a place to meet and provides a sense of identity. The gang also offers them a place of solidarity and security which they often lack in other parts of their lives.

John Pitts (2007) worked in Waltham Forest, where he conducted two surveys and fifty-four interviews with youth gangs and those affected by gang activities. He finds people are affected by gang activity in differing ways:

[W]e can say that gangs adversely affect the day-to-day lives of around 4% of the children and young people in the borough in the 10-29 age group. But these young people also have parents and siblings who are affected by their predicament. We estimate their number to be around 6,000. Thus, in the region of 8,800 people in Waltham Forest (approximately 4% of the total population) would appear to be adversely affected by youth gangs. This calculation does not include the professionals directly and indirectly involved with and affected by gangs (Pitts, 2007, p. 74).

Working in Lambeth in London, Pitts (2008) saw an increase in youth gangs in deprived areas. Pitts (2008) sees the current problem with gangs through a frame of increased drug trade in Britain. He argues that in certain deprived areas in Britain young people are pressurised by their neighbourhood gang and their rivals to become a gang member.

Territoriality/ Division of Society

Much of the literature surrounding youth gangs in the UK points to a distinct territorial and localised element to youth gang affiliation. Wallace and Coburn's (2002) study of territoriality in Glasgow identifies some positive aspects to localised identification and knowledge. Young people know everyone within their community and thus have trusted community networks, or as Putnam (2000; 2003) would term, 'bonding social capital'. Many young people may feel safer as a result of this knowledge and hanging around in a group of their peers can increase their sense of security.

However contrasting the positive aspects reported by Wallace and Coburn (2002), Kintrea, Bannister, Pickering, Reid and Suzuki (Oct 2008), in their study across six areas within England and Scotland, including Bradford, Bristol, Glasgow, Peterborough, Sunderland and Tower Hamlets find that although young people have positive reasons for becoming involved in territorial behaviour, such as developing their friendships and identity, on the whole the outcomes of territorial behaviour were negative. Territoriality was a part of the everyday lives of the young people they spoke to and found that it had deep historical roots that were often passed down through the generations. They also discovered that in some places low-level territorial behaviour could be the basis of a criminal gang's involvement in violent crime and distributing drugs.

Much of the territorial literature is based on young people rather than youth gangs per se, and Jankowski (2003) criticises viewing gangs through the lens of territoriality as it takes away the ability to differentiate between gangs and groups

of young people who happen to utilise a certain geographical area for illegal means, e.g. a college fraternity who take drugs and uses violence towards new recruits in a specified area is not a gang. Nevertheless as Aldridge et al (2007) note, this differentiation is problematic in the British context and if territoriality provides an additional lens to analyse the agreements then it is felt to be beneficial to this study.

Jankowski (2003) sees the problem of territorial based analysis as a linkage to the notion of gangs as packs, an animalistic element which can affect the cultural understandings of the reality of the lives of the young people who are gang members. He suggests that gangs act in a certain area, which can be termed a territory, because it is the only space in which the group feel safe and secure, as well as being powerful enough to control. This can be more about the market for control and security, than any psychological identification.

Valentine, Skelton and Chambers (1998) suggest that the “....space of the street is often the only autonomous space that young people are able to carve out for themselves” (p. 7). Similarly, McCulloch et al (2006) find members of different subcultures identified with particular territories and that young people expressed the view that being a part of the group gave them a sense of belonging, safety or security. It was also used as a way of identifying themselves against what they are not.

Waiton (2001) sees the street as one of the few places where young people can be free from adult supervision. Although this has always resulted in tensions between young people and some community members, it is now increasingly an issue that is referred to the police rather than being sorted out within the communities themselves. “Rather than policing criminals, the role of the police has developed into a baby-sitting service for the entire community, with non-criminal activities carried out by children being a focus of attention” (Waiton, 2001, p. 149).

He finds (Waiton, 2001, 2008) that interactions between young people cannot be replicated by adults in the home and there is a danger that if these normal peer

relations amongst young people are prevented it is likely to inhibit their sense of independence and make them increasingly reliant on adults. Equally if young people are told to fear all adults as they may be harmful, then they can grow up not knowing their neighbours, potentially creating a community of strangers. In his subsequent work Waiton (2008) reiterates the increasing reliance on the authorities and suggests by not taking personal responsibility for the actions of others, we are “reinforcing our own diminished subjectivity” (Waiton, 2008, p. 160). This, in turn, can undermine the impact of community agreement, emphasising reliance on external agencies.

British Literature Conclusions

Academically, politically and socially there has been increased attention on youth gangs within the UK. However Aldridge et al (2007) clearly found that there were stark differences between the generalised perception of youth gangs and their actual lived existence. There was recognition that the various usages of gang definitions had often muddied the conceptual waters. Three categories were used to differentiate between participants: gang members, gang associates and key informants. Nevertheless the researchers experienced difficulties in deciphering which young people still identified with the gang and those which changed their identification. Aldridge et al’s research also points to the necessity of questioning family and community relations because while they found that there were strong, tight bonds between these groups they also found that they could be problematic. Deuchar (2009b) also found that community connections were often problematic, with young people periodically finding it difficult to build positive reciprocal relations with community members. Ilan (2007b) identified findings similar to Zatz and Portillos (2000) when he found that community views of youth gangs were not consistent. Instead he found that the views depended on the group’s visibility and the impact they had on the residents’ day-to-day lives, thus underpinning a degree of ambiguity in the relationship.

Deuchar (2009b) highlights the necessity of analysing the relationship between the young people who identify with gang membership and the police. He found

that many youths in Glasgow felt stigmatised by the police and this gave rise to problematic relations. Lien (2005) felt that there was ambivalence with the police, but this was caused by the close connections that existed with them as opposed to feeling stigmatised or resistant to their powers. It is crucial to ascertain if the young people have a positive, negative or more complex set of agreements with the local police within both research sites to be studied.

Finally there is the important issue about territoriality in relation to young people and youth gangs. Though there is a difference of opinion as to the usefulness of such a lens, whether specific geographical identification plays a part in the definition of the youth gang, as has been hypothesised above, needs to be tested. Similarly in relation to the local agreements there needs to be an analysis as to where territorial behaviour stems from and if this has any part to play in the overall agreement forged between the youth gang and their local community.

Conclusion

As outlined above, there are a range of studies that analyse the relationship between youth gangs and their local communities. Despite acknowledgement that gangs within the United States are a somewhat different, the studies examined provide insights into the potential agreement(s) between youth gangs and their local communities within the researched areas. Much of the literature in Britain, Europe and Australasia focuses on the views of young people with regard to community relations; it consequently often does not offer an analysis of the community members' views of youth gang members. This research, while seeking to draw on the above literature, also aims to fill the void of current research by specifically focusing on youth gangs and their agreement(s) with their local communities, within a specific Glaswegian context.

From the literature on youth gangs a complex picture is emerging. Much of the American literature stems from a social disorganisation framework. Although the general theory can be criticised for its overly prescribed views on organisation within communities and as Cohen (1955) notes: "It is wholly negative. It accounts

for the presence of delinquency by the absence of effective constraints,” (p. 33) it can provide insights into the nature of agreement between youth gangs and their local communities.

Within many societies, particularly those who experience multi-levels of deprivation, there is a lack of access to protective structures from the broader civil society. Many of the studies report problematic relations with the police (Davies, 2000; Deuchar, 2009b; Jankowski, 1991; Patrick, 1973) thus potentially within these communities alternative means of protection and order emerge. This is based on protection of the identity of the community through violent reactions to outsiders. Both Decker and Van Winkle (1996) and Aldridge et al (2007) note the normalisation of violence among urban youth. Decker and Van Winkle (1996) demonstrate how the threat from outsiders, whether real or perceived, increases the solidarity, and thus the identity, of the gang. Moreover this response is often understood and tolerated by sections of the broader community (Horowitz, 1987, Foster, 1995).

The threat from outsiders, when the protection from civil society is not apparent results in the conflict behaviours becoming normalised (Decker and Van Winkle, 1966), ritualised (Wallace and Coburn, 2002) and symbolic (Aldridge et al, 2007). This perceived threat and lack of protection can result in the creation of folk devils and a moral panic. The moral panic can potentially work in two ways. It can either be directed at those ‘outsiders’ entering the community (Jankowski, 1991), or at the youth gang itself (Young, 2007).

The relationship between the youth gang and the local community is neither static nor fixed. It can be ambivalent (Jankowski, 1991), positively tolerated, negatively tolerated (Horowitz, 1987), tacitly supported (Ilan, 2007a), cause adversarial affects (Pitts, 2007) or a combination of all. Nevertheless, although the youth gang can at times be distanced from the broader community it is recognised as existing and provides a form of protection (Davies, 2007a). This protective role may be solely perceived by the youth gang (Zatz and Portillos, 2000), who feel by maintaining the gangs identity they are protecting the community. On the other hand it may be real and recognised by the community residents (Jankowski, 1991)

who find the gang can protect the community more effectively than external agents, such as the police force.

This study seeks to discover the differing agreement(s) prevalent between the youth gangs and their local communities, specifically within a Glaswegian context. Although there are similar studies available within an American context, there is little that is comparable throughout the UK and none within a Scottish context. Earlier studies, such as Patrick (1973), briefly alluded to relations with the neighbourhood and police, although this was not the focus of the main research. This study aims to bridge the divide between youth gang focussed research and neighbourhood studies, resulting in an analysis which comprehends and explains the complex interrelations between youth gangs and their local communities.

The literature demonstrates that there are entities that exist which can be classed as youth gangs. How these are defined, how they are labelled and how people interact, respond or relate to them is the central focus for this research. Prior to this analysis, and drawing on the literature and emerging findings there is a need to provide a theoretical framework to inform this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Prior to conducting field research there was no determining theoretical framework in place. However the notion of the agreement, for the research question was based on the epistemological framework of social constructionism, and a broad theoretical basis of symbolic interactionism. Early reading of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1986) and their work on social acts or joint action concretised the notion of the 'agreement'.

Their alignment does not occur through sheer mechanical juggling, as in the shaking of walnuts in a jar, or through unwittingly adaption, as in an ecological arrangement in a plant community. Instead, the participants fit their acts together, first, by identifying the social act in which they are about to engage and, second, by interpreting and defining each other's acts in forming the joint act (Blumer 1986 p. 70).

As the practical research progressed, and the theoretical readings became more varied, it became apparent that the agreement between youth gang members and their local community appeared to be related to a need for recognition; a need for an identity and a desire for security. This directed the theoretical framing of this research to the extensive works of Jock Young and encouraged exploration of the concepts of ontological insecurity, linked both to the young people and the community members being interviewed. This chapter is thus an examination of these broad concepts. It provides an overview of ontological insecurity and how this can be linked to a process of 'othering', resulting in affirmation of the self's identity. It also hypothesizes ways these concepts link to the notion of agreement, many of which are concretised through the empirical data presented in the evidence chapters, which are also informed by the conceptual analysis.

The chapter explores the historical origins of the notion of ontological insecurity and discusses how the concept can relate to groups, as well as to individuals. There is then a discussion about the process of ‘othering’ and how this, bred out of ontological insecurity and relative economic deprivation, may go some way to explain the agreement between the youth gang and their local community. The dialectic of inclusion and exclusion is also analysed with regard to how this can create a feeling of ontological insecurity and in certain circumstances can result in crime or deviancy. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how these theoretical notions may be drawn upon to offer insights into the thesis question – What is the agreement between a youth gang and their local community?

Ontological Insecurity

The concept of ontological insecurity was developed by R.D Laing (1960, 1961, 1990), a Scottish psychiatrist and academic who was born in an area similar to one of the research sites within this study. He discusses a split between the ‘disembodied mind’ and ‘de-animate’ body with particular reference to research with schizophrenic patients. In *The Divided Self* Laing (1960, 1990) contrasts an ontologically secure person, who despite the difficulties in life has a firm notion of their own and others reality and identity, to that of a person who is ontologically insecure.

Although Laing (1961) focuses on the psychology of the individual the premise of ontological insecurity has also been used in a societal, interactive sense. Ontological insecurity can happen if there is no clear identity. Identity formation, according to a wide tradition of social enquiry, is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Goffman, 1959; Jenkins, 2008). Giddens (1990, 1991) utilised the term further to explain the need for continuity of self-identity; without this human experience “...existential anxieties which, if they were allowed to concretise, might become a source of continuing emotional and behavioural anguish throughout life” (Giddens, 1990, p. 97).

Self and Other

Linking to the interactive order, Jenkins (2008) draws heavily on Mead (1934) and suggests that an individual's identity cannot just be an assertion from that individual, but rather must be validated by others. George Herbert Mead (1934) saw the human being as an actor who can make decisions through possessing 'self.' 'Self' provides the ability to interact with oneself, to interpret meanings and to interact within a world that has pre-existing meanings. The possession of 'self' enables humans to be reflexive, to note meaning and to allow reflection prior to action. This process of reflection and self-acknowledgment allows humans to define the world as opposed to passively respond to it. For Mead (1934) there are two stages in the development of 'self'. The first is the 'self' taking on the 'others' attitudes towards him. The second is the 'self' taking on and organising the attitudes of the 'generalised 'other'', the social grouping the 'self' is involved in. Both of these impacts upon the creation of 'self':

So the self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into the organized social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behaviour in which it and the others are all involved... (Mead, 1934, p. 158).

As opposed to viewing the individual and the collective as separate or one as superior to the other, the human world is seen as the arena where the two meet and meld together (Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins (2008) analyses the human world as being made up of three 'orders'. The first is the individual order - cognitive/embodied world, the second is the interaction order - relationships between individuals and the third is the institutional order - the pattern and organisation, the way things are done. These three orders are within the same space and are all inter-related so that any research on the human world will encompass or infer another order.

Therefore the individual, the 'I', must be understood for the broader human life to be meaningful. The self is socially constructed, as Mead (1934) explains, the 'I',

uniqueness, is different from the 'me' which is the internalising of the views of significant others. Mead (1934) argues that the view of the generalised other must be adopted to fully understand ourselves and that the self and mind are parts of the embodied individual.

For Jenkins (2008) while the presentation of self is crucial, there is limited control over how others interpret and receive this presentation. Jenkins (2008) also draws on Goffman (1959) who views people as pursuing goals and interests, thus seeking to be recognised or seen as something or somebody. Essentially then, a dislocation between the 'self' and the 'other' can cause a crisis of identity, or ontological insecurity. "The disembedding of the self from the secure tracks of family and work, the circumstances of uncertainty and multiple choice, the reflexivity of scepticism and anxiety meld together both material and ontological insecurities" (Young, 1999b, p. 96).

Late Modernity

Giddens (1990, 1991) and Young (2007) both contend that ontological insecurity is heightened in late modernity. They argue that this is a time where moral judgements and stereotyping are often common practice, where ontological insecurity is at its utmost and where many young people in particular struggle to find their place in the world. As will be discussed later, this uncertainty can lead to actions that have the potential to bestow feelings of power and control over personally defined space and provide a limited sense of ontological security. This view of late modernity is also held by a range of cultural criminologists. As Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2008) note: "...late modernity's defining trait: a world always in flux, awash in marginality and exclusion, but also in the ambiguous potential for creativity, transcendence, transgression, and recuperation" (p. 6).

Young (2007) argues that whilst the focus on identity is increasing, the bases of this identity are increasingly fragmented and dislocated within the broader society. Late modernity has a major impact on the creation of self-identity and the feeling of ontological insecurity.

Conversely Jenkins (2008) criticises many social theorists for being too quick to suggest that identity and difference is becoming more important in late modernity. He notes that studies of identity go back as far as the 17th Century when Locke (1988) wrote about identity and diversity. According to Jenkins (2008) much of the modern concern is on the changing economic and societal structures resulting in an uncertainty of identity. He also argues that changes in labour, ways of life and social progress, are not new phenomena but have occurred for humans throughout the ages. Although globalisation has made life more diverse, acknowledging this tells us little about the difference in diversity prior to globalisation as compared to now (Jenkins, 2008). Diversity in itself is not new and neither is the importance of self-identity a new phenomenon (Jenkins, 2008).

Jenkins (2008) does acknowledge that there is something distinctive about our current time, although arguably this was also true of one hundred years ago, as each period of time will be embedded within its own distinctive context. For this study there is an acknowledgement that people may feel ontological insecure but this is not to suggest that this is a previously unknown experience in other times or contexts. However even if the experience is one of 'normal human reality', there is still a need to examine the context or specific issues that have an impact on the individual or group.

In today's society young people are on the one hand included and engaged through many cultural and media based institutions and networks, whilst on the other they can be excluded from full citizenship (Sercombe, 2010), for example exclusion from employment opportunities, resulting in an enhanced need for security and certainty. Although history plays a role in the agreement between youth gangs and their local community, it is the current striving for self-identity and self-realisation in this research that is of primary importance.

Group Identity and Ontological Insecurity

This study analyses the impact of ontological insecurity and the effect this has on the surrounding community and the relations therein. Ontological insecurity can

be an individualistic position but it can also be felt by groups and can result in groups, as totalities, being 'othered'. Young (1999b) notes the combinatory impact of individualism as well as the plurality of social worlds when discussing ontological insecurity.

Such a situation breeds ontological insecurity, that is where self-identity is not embedded in our sense of biographical continuity, where the protective cocoon which filters out challenges and risks to our sense of certainty becomes weakened and where an absolute sense of one's normality becomes disorientated by the surrounding relativism of value. Individualism, with its emphasis on existential choice and self-creation, contributes significantly to such insecurity, while the pressing nature of a plurality of alternative social worlds, some the result of such incipient individuality, manifestly undermines any easy acceptance of unquestioned value (Young, 1999b, p. 14).

This pluralism is threefold (Young, 1999b), firstly, the diversification of lifestyles, secondly, the closer integration of society and thirdly as a consequence of the immigration of people from other societies (Young, 1999b, p.15). Kinnvall's (2004) discussion of globalisation and religious nationalism, notes:

The globalization of economics, politics, and human affairs has made individuals and groups more ontologically insecure and existentially uncertain. One main response to such insecurity is to seek reaffirmation of one's self identity by drawing closer to any collective that is perceived as being able to reduce insecurity and existential anxiety (p. 741).

This may be one reason for gang identification - the young people are drawing closer to the collective to gain protection and a sense of identity. However, even if this hypothesis for gang identity holds true, the crux of this thesis is to analyse the agreement between the youth gang and the community. Community members, as a group, may also feel ontologically insecure due to their changing environment and lack of continuity of identity. Part of the agreement may be that community members stereotype or 'essentialise' the gang members, or conversely

‘other’ people or groups from outside the community, to heighten their group identity and thus their community’s ontological security. Thus it is necessary to ascertain if community members potentially tacitly accept and/or agree to the existence of the gang if it maintains their community’s self-identity as distinct from people considered not part of the local community, be this based on racial or territorial lines. This process of differentiation of others in order to create similarity between members of a group is seen as a process of ‘othering’.

‘Othering’- Similarity and Difference

For Laing (1961): “All ‘identities’ require an other: some other in and through a relationship with whom self-identity is actualized. The other by his or her actions may impose on self an unwanted identity” (p. 82).

The young people who identify with a gang cannot solely focus on difference but rather this ‘othering’ (Young, 2007) reinforces the sameness and similarity within the group.

We should also recognise that invocations of similarity are intimately entangled with the conjuring up of difference. One of the things that people have in common in any groups is precisely the recognition of other groups or categories with whom they differ (Jenkins, 2008, p. 23).

What constitutes the gang, and their sameness, is partly their opposition to difference. McCulloch, Stewart and Lovegreen (2006), when analysing subcultures in Newcastle and Edinburgh, find that a “...common way of identifying with a group was to define themselves against what they were not” (p. 548).

Collectives and groups are not just abstractions but rather:

Group identity is the product of *collective internal definition*. In our relationships with significant others we draw upon identifications of

similarity and difference, and, in the process, generate group identities. At the same time, our self-conscious group memberships signify others and create relationships with them (Jenkins, 2008, p. 105).

Thus, if a group is constituted by individuals collectively creating internal definition, to categorise others is done through collective external definition. As a group, or group members, differentiates itself from others they are creating an external definition of the 'others'. The fact that group members create intersubjectivity with others constitutes it in reality.

As has been noted with regard to individuals, if the group members are the only recognisers of the group's existence then this delivers only a limited impact. However, if categorisation by others occurs then the group's status is enhanced. This can prove difficult if the group members themselves are unaware that they are being categorised by others. Thus part of the agreement may be that the group, or the youth gang, have self-constituted themselves as such and when the community members, the police and/or other youth external to the gang, categorise them as a gang this strengthens their identity.

This may be underpinned by the fact that through the recognition of the gang as a gang; by the community members, police or other external youth, they are validating their existence and ascribing them with more status, power and identity within the community. Equally however, it must be investigated whether the agreement between the youth gang members and their local community is based on a process of solidarity in contrast to the external outsiders, or if the community members themselves are viewed as 'others' creating a breakdown in relations.

Jenkins (2008) differentiates between groups and categories; members of a group are aware of other members, they most probably have a relationship or certainly recognise each other as members. Members of a category however may not know each other and have simply been categorised together by others. It is only when the relationships have been made or recognition of membership status has occurred, that group identification begins to happen. Groups do not exist independently of other groups, as the research question of this study implies. This

means that group identification and categorisation is not necessarily sequential but groups can result from categorisation or vice versa.

For the group to exist they must share something - this is why one of the main concerns of this thesis is to pose the question - what is a gang? If it is a tangible entity then its members must have something in common or share a recognised connection. Consequently, the group will be categorised by others, or categorise others, as different to ascertain and/or compound their similarity.

Individuals differ from each other in their characteristic portfolios of collective identities, and the similarities of members of a collectivity typically presuppose their difference from the members of other collectives. The interplay of similarity and difference is the logic of *all* identification, whether 'individual' or 'collective' (Jenkins, 2008, p. 73).

Young (2007) argues that without this justice of recognition (categorisation), one can become ontologically insecure or feel the impact of misrecognition. He further suggests there is also a need for distributive justice, economic reward, as without this there is relative deprivation. Failure of either of these causes an individual and/or a group to become isolated and resentful.

Process of 'Othering'

Laing (1961) notes that people can engage in security operations or sincerity operations: "...the need of some to preserve their sincerity can undermine the security of others" (p. 52), essentially a process of 'othering'. Young (1999b) analyses this further and acknowledges the implications and actions on both individuals and groups. Young (1999b) argues:

Because of ontological insecurity there are repeated attempts to create a secure base, that is, to reassert one's values as moral absolutes, to declare other groups as lacking value, to draw distinct lines of virtue and vice, to be rigid rather than flexible in one's judgements, to be punitive and excluding rather than permeable and assimilative (p. 15).

In order to create a 'secure base' often a process of 'othering' ensues, where self-identity is classified in opposition to what the individual, the family or the broader community are seen as. Simone De Beauvoir for example in her work on women notes "...that no group ever sets itself up as One without at once setting up the Other over against itself" (De Beauvoir, 1953, p. 17). A process of self-affirmation becomes apparent, where for example, young gang members feel the need to outwardly display their security and identity, be that in a symbolic manner, in harmful or negative behaviours towards others or engagement in personal risk behaviours, to regain an element of control and ontological security.

In order to establish self-security Young (2007) suggests barriers are created, most notably the process of 'othering' on the basis of cultural essentialism. This allows the individual, the self, to become more secure and projected as superior to those who have been 'othered', be that based on race, class, territory or gender. Young draws on De Beauvoir (1953) when she discusses the process of creating the other: "...Jews are 'different' for the anti-Semite, Negroes are 'inferior' for American racists, aborigines are 'natives' for colonists, proletarians are the 'lower class' for the privileged" (p. 17). Young (2007) also argues,

...insecurities in economic position and status, coupled with feelings of deprivation in both these spheres, engender widespread feelings of resentment both in those looking up the class structure and those peering down. Such insecurities can be experienced as a sense of vertigo and, outside of the charmed sphere of the contented minority, such uncertainties are tinged with anger and dislike (p. 12).

This creates fertile conditions for the process of multiple 'othering'.

'Othering' of the 'Underclass'

Young (2007) asserts that the 'underclass', who are normally constructed as an 'Other', as being different, actually have a clear insight into the lives of the wealthy. The discourse of exclusion is used to construct moral barriers and

distinctions between people. Pitts and Matthews (2001) argue that because the rhetoric of social exclusion within contemporary politics is underpinned by the underclass thesis it has connotations that social exclusion is self-inflicted. Although the term is used in differing ways, from Murray's (1990) original negative portrayal of the 'underclass' to more modern usages as in MacDonald (1997), it is still a term that often implies personal blame. "The implicit suggestion in much of this literature is that if the marginalised could be properly incorporated into the mainstream of society the problem would be resolved" (Pitts & Matthews, 2001, p. 18).

For these reasons the term 'underclass' will not be used as a common descriptor within this study. Exclusion does often occur to community members within areas of deprivation and to people who experience high, or relative, levels of poverty, but this is coupled with punitive responses - "...just as the relative deprivation and ontological uncertainties of the poor can lead to crime, so perhaps more paradoxically the deprivation and insecurity of the more wealthy can lead to feelings of punitiveness" (Young, 2003, p. 401).

Young (1999b) suggests that the exclusion of members from society does not only impact upon those who are excluded but also those at the core. The 'hard-working citizens' target the poor collectively for their resentment of the seemingly chaotic dispersal of rewards (Young, 1999b). There is a process of 'othering' which takes hold, where blame and resentment is directed at the seemingly homogeneous group of poor. The targeting can occur against stereotyped groups of people, be that a whole community or a particular grouping of young people. Young (2003) argues that the narrowing of cultural differences encourages resentment to flow both ways. The key feature of resentment is the scapegoating and stereotyping of a particular group. They are seen as the ones who cause the problems who can be blamed for the "social ills." Importantly this stereotyping and blaming often does not relate to reality; the depiction of the problems they cause is often portrayed as considerably worse than the actual impact.

To sum up the process of 'othering', Young (2007) notes:

‘Othering’ is a strange process, for it has a triple structure: the self is defined by the other, the group who are ‘othered’ are liable to counter-other, to create a contrary fundamentalism, but more profoundly the self *itself* is hardened in a process of self-’othering’ (p. 198).

From a reflexive point of view, Young (2007) suggests that ‘othering’ not only happens in society but is practiced by the social scientist when researching and this insight was heeded as a warning in undertaking this research.

...[J]ust as the ontologically uncertain citizen attempts to assuage feelings of social vertigo and insecurity by the magic of ‘othering’, so positivist sociology and criminology attempts to achieve the scientific goal of objectivity by distancing from its subject, by creating a hiatus where social relationship is denied, by an act of scientific ‘othering’ (Young, 2007, p. 9).

Essentialism

One of the most immediate responses to ontological insecurity is essentialism. During the last third of the twentieth century there has been an increased focus on multiculturalism, with the recognition and acceptance of diversity, which at times resulted in a tension between the need for stability and the desire for change (Young, 1999b). Young details how multiculturalism was seen as a way of dealing with ontological insecurity. Moving from the inclusivist notion with its dominant discourse of specified norms and values, multiculturalism allowed for difference and toleration of difference. The approach provided each person, or group, an acknowledged position, where all cultures were seen as equal and each culture was accepted in terms of its own norms.

Problems arise when multicultural essentialism takes hold, where the differences between cultures are “...fixed and timeless...” (Young, 1999b, p. 103). It can unify people without questioning inequalities. Actions can also be seen as natural and thus acceptable. Essentialism also provides the opportunity to apply stereotypes to other groups. Groups can simply be classed as different from our

own, thus allowing stereotyping for their actions or nature, e.g. women love children because it is in their nature and culture to do so. Even more so, it allows one group to place blame upon another, e.g. the Roma in Glasgow become blamed for all social problems being faced within the broader society because they are 'othered' tautologically based on essentialist notions. As Young (1999b) states: "Cultural essentialism allows people to believe in their inherent superiority while being able to demonize the other, as essentially wicked, stupid or criminal" (p. 109).

The process of demonising others within society allows for a disproportionate allocation of societal problems to be blamed on 'them' as opposed to analysing the underlying root causes. Racial demonization is just one example, where a whole race gets blamed for certain actions as opposed to analysing the underlying issues of poverty, discrimination and social injustice. Instead of analysing the fact that certain individuals who happen to be within a specific ethnic grouping may be engaging in criminal behaviour, to a greater, or lesser, extent because they are in dire poverty; or that they may be generating more rubbish because they are living in slum housing with inadequate refuse collection, such groups can all too easily become a target for blame in the context of broader societal issues. "If they were not here there would be no problems" is often the expressed sentiment underlying demonization. The 'othering' of refugees, immigrants or people of a differing race, class or area, becomes a useful means of blaming social problems on a particular group. This approach is in stark contrast to seeing the group as being victims of the social problems, be that poor housing, crime or inadequate health care, which they lack the resources or capacity to deal with. In relation to the 'othering' of immigrants, Young (2007) explains how the essentialising of oneself is accompanied by the essentialising of the other to confirm one's own identity.

The simplest notion of what constitutes a demon, a folk devil, an enemy for any particular culture is that it is what they are not. It is the embodiment of all they stand against, a violation of their highest principles, ethics and values – it is, in short, constituted by negativity – it is the black and white of moral photography (Young, 2007, p. 141).

Furthermore essentialism aids the process of social exclusion and by excluding others reinforces the sameness or inclusion of the 'in-group' who see themselves as the norm.

It furnishes the targets, it provides the stereotypes, it allows the marshalling of aggression, it reaffirms the identity of the in-group – those with power and handy rhetoric – but we can go a little further than this, because social exclusion confirms and realizes essentialism (Young, 1999b, p. 117).

Young (1999b), drawing on the work of David Matza (1969), demonstrates the links between social exclusion and essentialism. Social exclusion threatens the identity of a group or individual, making them ontologically insecure and thus more willing to embrace the essentialised label placed upon them.

This disembeddedness results in an identity crisis which can cause people to become essentialist in approach in order to assert their own being and self. This essentialism takes three forms according to Young (2007). The first is to reaffirm or insist personal values and qualities, the second is the stereotyping of others as not having these values, thus creating prejudices and thirdly is where those who are 'othered' and essentialised harden their image of themselves as a protection against the experience of being excluded from society.

The process of 'othering' becomes a means of self-protection. Interestingly though it is often not the rich celebrities who are negatively 'othered', rather it is 'horizontal differences' (Young, 2007) that become emphasised. "Even the essentialising projections of the better off, the 'othering' of the poor becomes utilised by the poor to essentialise themselves" (Young, 2007, p. 52). Further, "...it is not simply that structures oppress the agents, but that the social agents themselves contribute in the pyrrhic fashion to their exclusion and oppression..." (Young, 2007, p. 53).

This process of horizontal divisions is crucial to this research; it is not solely wealthy to poor, nor poor to wealthy forms of 'othering', but within a group -

gang against gang, locality against locality to secure the individual's or group's ontology. This is not to suggest that the wealthy do not other the poor, but rather this can often result in self essentialisation and thus 'othering' of people along horizontal axes. The process of 'othering' becomes used against each other both within the included and within the excluded, though the outcome tends to be different. The process of 'othering' becomes self-reinforcing, where the assertion of oneself becomes essential. To combat exclusion a person may identify with an essential and valued quality (cultural or biological) which is associated with the individual (e.g. race, class, religion), while those who do not fit this mould are treated negatively, with stereotypes and prejudices being encouraged, and as a result, those who are 'othered', who are victims of the negative sentiments; harden themselves, often in a macho manner. Thus the process becomes cyclical in nature.

Crime

Relative deprivation along with increasing individualism can increase the level of crime and the conflictive nature of crime (Young, 2007). Similarly ontological insecurity coupled with economic precariousness can result in punitive responses and the scapegoating of certain groups. This not only results in less tolerance but also gives rise to certain consequences that can negatively impact on the participants within this study, such as the privatisation of public space. Laws which allow dispersal of two or more people who are within a public space are just one example of the increasingly punitive laws that are apparent within the city of research. Dispersal can be used if

[An] officer has reasonable grounds for believing that any members of the public have been alarmed or distressed as a result of the presence or behaviour of groups of 2 or more persons in public places in any locality in the officer's police area...(Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004: section 19 (1)).

Young (1999b) notes that in this changing society the enhanced perception of crime and more punitive laws walk hand in hand:

The obsessive violence of the macho street gang and the punitive obsession of the respectable citizen are similar not only in their nature but in their origin. Both stem from dislocations in the labour market: the one from a market which excludes participation as a worker but encourages voraciousness as a consumer, the other from a market which includes, but only in a precarious fashion (p.9).

In relation to the committing of crimes Young (2003) argues that "...the structural predicament of the ghetto poor is not simply a deficit of goods – as Merton would have had it- it is a state of humiliation" (p. 408).

Merton (1957, 1967, 1968) viewed crime as an alternative path to the American dream, where crime was a substitute to the world of work. As against this, Young (2003) argues that although crime may be a substitute for work, it is not like work, it is not seen as a direct alternative. He also criticised the rational choice theoretical explanation of crime, where the explanation of crime is motivated by mundane reasons, i.e. taking opportunities when there is lack of control or illegal relief. Cultural criminologists in contrast explain the excitement of crime, where the motivation is a revolt against the mundane, a buzz, and an adrenaline rush. Quoting Hayward, Young (2003) writes, "...put simply, many forms of crime frequently perpetuated within urban areas should be seen for exactly what they are, an attempt to achieve a semblance of control within ontologically insecure worlds" (p.391).

The anger and resentment often formed from a sense of economic deprivation and ontological insecurity can lead to a need for moments of pleasure and release. Thus Young (2007) and other cultural criminologists (Ferrell, 2004; Ferrell, et al., 2008; Hayward & Young, 2004; Kane, 2004; Presdee, 2004) suggest that

...in a world where pleasure is increasingly commodified and control of one's life extremely limited: going to the edge and grasping control out of

chaos can be both reassuring and immensely pleasurable. Ontological certainty is seized from a situation of uncertainty and threat to being (Young, 2007, p. 57).

In a similar vein Presdee (2004) suggests that crime can become a therapeutic action. He explains:

The process of oppression through poverty is not a passive one. Cultures of 'resistance' erupt, become visible and in turn are viewed as disorderly behaviour and criminal. It may involve acquiring illegal wealth; being violent; achieving status, excitement, respect. It may simply mean 'doing wrong', 'transgressing', 'pushing the boundaries', 'edge work'. As long as the end product is the desired 'feeling' that brings meaning to existence-feelings as meaning (Presdee, 2004, p. 281).

Nevertheless, the marriage of ontological insecurity and relative deprivation does not necessarily lead to crime in all cases but can help explain the potential for certain risk behaviours, or actions, that are deemed by others as being criminal or anti-social. It is those very people who are systematically included and excluded from institutions and alternative opportunities in society who may turn to particular actions that provide meaning and identity creation.

Inclusion/Exclusion Leading to Ontological Insecurity

Young (2007) draws on Merton (1957, 1967) to explain how society simultaneously includes and excludes individuals and groups. He calls this the 'bulimic society' (Young, 1999a, 1999b, 2007) suggesting that

...it is one where both inclusion and exclusion occur concurrently – *a bulimic society* where massive cultural inclusion is accompanied by systematic structural exclusion. It is a society which has both strong centrifugal and centripetal currents: it absorbs and rejects (Young, 2007, p. 32).

Gerry Mooney and Mike Danson (1997) when studying Glasgow found that areas of deprivation were not as clear cut as often argued. Within the stigmatised Glaswegian estates there were marked differentiation in terms of unemployment, poverty and deprivation. People living in these areas were not a singular homogenous group filled with hopelessness and despair; rather:

The dual city where the poor are morally segregated from the majority and are held physically apart by barriers is a myth. The borderlines are regularly crossed, the underclass exists on both sides anyway, but those who are clustered in the poorer parts of town regularly work across the tracks to keep the well-off families functioning (Young, 2003, p. 396).

This is not to suggest that physical boundaries do not occur or that there is no cultural exclusion, but rather exaggerating these boundaries ignores the ways in which people can be simultaneously included, such as through employment or media based institutions.

This '*bulimic society*' is used to explain the levels of discontentment at the 'bottom' of the social structure (Young, 1999a). The poor are not just structurally disadvantaged because of a lack of goods but there is a humiliation associated with being impoverished. The '*bulimic society*' involves incorporation of cultural goals and rejection from structural attainment. Mertonian (1957) analysis would suggest that being included in cultural goals but excluded from economic attainment i.e. access to material goods, would result in anomie and the potential of deviant behaviour. "...Aberrant behaviour may be regarded sociologically as a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realizing these aspirations" (Merton, 1957, p. 134).

For Young (2007) this is not a comprehensive reason for criminal activity, as noted above, but rather this combination of acceptance and rejection results in a strong feeling of resentment. For those experiencing economic deprivation there is a fusing of misrecognition, class and status resulting in resentment and resistance. "Poverty is a stigma, because all of the institutions of society say so. The market flaunts its goods but denies you access to all but the most

tawdry...This is where self blame and social stigma come together” (Young, 2007, p.76-77).

Inclusion on one level and exclusion on the other, arguably makes people feel even further excluded and more insecure.

The ghettos of the poor and the rich, are not islands of isolation: they are porous vessels in which osmosis of a very calibrated kind occurs... The paradox, then, is that the gated community needs to be permeable in its barriers, but that the osmosis is one-sided. For the rich do not know or care to enter ghettos of the poor (Young, 2007, p. 31).

To hypothesize about young people then, there is the possible inclusion in media institutions, social networking sites or consumer culture, but systematic exclusion from the workplace, from certain territories and from being viewed as a full citizen. This is a contradiction which may heighten feelings of resentment and insecurity of identity.

Denied access to full status of citizenship – a sense of indignity for many rubbed into them daily by their treatment on the streets by the police, or of being unable to take up the role of husband and breadwinner portrayed daily against the backdrop of comfortable homes that make up the sets of so many television dramas, feared because of stereotypes and prejudice – lower class youth have the most extraordinary crisis of identity and self-worth. It is not relative deprivation then that they confront but ontological crisis (Young, 2007, p. 94).

Nevertheless, one should not be seen as worse than the other, but the experience of both relative deprivation and ontological insecurity may result in many young people, not necessarily turning to crime, but certainly striving for a comprehensive identity.

Conclusion

This theoretical framework provides broad thematic concepts that centre on the core concept of ontological insecurity. Ontological insecurity may be viewed as a concept which focuses on the psychology of individuals (R.D Laing, 1961), and also groups of people who feel a lack of identity, of recognition or of access to established economic and social structures. Ontological insecurity can come about as a result of a society that simultaneously systematically includes and excludes people. Without the justice of recognition, or distributive justice, Young (2007) argues there can be a feeling of ontological insecurity. This insecurity can result in isolation, resentment and anger. Many of the young people who identify with gang membership may feel ontologically insecure, resulting in them striving for a more secure base which comes from grouping together against an objectified or essentialised 'other', whether this is based on religious, territorial or racial lines.

The youth gang are being 'othered' by broader society and in turn they 'other' people outside their community to affirm their own identity. While the young people involved in gang activity 'other' they are systematically being 'othered' by the broader society in which they live and engage with. For example the community members or the police within their community may have a negative view of the youth gang and thus other them and exclude them from being viewed as accepted citizens.

This theoretical lens can also provide explanation as to why young people may turn to crime or fight with other young people. The resentment felt from lacking class status, and from being misrecognised and economically deprived, can result in people needing to become involved in acts that help to provide a degree of ontological certainty. As noted above, the feeling of adrenaline, the 'buzz' gained from being involved in certain high risk activities, can provide a sense of power and control over one's life, no matter how short term in nature. If a young person's life seems to be outside their personal control, if they don't feel recognised or valued, then it seems plausible that they may engage in activities that enforce recognition, even if that recognition is negative. Similarly, some

young gang members may engage in risk behaviour that gives them a personal feeling of choice, be that substance misuse or territorial combat with peers. Equally, if the young people are excluded from the workplace, thus lacking the ability to make money (whether due to the current economic recession, lack of education, skills or experience), then some may turn to crime. This may, of course, be cyclical; if a young person has been involved in crime or deviancy then this will undoubtedly have an impact upon their chances to be included within economic structures.

However, although this framing does provide some explanation as to why some young people act in a certain manner and engage in particular activities, it does not explain the agreement between the young people who identify with gang membership and their local communities. Arguably the community members themselves are similarly in a position of economic deprivation and have also experience of being ‘othered’ by wider society.

The link would seem to be that the community members feeling ontologically insecure due to their structural exclusion from broader society, essentialise, ostracise and further exclude the youth gang, consolidating their own sense of identity and security. As noted above, Young (2007) suggests, “...it is not the rich and the celebrated who are ‘othered’, it is not vertical but horizontal divisions: by men against women, by ethnic group against ethnic group, by gang against gang, by locality against locality” (p.52).

One interpretation could be that the community members adopt this essentialist means of ‘othering’ against the youth gang members as depicted in figure one below. The arrows in this diagram demonstrate the movement of ‘othering’, with the assumption that both the youth gang members and the community members are feeling ontologically insecure. The arrow pointing out of the youth gang members shows the ‘othering’ from them to those outside their community. This might relate to other youth gangs, or could result in a circularity where they ‘other’ people from within the broader society, such as the police, as will be discussed below.

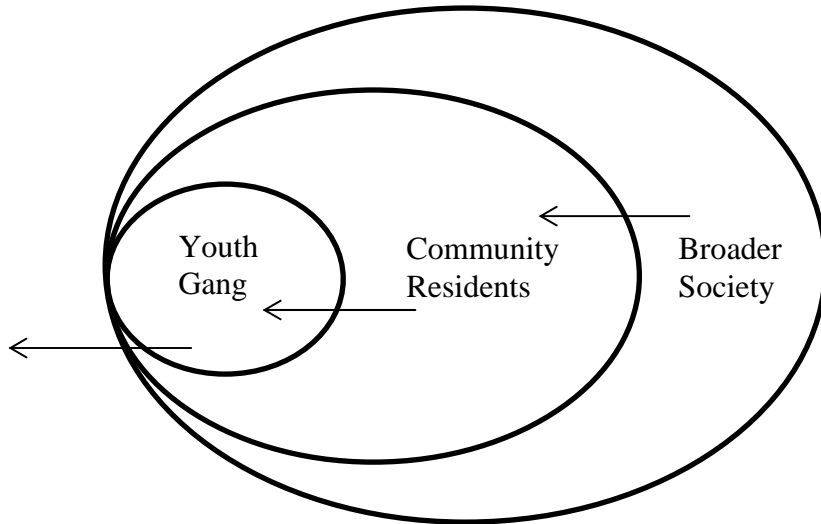


Figure 1- Process of 'Othering'

However this is not the only prospect in the process of 'othering' due to ontological insecurity. The fact that both the youth gang members and the community residents feel ontologically insecure and 'othered' by the broader society can also serve to emphasise their linkages and thus carry the same, or similar, sentiments and values, creating a unified other. If this were the case those young people who identify with gang membership are linked to the community members broad feelings of insecurity, lack of recognition and lack of identity resulting in a joint 'othering' of people outside the community. This is depicted in Figure two below.

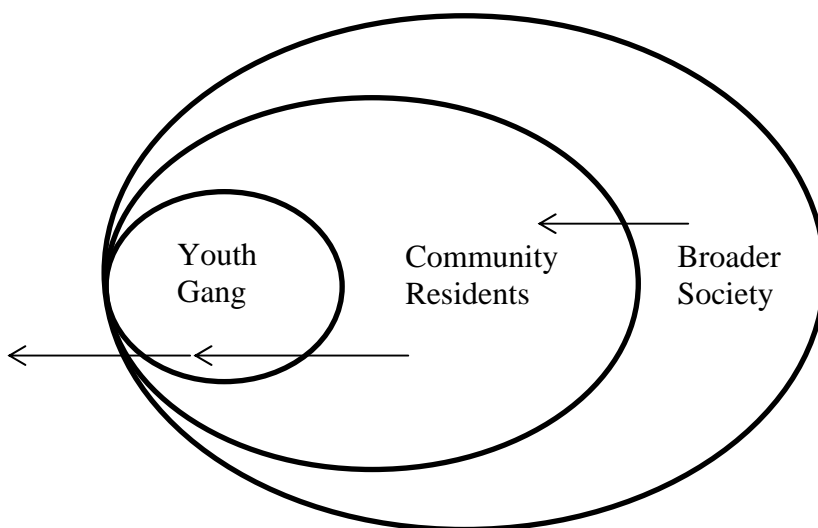


Figure 2- Alternative Process of 'Othering'

Jenkins (2008) suggests that whilst the classification of others is done hierarchically it is dependent on context. The same person may be identified as a son in one instance, a gang member in another, a prisoner in another or an employee in the other. Classifications of ourselves, and of other people, are not linear or singular but rather multi-dimensional and variable. It is the job of the evidence chapters to explore this notion further; to ascertain if community members are ontologically insecure, resulting in actions which reaffirm their own identity and crucially if this links to the actions of the youth gang members.

This theoretical framework can also be drawn upon to explain the relationship between the youth gang members and the local police force. The police are often viewed as enemies of young people. In relation to these broad theoretical concepts, the police have a role in the inclusion or exclusion of young people from economic and other societal structures. They have the ability to compound and heighten the young people's feelings of ontological insecurity. If a young person is continuously put in prison for petty crimes they will not have access to employment structures, may feel powerless against the 'strength' of the police force and thus continue to engage in risk-taking activities that they deem will give them recognition and reaffirm their self-identity.

The process of 'othering' may also be adopted by the police towards those young people they suspect are involved in gang activities. Young's early work (1971) suggested that police may stigmatise groups of people due to actions deemed deviant resulting in the amplification of deviancy. This process not only serves to compound the youth gang member's ontological insecurity, but result in actions which affirm their own identity and security. Thus the role of the police and how they diminish or encourage the security and identity of young people, will be explored further within this research.

As can be seen the process of ontological insecurity is felt by those generally at the bottom of the class structure who not only gain little recognition from the broader society but can experience demonisation. This can result in groups of people attempting to create solidarity and a unity amongst those deemed to have

the same qualities and values. The question for the findings chapters is to analyse if this multi-faceted process of ontological insecurity, linking to essentialising the other and resulting in the unified self, can be drawn upon to understand the complex relationships between youth gang members and their local community. This framework allows for the processes to be experienced in different ways between varying members of the community, be these friends, family, community members or the police, or indeed the gang members themselves.

To link the theoretical focus of ‘othering’, derived from ontological insecurity, with elements of the literature discussed in the previous two chapters, it particularly resonates with the studies of Decker and Van Winkle (1996); Jankowski (1991); Aldridge et al (2007) and Wallace and Coburn (2002) who all discuss outsiders. However, it can also be related to those studies considering the importance of structural deprivation (Fagan, 1996; Jankowski, 2003; Mays, 1956; Patrick, 1973 and Thrasher, 1927) that indicate ‘othering’ of disadvantaged communities by broader society as a whole. This has been taken a step further by Cohen (1973) who described how ‘othering’ can take the form of moral panic. Equally, considerations of gang’s as territorial entities by Deuchar (2008; 2009a; 2009b) and by Jenkins (1983) in terms of his localised groups can allow for ‘othering’ on the basis of identifiable communities. Finally the literature on social control (Hagedorn, 1991 and Zatz and Portillos, 2000) provides for ‘othering’ as a form of social categorisation and control. While ‘othering’ is implicit in this broad range of studies, it is felt that its potential applicability is sufficient to adopt it in this research study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will explain the methodological approaches drawn upon to ensure the adoption of an iterative and flexible approach. The epistemological framework underpinning this research, as well as the importance of reflexivity and the methods used to collect data, will also be described and explained. This provides understanding and insight into decisions made and conclusions reached throughout the research process, as well as grounding the data presented in subsequent chapters.

Research is not a process to be carried out in linear fashion. It requires the researcher to move interactively between data and theory: induction and deduction (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). For this reason a flexible methodology has been adopted. The field was viewed as an arena where signposts could be identified to direct me to relevant theoretical texts. In addition to this, prior theoretical knowledge and assumptions have also shaped the research topic, the questions asked and the people selected to be spoken to.

The research is iterative, between inductive and deductive research, engaged in the hermeneutic circle (Moustakas, 1990) or more usefully the hermeneutic spiral. It is a process of continuous spiralling, or circling deeper into the understanding of the required phenomenon, text or person. This spiral never truly ends, moving continuously back and forth, deepening understanding each time. As Moustakas (1990) notes: “It refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis” (p. 9).

This process ensures a deep understanding and familiarisation with the collected data, linking analysis and constantly reviewing any tentative findings. The data

does not solely test a theory and neither does a theory solely dictate the nature of the collected data. Rather theory sensitises the researcher to data, the collected data then influences theory, a continuous iterative process, until enough data and theory are engaged to answer the set questions.

This approach resonates with methodological approaches such as grounded theory and ethnography. Being informed by differing approaches allows an approach to be adopted that is reflexive and open about the course of action to be used.

Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) acknowledge the benefit of learning from both traditions.

The benefits of combining ethnographic and grounded theory approaches go both ways. With ethnography, we can move grounded theory away from technology and turn it towards art. Grounded theory studies can be reclaimed as humanistic stories rather than stand as scientific reports (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p. 161).

What follows is a brief overview of the approaches and how they informed the study, whilst not dictating it.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory (BG Glaser, 1992; B Glaser & Strauss, 1967; B. G. Glaser, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994) links theorising and data collection, the inductive and deductive. As opposed to beginning with a pre-set theoretical framework, data is collected and through analysis, thematic categories are generated. Data is collected until these categories are saturated, whereupon the researcher draws linkages between the categories in a more generalised manner. These links are then tested in the field and linked to other theoretical schemes. This data driven method attempts to remain true to the data while drawing out theoretical concepts as opposed to having a pre-set theoretical base prior to data collection.

First wave grounded theory, as advocated by Glaser (1992), takes a positivistic approach to research, i.e. assuming objectivity of the researched topic. However it is not possible to be completely objective or value free when carrying out grounded theory. Charmaz (2003) proposes a new category of methodology: constructivist grounded theory: “Constructivist grounded theory recognises that the viewer creates the data and ensuing analysis through interaction with the viewed...A constructivist grounded theory seeks to define conditional statements that interpret how subjects construct their realities” (p. 273).

Constructivists acknowledge that their findings are an interpretation of the data collected from research participants and that it is not possible to experience the exact life of the participants and to stand outside the views of the researcher is not possible. Constructivists aim to ask how, and why, participants understand and construct meanings of situations. The constructivist acknowledges that when researching a phenomenon it is being seen through their perspective, as opposed to being a completely objective stand point. Jeon (2004) argues: “A study is shaped by the researcher’s guiding principles associated with a paradigm or world view, which encompasses ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions” (p. 249).

Thus it is important to be aware of personal predispositions and values. Value judgements are simply defined as “...expressions that contain either disapproval or approval” (May, 2001, P.48). As May (2001) shrewdly points out, “...it is evident that the idea of research free from values is problematic. Indeed, value-freedom is itself a value position!” (p. 67).

It is thus impossible to research a singular definite truth or reality. Through research a *representation* of reality is discovered. I cannot claim to be telling the reader that I know what it is like to be a young gang member in Glasgow, but I can report my observations and the stated views of the participants within the study. These views are mediated through a personal filter, my own ideas, experiences and outlook on the world that influence any interpretations of the data, or conclusions reached.

Grounded theory derives its theoretical underpinnings from Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism which provides it with two key principles. The first is that phenomena continually change due to evolving conditions. The second is that both strict determinism and non-determinism are rejected.

Actors are seen as having, though not always utilizing, the means of controlling their destinies by their responses to conditions. They are able to make choices according to their perceptions, which are often accurate, about the opinions they encounter... Thus, grounded theory seeks not only to uncover relevant conditions, but also to determine how the actors respond to changing conditions and to the consequences of their actions. It is the researcher's responsibility to catch this interplay (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5).

Corbin and Strauss (1990) again drawing from social interactionism, highlight the importance of including the social context and its impact upon the research. Denscombe (2007) explains: "This is a form of social research that focuses on the way that participants in social setting make sense of situations and events through the use of symbolic actions" (p. 92).

This research rejects a solely individualistic stance and asserts that individuals live in a social context which cannot be undermined or ignored. It would be nonsensical to eliminate the social context from this piece of research and focus solely on a cognitive, individualistic view of interaction. How people interact and construct meaning is important and is collected through the interview process; but analysing these views within their social context is also paramount to this research. Although the basis of constructivist grounded theory is drawn upon, the strict analytical processes and procedures were seen as overly prescriptive for this research. It is for this reason that an ethnographic methodological approach has also been considered and drawn upon. This prioritises immersion within the community setting and can contribute towards the practicalities and understanding of the research themes to ensure the broader social context is engaged with.

Ethnography

Constructivist grounded theory according to Brewer (2000) is congruent with humanistic ethnography. It similarly requires thick description, rich data and acquiring people's views and opinions on what is being studied. It values the social context through which meaning is being constructed and reconstructed. One criticism of humanistic ethnography is the claim that by staying close to the data it can give a true or real understanding of what is being studied. Reflexive ethnographers and social constructionists would criticise this claim, suggesting it is not possible to gain a singular universal representation of reality but rather it is the researcher's interpretation of what is being studied. To conduct social research under this methodological position it is important to ask people their views and opinions in an in-depth manner, as the meanings created can often be taken for granted. It is also important to address the social context which gives meaning to the views expressed and to ask people in a manner which allows them to express it in their own words.

Grounded theory advocates entering the field early. Rock (2001) notes, ethnographers often spend a great deal of time at the beginning of a research project in the library which can often be unfruitful and frustrating. This research began by entering the field early but continually returning to the library to update knowledge and to read about issues that were arising.

Ethnographers often locate themselves within the narrative of writing, the story of research, which if adopted by grounded theorists can aid the move away from traditional 'objective' grounded theory reporting. Ethnography also encourages researchers to connect theories to the studied phenomena which "...may prompt grounded theorists to go deeper into their studied phenomena to understand experience as their subjects live it, not simply talk about it" (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, p. 161).

Both methodologies aim to anchor theoretical literature and argument into the analysis of data. Grounded theory provides certain guidelines which may be adopted by ethnographers to increase their clarity and control over their work and

to prevent a huge amount of unconnected data to be collected and reported. Similarly, it may be beneficial for grounded theorists to adopt ethnographic sensibilities.

Grounded theory strategies and guidelines can be reclaimed and used to achieve the kind of depth and breadth represented in the best ethnographies. Simultaneously, grounded theorists can move away from the quest for elegant method and move toward writing with grace and style (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, p. 171).

Practically, Grounded theory promotes simultaneous data-collection and analysis as opposed to ethnography which can often collect vast data and then analyse it on exiting the field. Grounded theory follows emergent themes from early analysis, attempts to uncover basic social processes within the data, the inductive construction of abstract categories that explain these processes and the integration of these into a theoretical framework (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). Rather than moving the researcher towards theoretical explanation ethnographic research is more descriptive and details a society or group and their everyday life.

In this study then, I have drawn upon constructivist grounded theory in its epistemological stance and its requirement to enter the field early. However, the study is not locked into the prescribed data analysis method. I have also been informed by the descriptive nature of ethnographic writing as well as the notion of spending significant time in the field, the building of rapport and analysing interaction through a cultural lens.

As noted above, many ethnographers and grounded theorists claim to have privileged insight into a particular studied phenomenon due to their use of thick description. However:

Ethnographers who imply that their accounts are accurate representations of the social world 'as it is', beyond the influence of theoretical presumption or prejudice, are both ignorant of the effect of their values upon research and

simplistic in suggesting that there is only one objective description which they have reliably captured (Brewer, 2000, p. 42).

Reflexivity is often used to combat these criticisms. Failing to be reflexive raises the danger of ignoring the various aspects of the researcher and the particular social setting which can impact on the data collection. Being reflexive allows me to acknowledge that the findings are a selective account of the studied phenomena; they are an interpretation from my personal viewpoint. As a researcher I am within the social world which is being studied and I am a product of my own social history. Acknowledgement of my views and bias leads to a greater transparency of work and justification for particular data collection methods and means of data analysis. These biases will be discussed in greater detail below.

Reflexivity and Social Construction

Taylor et al (2000) note that the dichotomy of viewing society as realist or relativist is insufficient. The realist, positivistic, perspective stems from the enlightenment tradition where the aim was to discover fundamental truth, a definite description of reality. This notion of a definite truth sees naturalistic observations of social phenomena as objective and thus can be said to be close to reality. In comparison relativism argues that there is no such thing as an objective truth, a truth that is definite, but rather there are differing views on the world, differing interpretations of reality and of knowledge.

For social constructionists there is a reality that exists, but our access to it is socially constructed. “That is, we enter a world where the things that exist are represented and constructed through language as a set of concepts or ideas” (Taylor & White, 2000, p. 25). Vivien Burr (Burr, 1955 quoted in Taylor & White, 2000) notes the importance of cultural and historical contextualisation in this construction.

... [A]ll ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Not only are they specific to particular cultures and periods in history, they are seen as products of culture and history, and are dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that particular culture at that time. The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that *our* ways of understanding are necessarily any better (in terms of being nearer the truth) than other ways (p. 4).

Social constructionists focus on the differing ways people describe the same event or phenomena, as the individual's interpretation of this may vary dependent on the discourses open to them. As a researcher, I am engrained within the study and have views which can impact upon interpretations. One method of taking account of this is to adopt a critically reflexive approach to the study. Being reflexive is to place oneself, your bias and values at the forefront, and throughout, the research process. To be critically reflexive is to critically analyse one's own knowledge claims and to address dominant constructions of reality, e.g. for this study the dominant discourse may be that youth gangs are inherently negative. To be critically reflexive is to acknowledge the prevalence of this view and to address it. Critical reflexivity is more than simply reflecting on one's methodological practice. To reflect may be to note how a piece of research was conducted, why certain actions were taken and the outcomes of these actions; it is to reflect on the overall process. To be reflexive is to be critical of these actions and to examine tacit as well as overt assumptions, bias and prejudice which may be held. As Clough and Nutbrown (2002) note:

The inseparability of research and researcher is, many would argue, an essential feature of research in the social sciences; and the methodology which drives such research is as much to do with personal values as it is to do with 'rigour' and 'hygiene' in research methodology (p. 68).

Reflexivity can acknowledge these personal values whilst allowing explanation for the driving methodology.

Bias and Positionality

The notion of reflexivity is different from positionality. Positionality would be noting that I am a twenty-seven year old female from Belfast in Northern Ireland; I am white and was brought up as a Catholic. Initially I felt this was an unnecessary statement to make unless it directly related to this study. Is it necessary for the reader of this PhD to know my ethnic origin, religion or gender? I thought it more beneficial to note that I am a trained youth worker and that my commitment to young people's rights would have more of a bearing on the research. Although my belief in social justice and advocacy work for young people makes me more inclined to argue that young people are often unfairly labelled as bad, negative or deviant, my positionality also played a role throughout the research. The fact that I am a female studying a predominantly male phenomenon obviously had a bearing on the interactions I had with the young males. Sectarianism is also a part of the symbolic landscape in these environments. My religious affiliations and upbringing in Northern Ireland, which is accustomed to both violence and negative stereotyping, therefore also played a role in this research. I have an identifiable Northern Irish accent and as such encountered young people asking me about my religious upbringing and what Glaswegian football team I support. Although this often worked to my advantage, by initiating conversations that may have otherwise been difficult, I am also aware I struggle to listen to overtly negative sectarian sentiments from people who have not directly lived in areas affected by the consequences of such attitudes.

Mantzoukas (2005) discusses the researchers views through the terminology of bias. He suggests that traditionally studies which encompassed bias were seen as non-scientific and were referred to in a negative light, whereas those studies that did not include, or obscured, bias in the study were seen as rational, scientific and correct;

...those bequeathed with the responsibility of revealing scientific knowledge (in other words, researchers), had to discard individual, subjective and value-laden ideations in order to acquire pure and objective facts. It is therefore not at all surprising that subjectivity, individuality and value-laden approaches to explaining and knowing the world were scathingly stigmatised as biases that could only produce fictitious accounts or mythopoeia of primitive religious projections (Mantzoukas, 2005, p. 281).

The positivistic framework argues that bias should play no part in research. This approach established by Ayer (1959), suggests that the researcher can separate their bias if they follow methodological canons correctly. Recently Glaser (2002) also noted that if a methodology was applied correctly then bias would simply become another variable which could be displaced through a constant comparative method. To insert bias would be an “unwarranted intrusion on the research” (B. G. Glaser, 2002, p. 3). In contrast, Mantzoukas (2005) quotes Wittgenstein, to argue that bias is inseparable from the researcher and thus should be acknowledged and accepted throughout the research process.

This latter stance is in line with the views of social constructionism and highlights the impact the researcher has on the research project. From the beginning of the process the researcher deciphers the questions which are to be asked, the areas to be studied, the ways to collect data and the methods used to analyse the findings. However, a further debate arises once the notion of bias has been acknowledged on how best to report and record this bias. Some researchers i.e. phenomenologists choose to acknowledge bias and then bracket it off as if it should not influence the overall research. Husserl (1989) suggests, “...we perform the reflection at first precisely as a new naturalistic attitude, which thus, in the phenomenological reduction, belongs in brackets” (p. 183).

Similarly for Ahern (1999): “The ability to put aside personal feelings and preconceptions is more a function of how reflexive one is rather than how objective one is because it is not possible for researchers to set aside things about which they are not aware” (p. 408).

Being reflexive on personal, implicit values does not necessarily require them to be sidelined or bracketed. An acknowledgment of such values and their impact upon the research can enrich the research process and data analysis. However this study is not an autobiography and as such there needs to be a careful balance between acknowledging the researcher's own bias, pre-set values and views, whilst also maintaining the focus of the study.

In order to do this the process of reflecting on field notes was adopted. As stated above, my epistemology will be made clear from the beginning and there will be no secret made of any bias that may impact on the study. Rather this will be described and reflected upon in a reflexive manner which will not only explain my interpretations but will assess these in relation to the broader study; taking note of the views of Clough and Nutbrown (2002):

...[I]n a sense, methodology is as much about the way we live our lives as it is about the way we choose to conduct a particular piece of research.

Methodology is about making research decisions and understanding (and justifying) *why* we have made those decisions. Our research methodologies are (we would argue) rooted in our own personal values, which, in some form, inform our ethical and moral responses to problems and challenges (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, p. 68).

Methods

Introduction

Brewer (2000) sees methods as "...merely technical rules, which lay down the procedures for how reliable and objective knowledge can be obtained" (p. 2).

In contrast Bryman (2008) suggests that methods are not simply tools but are linked to differing views on social reality. I have adopted research tools that I deemed the best for the research question posed, and which fit with my view on social reality. This has allowed me to feel comfortable with the approach adopted

and the methods used to engage with the participants of the study. For this research I again drew on Clough and Nutbrown (2002) who note:

It is the task of methodology to uncover and justify research assumptions as far and as practically as possible, and in so doing to locate the claims which the research makes within the traditions of enquiry which use it. Equally, it is our task, as researchers, to identify our research tools and our rationale for their selection (p. 31).

This section will aim to identify the research tools used whilst providing a rationale for their selection.

The methods adopted to collect the data were predominantly from qualitative paradigm. However, to gain a range of contextual information on the studied area certain statistics were examined and at times incorporated, including the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and official crime statistics. Relevant pieces of information, including detached youth work forms, newspaper articles and relevant data was collected to inform the study. Statistics and figures are quantitative pieces of data and collecting information according to both paradigms (qualitative and quantitative) is referred to as a mixed method approach.

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), in what they call a ‘deliberately inclusive’ definition, describe mixed methods as: “Research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry” (p. 4).

This study did not adopt a strict qualitative or quantitative approach. The focus was on qualitative data but other sources were adopted with a pragmatic under toning. If collating data from a range of sources offers a more in-depth, rich account of the studied phenomena then it should be embraced. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note: “Taking a non-purist or compatibilist or mixed position allows researchers to mix and match design components that offer the best chance of answering their specific research questions” (p. 15).

Triangulation

“Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena” (Bryman, 2008, p. 379). Primarily my study included reflexive recordings and interview material, although secondary data, such as area statistics, media reports and area specific literature also informed the study and knowledge of the research areas. These are deliberately seen as ‘background data’ as they add context and environment to the main story being told by participants.

Triangulation was used within the field, where participants were often questioned on particular instances or pieces of information picked up whilst ‘hanging about’ in the research area. This allowed clarity of understanding and confirmed or negated personal reflections on various issues.

Contact Environment

All the data was drawn from two urban areas in Glasgow. This allowed depth of investigation and room for comparison. To establish which two areas were to be analysed I conducted desk research on a number of areas, particularly those with reported gang activity. Contact was made with community organisations throughout Glasgow, mainly prioritising those who conducted detached youth work as I felt this might be a beneficial way to engage with young people who did not access centre based services. Detached youth work attempts to engage with young people in their own sites of socialisation as opposed to within a building and were felt to be particularly relevant. This often involves youth workers walking the streets in pairs, or groups of three, to informally speak to young people; to build rapport with young people; and to provide support and information if required. The Princes Trust define detached youth work as taking “...place on young people’s own territory such as streets, cafes, parks, and pubs at times that are appropriate to them and on their terms” (*Thinking on your feet: outreach and detached youth work with vulnerable young people*, 1998, p.14).

The notion of gate-keepers was important to this piece of research. I initially took the advice of practitioners in the field of youth work as to which community organisations might be beneficial and willing to participate with this research. At the beginning there were many community workers who were interested in the project although were fearful of negative press about their area. To be true to the research it would not have been possible to conduct research in an area where there was a rule of only positive findings to be recorded. I did not anticipate this response nor did I expect this part of the investigation to be so time consuming and problematic. As such, an opportunistic approach was adopted with the first site of research being discovered through a colleague who already had made connections and had developed relations within the area and where they were happy for another researcher to be involved in the work they were doing. The second area of research involved a lengthy process of email and telephone communication but was eventually established through a personal contact from my youth work practice. As Lofland and Lofland (1995) acknowledge gaining entry to a site of research can be “greatly expedited if you have connections” (p. 37).

Once initial contact was made with both areas and as the gatekeepers provided access to the community, the process became less problematic. In area one I began by becoming a regular attendee at a newly established youth club. The youth club was set up as an outcome of a twelve week program of detached street work. The street work was carried out with the aim of engaging with the ‘hardest to reach’ young people. Once contact was made with the young people they were asked to participate in a series of workshops about territorial and gang related behaviour. If the young people agreed to attend these workshops for an hour on a Wednesday then in the second hour the youth organisation would provide a range of activities in the newly established youth centre space. The youth organisation also took the young people out of their area on a Friday night. This served two purposes - to allow the young people experiences and opportunities outside their neighbourhood, and secondly by taking this group of young people out of their area they were actively preventing territorial gang fighting from taking place with neighbouring areas. I attended the Wednesday club weekly, missing three sessions due to other commitments, over a period of five months. I also attended

some events that the project ran, including a fun day which allowed me to meet a number of local residents.

In area two I began by attending a dance group that was organised by the local youth project. However it soon became apparent that this group would not be a beneficial site for this particular research. The club was attracting far younger people than I had ethical approval to work with. Following this I joined the youth workers on a series of detached street work shifts.

This was a beneficial way to get my bearings within the area as well as to get my face known within the community and by the young people. At this early stage of the investigation I informed all young people that I was doing research in the area but did not go into great detail as I felt this would be premature.

After being in the community for a few weeks an opportunity came along to participate in a football diversionary programme. I was asked if I would be interested in gaining my Scottish Football Association coaching badges, which a local football team would pay for, and then become a qualified community coach in the local area one evening a week. As a result of this process I was asked by a local government organisation, who were working with the young people identified as engaging in problematic behaviour, to conduct a couple of football sessions during the day. This opportunity gave me direct contact with the local 'young team' and provided me the space to build rapport, explain my research and ask if they would be interested in discussing my research topic further.

Young team is a term I came across in Scotland and have not heard the term used to describe gang behaviour anywhere else in the UK. It is often used after an area name; Ormeau Road Young Team is a fictional example of the construction often found. Although I am not sure of its origin, the word team signifies solidarity, commitment, a common goal and importantly, a collective identity. Even if the gang itself does not have the word team in its title, the term 'young team' is still a central part of Glaswegian narrative when discussing any youth gang in a particular area.

Using sport as a medium for data collection can break down barriers and help to establish contact, trust and dialogue with the young people. This approach allowed me to establish relationships with the young people and later conduct interviews with willing participants. This activity was set up in partnership with a number of key stakeholders within the community, including a local church, a youth project, the city council and community safety services. Being involved in this not only allowed me to play an active role within the community, but enabled me to meet young people and to 'repay' the youth organisation for providing access to the broader community. This notion of reciprocity within the fieldwork is prevalent within ethnographic studies, as well as in much action research and feminist research. Lofland and Lofland (1995) note, "...unless you wish to be seen as odd and cold, and perhaps risk being completely shut out from the research setting, you cannot forego the helper role altogether: It is your trade-off for access" (p. 60).

Participant Observation

Participant observation, traditionally linked with ethnographic research and the theoretical tradition of symbolic interaction, was adopted. Although it has been argued that all social research may be seen as a form of participant observation, as one has to be in the social world to research it (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994), May (1997) suggests participant observation is "... a systematic and disciplined study which, if performed well, greatly assists in understanding human actions and brings with it new ways of viewing the social world" (p. 155).

Brewer (2000) differentiates between the role of participant observer to that of an observant participator. Observant participation is seen as someone who is using an existing role, i.e. drawing on youth work techniques, to research an unfamiliar setting. However Gold (1958) goes further in the differentiation of roles within participant observation, citing four distinct categories. The first is complete participant, where those being observed are not aware of the identity or purpose of the researcher although the researcher does get involved completely in day-to-day activities. This would not be feasible in this research as I could simply not fit into

the day-to day activities of youth gang members. The second is the role of participant-as-observer, where the researcher's role is known. My role as a researcher was known and I did not partake in the day-to-day activities of those involved in the research, nor did I adopt an objective observational role. Problems may arise when adopting this role as researchers' may become too close to informants and are in danger of losing perspective on the research and normalising particular actions. Another danger is that informants may become too close to the researcher preventing them from functioning solely as an informant but more as an observer (Gold, 1958). The third role is that of observer-as-participant, where formal observation takes place, often in one visit to the research site and data is often collected through formal interviews. This role can be superficial and would not be suitable for this research. The last role is that of complete observer, where those being observed are unaware of the researchers role but the researcher doesn't take part in day-to day activities within the field. Much of this research would be collected through observing from a distance which may cause cases of misrepresentation or misunderstandings as there is no interaction with those being observed.

As I am not originally from the country where the research was conducted, I was researching an unfamiliar setting but still drawing upon experience of youth work practice to engage with the participants. Thus using Brewer's (2000) differentiation I adopted observant participation. Similarly drawing on the typology discussed by Gold (1958) I adopted the role of participant-as-observer as participation in the field did take place but data was also collected both formally and informally. Gold (1958) explains that

...where an observer develops relationships with informants through time, and where he is apt to spend more time and energy participating than observing. At times he observes formally, as in scheduled interview situations; and at other times he observes informally... (p. 220).

'Participant as observer' (Gold, 1958) or 'observant participation' (Brewer, 2000) was conducted within both areas of study, though it was more systematic and successful in area one. In area one short hand notes were recorded on my mobile

phone thus allowing quick instant referencing which is not as intrusive as producing a notebook and pen, or a voice recorder. These notes were used as an aide memoir when writing up the full reflexive recording later that evening or the following day. No identifying names, features or places were recorded within these reflexive recordings; a coding system was adopted to signify different participants.

In area two notes were not recorded in the same manner. This was primarily due to the differing roles adopted. Initially during or after detached street work notes were recorded in the same manner as in area one. However when I took on the role of a sports coach I did not record all details of the sessions as my responsibility was now one of a coach not solely a researcher. Nevertheless, this opportunity allowed me to engage with a number of young people in the area. From this engagement I could then ask them if they would be interested in being involved in the research project.

Interviews

Generally with the young people I have used semi-structured interviews but I have allowed tangents to develop or stories to be told. As Fylan (2005) notes:

Semi-structured interviews are simply conversations in which you know what you want to find out - and have a set of questions to ask and a good idea of what topics will be covered – but the conversation is still free to vary, and is likely to change substantially between participants (p. 65).

The flexibility available in this type of interview arguably made the participants feel more at ease. “These types of interviews are said to allow people to answer more on their own terms than the standardized interview permits, but still provide a greater structure for comparability over that of the focused interview” (May, 2001, p. 123).

It was my aim to use the interview as a means of retrieving personal experiences whilst acknowledging that this, like any other, is a social interaction that often generates certain expectations and procedures to follow.

Some participants preferred to conduct interviews with friends or colleagues present. Many of the young people, particularly in area one, opted to participate in the interview process with a friend. Conducting interviews in friendship pairs allowed the young people to feel more at ease and thus create a more fluent conversational style interview. Although unplanned, some of the community residents in area two chose to speak as a small group. While this process was beneficial as it allowed fluency in the discussion, it also caused problems. When transcribing the interview afterwards recordings of the women, when speaking to each other, were muffled and difficult to make out. Also there is an issue with confidentiality when speaking in front of each other but the interviewees were informed that although anonymity and confidentiality could be kept whilst speaking individually, I could not guarantee that those they spoke in front of would afford the same privacy.

When collecting data from the police the semi-structured interview technique was also adopted.

Watson (2006) notes that as interviews have become a well known phenomena in our society there is the potential to view them as “deceptively simple” (p. 368). As noted above, the interview is viewed as a constructed interaction between participants. Striving for ‘neutrality’ or ‘interactivity’ within the interview process has been critiqued by Watson (2006) when she argues that: “Neutrality and interactivity may therefore be considered to constitute an unsustainable binary since both involve decisions about how to act in a particular situation in order to elicit information” (p. 369).

In essence then the interview process is indeed about eliciting information for the purposes of the research. Nevertheless, as Watson (2006) asserts, it is crucial to “...listen out for complexities, incoherence and ambiguity in interviews...” (p. 381). In order to ensure a certain degree of reflexive monitoring I asked a range

of different interviewees about the same issues and topics. Throughout the interview process I often repeated the response back to the participant to ensure I had understood the respondent correctly, thus allowing space for clarification or reaffirmation of what was recorded.

In one instance an interviewee, after reflecting upon the transcript, contacted me to note that his opinion since the interview had shifted. He informed me that having received the transcript he had spent some time reflecting upon his own views and had concluded that one issue we discussed now seemed invalid. This demonstrates that the interview process can invoke reflection from all the participants. Although not all participants were interested in receiving the completed transcripts, this one instance highlighted the importance of offering this service after the interview had taken place.

Youth Work Experience

There is a danger with assuming too many roles within the research field, as it can either cause confusion or tension. Having prior youth work experience provides the skills base to talk and communicate with young people. Youth work is defined by Sercombe (2010) as “...a professional relationship in which the young person is engaged as the primary client in their social context” (p. 26).

However although the social context of the young people was being engaged with, the primary focus of this piece of research was not solely the young people. The young people participating in the research were not led to believe that, as a researcher, I would unambiguously stand for their perceived best interests irrespective of the views of all other stakeholders (Sercombe, 2004). In this research the primary client is arguably the field of study which I engage with and the external examiners who decide, as representatives of the discipline, if a doctorate is to be awarded. My role was that of a researcher, although I drew on previous experience as a starting point for engagement. As a researcher my role was not to build long-term trusting relationships with the young people but rather to collect relevant data for this study. By differentiating between my roles, as

youth worker, researcher and sports coach, from the outset, and ensuring everyone understood these, it allowed me to enter and exit the research without any lasting attachments or responsibilities beyond ensuring the protection and anonymity to those who took part in the research.

Nevertheless, as I am a youth worker by profession it is important to acknowledge that there is a duty in this research to ensure that the voices of the young people are portrayed as clearly and as loudly as those of any other community member. There was also a commitment to spend time in the social context to get to know the young people and build a rapport with them prior to asking for an interview. This was also attempted with the community members although some interviews were conducted with people after only meeting them once. Whilst this was not ideal, the practicalities of the research sometimes meant there was little alternative.

Building Rapport and Listening

With the young people I attended the youth clubs, played sports, was involved in coaching football, went on trips and generally spent time 'hanging about'. It was not as easy to spend long periods of time with adults. However, I did ensure that I had spoken to all the participants prior to conducting the interview and generally attempted to meet them first. This was sometimes problematic, particularly when it came to agency officials, such as the police. In this case the interview was arranged and was conducted without an initial personal meeting. Nevertheless, I always sent an email, or spoke on the phone, to the person explaining to them about the project before meeting for the interview.

Bryman (2008) notes that building too much rapport can result in the interviewee answering questions in a manner which they feel may satisfy the researcher. Although this was not found to be problematic on the whole, there was one instance where an interviewee directly asked me at the end of the interview if I really had wanted the truth or if I would like to re-record after I informed him of what he should say. In reflecting upon this the young man was trying to be

friendly and helpful to me as I had built up a high level of rapport with him. This highlights the importance of listening for complexities and ambiguous or unrealistic statements (Watson, 2006).

I ensured that more time was spent with the young people prior to interviewing. The young people are the ones involved in the gang activities which were central to my research question, so it was they who may well have felt reluctant in speaking about such an emotive topic. I wanted to ensure that I was listening to the voice of the young people and that I was doing research 'with' the young people as opposed to solely 'on' young people (France, 2004). This was not to downgrade the voice of other participants, but was to ensure that a group of people, who are often excluded from society, were included and had as strong a standing as other participants within the research process.

Although listening to the voice of participants is important, as a researcher my voice played a role as well. I engaged in the conversation, and posed prompt questions to interviewees, to ensure there was an open and fluid discussion.

Ethical Issues

If ethics is seen as "...how we should live and how we should conduct our social life and political affairs..." (Almond, 1995, p. 1) then the ethical issues for research are about how to ideally conduct research. However as France (2004) notes, "...what is ethical (or unethical) is problematic, being a process of social construction linked to moral arguments and positions" (p 181).

Nevertheless, moral arguments and positions need to be adopted and clarified to explain the reason for certain actions throughout the research process.

Judgements about whether to report a crime, to maintain anonymity or even how to engage with research participants, are arguably all ethical decisions.

Diener and Crandall (1978) usefully split ethical issues into four main areas. The first is assessing if there is any harm to the participants; this includes physical or

psychological harm that may be encountered. Secondly there is a need for informed consent from the participant, thirdly the need to ensure no invasion of privacy occurs; and finally to ensure that there is no deception involved. These four key areas are discussed below.

Harm to Participants

Throughout the research there was a conscious attempt not to ask questions that might have caused any psychological or physical harm. There was no physical contact with participants and none were involved in any physical actions that could lead to physical harm. However, psychological harm covers a range of issues and all possible preventative methods were undertaken. The outcry that Scheper-Hughes (2001) caused with her anthropological study in rural Ireland is a lesson well learnt about the lasting damage a research project can potentially have on the participants. Her original work in 1979 left villagers outraged by her negative portrayal of them and despite updating her book in 2001 to explain some of the initial findings, many in the village still felt misrepresented:

You wrote a book to please yourself at our expense. You ran us down girl, you ran us down...We warn our village children before they go off to the university in Cork or Dublin to beware of books about Ireland written by strangers (Scheper-Hughes, 2000, p. 119).

Gallagher (2009) acknowledges the distorted power balance that often exists between the researcher and participant, particularly in relation to children. He notes that in a scientific or medical examination it is clear cut as to what is damaging and what is not, however, "...in a consultation or an ethnographic study, however, making such predictions is likely to be more difficult" (Gallagher, 2009, p. 13).

As the participants in this study are young adults they may feel more comfortable with holding or refusing information. The interviews were all conducted with a youth worker within close proximity, someone they knew and could speak to if they felt uncomfortable.

An information sheet can prevent harm for participants by making them fully aware of the research project, the level of involvement required and how the information collected will be used. It also contained contact details of both the researcher and the university supervisor so as participants could ask further questions or gain additional information on the project. Prior to the interview participants were given time to read the information sheet and ask any questions. As France (2004) notes, "...if we are committed to listening to young people's voice we need to give them detailed information about the research so they can make an informed decision" (p. 183).

If an interview became too personal or emotional for any participant then that line of questioning was stopped immediately. As noted above, whilst interviewing the young people there was a trained youth worker in the vicinity to provide emotional support and guidance if required. These people were fully qualified professionals who worked in officially registered institutions and therefore had the relevant credentials needed to work with young people in a pastoral role. I also had telephone numbers for support services available if required by interviewees.

All participants were informed that I was doing research in that area and were reminded and asked if I could use the information gained from informal conversations.

Harm to Researcher

Although not an ethical consideration noted by Diener and Crandall (1978), harm to the researcher was a necessary practical consideration prior to conducting field research. When participating in detached youth work I was always with a trained youth worker who had more rapport with the community and young people. A mobile phone was always carried in case of an emergency.

If feelings of aggression, or more seriously, a violent incident were to occur, I would have followed the instructions and guidance of the trained staff members. Similarly if an incident was to occur during an interview situation then I would

have immediately sought the support of the trained youth worker within the vicinity. By conducting interviews in private but not secluded areas both I and the participant were always close to members of staff thus facilitating the safety and protection of both.

Anonymity/ Confidentiality

The anonymity of the participants was upheld throughout the research process. When data was recorded I used no identifying features of the participants such as names or addresses etc. At times participants used names of people or names of areas but when transcribing, I replaced the mentioned name with [name] and the area name either with [research area] or [neighbouring area] depending on its relationship to the research sites. Field notes were recorded without any identifying features and were locked in a drawer in the university which only I had access to. Any notes taken during the in-depth interviews were locked in a drawer and once the data was transcribed it was stored electronically in a password protected folder on the university computer system. By removing any identifying names I hoped that the participants would feel more relaxed in opening up and giving detailed information in response to the questions asked.

Although pseudonyms were used and places were not named it became difficult to prevent everyone from knowing the areas of research. Youth workers in the area often knew that I was speaking to particular young people although I made sure not to discuss answers with them. My supervisors do have access to all my interviews although generally do not know the young people or the areas. As such, as much as possible was done to prevent people being identified. Unlike Aldridge et al (2007) I choose to name the city which I was studying - Glasgow. Failure to mention the city would not have provided further anonymity as the university I am attached to is public information and thus people would generally know that I would be researching in a localised area.

One of the main ethical considerations was whether I, as a researcher, would maintain the anonymity of the interviewees even if they spoke of involvement in violent acts. Ethically and morally I decided that if any participant told me details

of a planned attack, or an organised act of violence, I would feel obligated to tell the relevant authorities. This was made clear in the information sheet and reiterated verbally. This provided me the permission to report something if I deemed necessary. If I was informed of a historical incident, then given that the account could not be prevented, I decided retrospective reporting would be inappropriate.

Digital Recording

Digital recording was used in the interviews but consent from all the participants was obtained either orally (on the recorder) or in a written format prior to it being used. Bryman (2008) suggests that tape recording for qualitative research is beneficial. By using recording equipment I was able to engage in a conversation without being distracted by constantly writing. After trial and error I found that to maintain eye contact and show interest and listening intently resulted in the participants, particularly the young people, talking for longer and in a more open fashion. At the beginning of the research process I took detailed notes but felt that the participants were often straining to see what I was writing as opposed to thinking about the questions that were posed. The recording equipment was particularly important when talking to a group of participants together, as to try and keep detailed notes of such a fast flowing conversation would have been extremely difficult.

There were also problems with using recording equipment. The digital recorder was extremely sensitive and picked up background music, people speaking in the vicinity and any surrounding sound. This became more of a problem when transcribing as there was constantly background noise. Another issue was that often when I turned off the tape recorder the participants would continue to speak, meaning I would miss valuable pieces of information. Most of this information will not appear in the research as it was apparent that the participant, although comfortable to speak to me in person, was not comfortable with certain pieces of information becoming public through research. In line with my ethical guidelines I respected this position and ensured that no information went on record without the full consent of the participant.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was gained from each participant after a short discussion and overview of the information sheet. I verbally discussed the information sheet with all participants in case anyone had difficulties with reading. All participants over the age of sixteen can provide 'informed consent' on their own behalf. However after being in the field for a couple of months I decided it would also be beneficial to gain ethical clearance to speak to young people between fourteen and sixteen years old. As such I created a new information sheet and attached a parental assent form to be completed. The assent form allows an adult to take responsibility for me speaking to a fourteen year old if they themselves were willing.

The consent sheet I provided was specifically tailored to each set of participants. I explained what the research was about, what I was seeking to discover and how the participant could aid my project. Being transparent about the research and my intentions was crucial in ensuring trust and confidence from the interviewees.

Invasion of Privacy

The right to privacy is a tenet that many of us hold dear, and transgressions of that right in the name of research are not regarded as acceptable (Bryman, 2008, p. 123).

This point was taken very seriously throughout this research project and is closely linked to the collecting of informed consent, thus ensuring that the participant knows the purpose of the research. There is still an ethical issue to ensure irrelevant information, in breach of the right to privacy, is not released within the documentation. As noted I also refrained from speaking about the interviews in detail with people not associated with the research, i.e. only supervisors.

Deception

The point has already been made that it was crucial to be transparent throughout the research process. This included identifying my role, the purpose of the research and the estimated length of time I would stay in the area.

I had a pre-planned exit strategy, ensuring everyone was clear about my intentions. I originally estimated a period of nine months in each area but in reality this varied between the two sites. It resulted in me visiting for six months in one area, but then revisiting for interviews and staying a year and a half in the second area. I tried to ensure that I did not leave an area suddenly, without a personal goodbye or recognition of the help and support which had been afforded both to me and my research.

I chose not to physically move into either of the research areas as I have personal commitments and did not feel this would hugely benefit the research project. Hodkinson (2005) acknowledges the potentially varying application of time to differing projects and sees, “...insider research as a non-absolute concept intended to designate those situations characterised by a significant degree of *initial* proximity between the sociocultural locations of researcher and researched” (p. 134)

He goes on to note that differing research will have a different balance of factors and thus will have varying levels of initial proximity. Brewer (2000) suggests that non-insiders, who spend less time building initial proximity, may have a longer period of work to gain levels of trust they require, although conversely being an ‘insider’ does not necessarily mean one gets better data and may result in the young people answering in a certain fashion because they know you.

Participants

The number of people interviewed, as well as their gender and role descriptor within this research is displayed in tables below.

Area one

Young People		Youth Workers		Community Residents		Community Police	
6		3		2		1	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
6	0	1	2	1	1	1	0

(Table 3- Area One Participants)

Area two

Young People		Youth Workers		Church Worker		Community Residents		Statutory Agency		Community Police	
9		3		1		10		1		1	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
7	2	1	2	1	0	2	8	8	1	1	0

(Table 4- Area Two Participants)

Total

Young People		Youth Workers		Church Worker		Community Residents		Statutory Agency		Community Police		Total	
15		6		1		12		1		2		37	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
13	2	2	4	1	0	3	9	1	0	2	0	22	15

(Table 5- Both Areas Participants)

Although the participants of this research were not specifically targeted by gender or age, I have shown above the gender split to demonstrate the differing rates of access, Male (M) and Female (F). Young males were easier to engage with and were willing to conduct interviews about gang membership and the relation with their local communities. There are a number of reasons that young females may have been harder to reach throughout the process. One reason in area two may well have been that I engaged in a predominantly male orientated sport, football, as one way of engaging with young people. However, I did find that females tended to engage with the youth project at a young age and then dropped away

from it slightly earlier than young males, making the age group I was targeting inaccessible. I did manage to engage with two females in area two who were willing to participate in the study and provided excellent data. In area one I similarly found it was predominantly males who regularly attended the youth club sessions. This made it problematic to build any rapport with the young females as they attended sporadically and often in differing groupings. I did speak to the youth workers about accessing young females but they themselves were struggling to engage with females in the area. Part of the reason for this may be that, “Teenagers are more likely than younger children to spend time in their own rooms and girls tend to spend a greater proportion of their time there than boys” (Bovill & Livingstone, 2001, p. 182).

The fewer number of females within this research is a limitation. Young females could have discussed their relationship, involvement and engagement either with or in the youth gang. Future research which gains the views of young females would be hugely beneficial and could provide additional perspective on the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities.

In relation to community members there was an attempt to speak to a variety of people to achieve breadth and depth of opinion. Although this did include both male and females and encompassed a variety of ages, there was less representation from males. Again attempts were made to engage proactively with male community members but women often seemed more willing and often responded to the request for participation more readily than men. Nevertheless those male community members involved in the study provide an interesting insight into their views of the youth gang and the relationship of the latter to the local community.

The community residents' ages were not always ascertained but they varied from twenty seven to mid- seventies. For ethical reasons the youth participants had to be over fourteen years old. There was no stringent cut off age above fourteen years old and the young people varied from sixteen to twenty-five year olds.

Area one, although beginning as the first site of research, quickly fell behind due to difficulties of access. The young people who originally were interviewed

gradually were no longer engaging with youth services and it became increasingly difficult to meet with them. The community residents were also difficult to engage with, despite a number of channels being followed which included contact with the church, parents of young people and local workers. Area two, in contrast, was less problematic to gain interviews and build rapport with community members. Reflecting upon this, I feel this was due to the work I was conducting through the medium of sport. I became a known face in the community and found this a beneficial way of meeting various people. I also spent more time in the community, generally around the youth project and 'hanging out' in the area. This was made easier as the gatekeepers were constantly in the area and willing for me to participate in any community event or to become involved on any level which was beneficial for my research. In Area One the initial point of contact was with a youth service which was external to the area, so they entered and exited on a particular night without fully engaging with local residents. Due to these difficulties Area One afforded a smaller sample in comparison to Area Two. This is demonstrated by the different number of interviews.

In gaining interviews with participants there were a number of barriers faced. Frequently interviews were arranged but participants would fail to attend. Although this often caused frustration it was perfectly understandable and made me reflect on the importance of being flexible in my research approach. To counter this I began to conduct interviews in places convenient to the participants. This included speaking to residents outside a sports club which their children were attending, going to the person's house and meeting in coffee shops and local pubs. Adopting this approach allowed me to meet people in their own comfort zones which contributed to the quality of the interviews.

Data Analysis

While arguably there is always the potential to gather more information from different people, there came a point in the collection process where similar themes

and topics were consistently emerging. This level of saturation coupled with time restraints ensured the interview process did not continue indefinitely.

As the data was being collected there was an attempt to ensure transcription took place within a relatively short time of the interviews being conducted. This allowed for instant reflection upon the interview data and ensured gaps in the information were detected and could be addressed either through other interviews or through discussions within the site of study.

NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software package which allows the researcher to categorise, sort, code, manage and interpret their data, was used throughout the process. There are of course differing views as to the benefits of using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). There are numerous computer programs available which create the codes and aid in the management of data. However as Basit (2003) concludes the choice of whether to use CAQDAS "...will be dependent on the size of the project, the funds and time available, and the inclination and expertise of the researcher" (p. 143).

For this research NVivo was used. It aided in the organisation and coding of all the data, as well as saving time due to the flexibility of changing or reorganising data as the process developed.

Codes are used in the collection of most data, be it qualitative or quantitative, as a means to manage a large amount of data. However for grounded theorists codes are worked on throughout data collection to ensure the researcher is continuously engaging with the analytical process. Charmaz (2003) emphasises that grounded theory analysis should begin early in the process and data should be coded as collected. She notes:

Coding helps us to gain a new perspective on our material and to focus further data collection, and may lead us in unforeseen directions. Unlike quantitative research that requires data to fit into *preconceived* standardized codes, the researcher's interpretation of data shape his or her emergent codes in grounded theory. (Charmaz, 2003, p. 258)

Although there are benefits to instantly coding as Charmaz (2003) notes, when coding using a software package it can only work as well as your input allows it. As MacMillan and Koenig (2004) assert, there is a danger of assuming software packages conduct the analysis as opposed to organising the data; "...this view implies that the better the researcher is at working the program, the better the analysis" (MacMillan & Koenig, 2004, p. 182). Similarly as Brewer (2000) notes, the focus on coding by grounded theorists' is often criticised:

Grounded theory also offends postmodern sensibilities by constructing a single authoritative voice that gives an 'exclusive' interpretation of the data. Thus, they seek ways of representing data that do not constrain and confine it to analysts' codes, which is the premise of grounded theory (p. 154).

It is thus important that coding does not limit the research but rather is a way of managing and extracting information from the data. Similarly it is crucial to be attentive during the analysis process to ensure no crucial pieces of data are overlooked. In this research it soon became apparent that the original coding was not sufficient to cover the range of information being collected and the depth of views being expressed. This resulted in a re-evaluation of the data analysis techniques.

It was decided that although continual transcribing was beneficial to ensure engagement with the data and field, there was a need to begin coding again from the start once all interviews had been conducted. This is different to the data analysis techniques typical of grounded theorists (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994) but helped to ensure transparency by ensuring I was constantly being reflexive upon my own research. Grounded theorists suggest that by following definite coding rules theory can emerge from the collected data. However for this research, while a theory was not decided upon prior to entry into the field, the continual reading and re-evaluation of theories allowed notions of identity and agency to emerge and be used as a lens when thematic analysis was undertaken.

NVivo was used as a resource to aid with the organisation of data, as well as to categorise data into certain coding strands. The early reflections and engagement with data led the research into ‘unforeseen directions,’ although thematic coding was adopted allowing all participants views to be explored and analysed under broad themed topic areas. Both tree nodes and free nodes within the NVivo package were used to reduce the possibility that vital pieces of information were missed or overlooked. Tree nodes allowed certain themes to be linked together or to be classified under broad headings, for example under a heading of violence there was a related, but subfield, entitled knife crime. Free nodes were also used; these were pieces of information that, while crucial, did not link specifically to other categories or were stand alone issues that needed to be addressed individually, e.g. gang definitions. The benefit of using a program such as NVivo was that it was possible to change the free nodes to tree nodes or vice versa if the emerged data started to link to other pieces of information.

Conclusion

The methodological approach, which drew on both grounded theory and ethnography, was underpinned by a social constructionist epistemology and a commitment to reflexivity. The chosen methods were observant participation, reflexive recordings, in-depth interviews and the use of secondary statistical data. This allowed the epistemology to guide the research whilst ensuring the methodology and methods were flexible, reactive and engaging for participants.

I deliberately drew on previous youth work experience to adopt differing engagement strategies, including detached street work, football coaching and participation in youth and community events. By spending time in the community I became known which facilitated engagement with participants prior to interviewing them. Rapport, in differing forms, was crucial for this research process and for me as a researcher. The importance of making a connection with people ensured the data would be rich and benefited reflexive from learning. Since completing the data collection process I have reflected on why so many of the young people were honest and open with me during both informal

conversations and through the more formalised interview procedure. I partly put this down to building rapport, but also believe that the young people rarely get the opportunity, or time, to speak about their own lives and their own experiences with someone who is genuinely interested in their views on the world.

Since the research process has ended it has been more difficult than anticipated to completely cut off any connection with everyone from the research sites, notwithstanding the exit strategies I identified. I still have personal connection with many of the youth workers and often get informed if any of the young men interviewed have experienced major changes in their lives. In the week I had set to leave the research field one young man, who I had built a rapport with, stabbed another young man and was being sentenced on an attempted murder charge. In cases like this I have been kept informed about his progress and the outcome of his trials. This personal connection has not detracted from the research process but rather has ensured that I continually reflect and remind myself of the social context and lived experiences of the research participants.

The analysis process meant that I continuously read through transcripts and reflection to ensure all information was collated within the correct code. Both by coding in this manner and having transcribed all interviews personally, I became increasingly familiar with the data which contributed to the findings reported. Familiarity with the data allows new themes and narratives to emerge whilst simultaneously allowing depth of analysis that may otherwise be elusive.

The creation and finalisation of the theoretical framework was based upon readings throughout the data collection and coding of the data. By my in-depth review of the data, a number of theoretical traditions were discarded whilst others emerged that chimed with the views and perspectives of the participants. Data was not forced into preconceived codes based on fixed theory, nor was theory completely formulated from data. Instead the theoretical framework emerged from an iterative approach which allowed the data to be analysed and the framework to be adapted simultaneously.

The data collection process drew heavily on my personal views and values concerning how to conduct effective and relevant research. By drawing on two methodological traditions, whilst being clear about the manner in which data should be collected, it afforded flexibility and the ability to engage in reflexive practice throughout.

CHAPTER SIX

Gang Definitional Evidence

Introduction

This chapter explores in detail the participants' views on 'What is a gang?' This directly links to the first research question and draws on data from both research study areas. All quotes clearly indicate the participants' gender, pseudonym and age, where known (as some community members ages were not given).

This chapter is sub-divided into seven key areas, with the participants views displayed under the overarching theme. The first theme analysed is the concept that fighting discusses whether the gangs are willing to defend their space through physical means. The second theme relates to the gang identification within a geographical location. In the third section, the chapter discusses the notion of symbols and the symbolic representation of the gang. The fourth theme investigates whether the gangs examined can be determined by age of participants. The fifth section of the chapter analyses where the gang came from; whether the gang is a new phenomenon, a social construction passed on generationally, and/or a rite of passage for young people in certain areas. The sixth theme links to the notion of gender and questions whether this impacts on the roles adopted by gang members. The seventh, and final, part of this chapter considers the concept of race as an identifying factor of youth gangs. This relates more to the evidence gathered in area two as there was very little reference made to race within research area one. Nevertheless, there is a sizeable set of literature which questions if race is a means for gang affiliation; consequently this must be considered in relation to the collated data.

The chapter concludes by showing how the data empirically supports the proposed definition of a youth gang as proposed for this research:

A youth gang is a social process in which a named grouping of young people actively identify with a defined geographical space, is willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means, and is recognised by others.

Self-identification with the gang was one element to the gang definition proposed. While some young people clearly identified with being a gang member others felt that, as they were not actively looking for confrontation, they were a group of friends rather than a gang. This identification does not have to be continual and can vary depending on the place, space and context of the life course of the particular young person. Tam, a sixteen year old clearly self-identified with being a gang member at the time of the interview.

So would you say you were a part of a gang?

Aye

(Tam, 16, male, area 1)

Again for Jason:

...is there a young team in [research area]

Aye

And are you apart of that?

Yes.

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Other young people, while not identifying with the youth gang, were still labelled as gang members by others, socialised in the same grouping or engaged in similar activities as the boys above. For this study the process is two-fold, the personal identification with the gang and the recognition from others as being a member.

While a number of young people interviewed actively called themselves gang members, others did not. The reasons young people gave for no longer identifying with gang membership will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter. However, there was a difference between those young people, such as Dylan and John, who did not associate with gang membership and were also no longer willing to fight, compared to those who said they were not in a gang because they did not seek confrontation, but were still willing to fight if deemed necessary. As is demonstrated below, one of the main criteria which emerged as constituting a gang member was the willingness to, or involvement in, fighting.

Fighting as Identification with the Gang

The main characteristic that differentiated those young people who were in the gang from those who were not, was whether they fought with others from outside their social grouping. John replied when asked what makes you a part of a gang:

Fighting.

(John, 18, male, area 1)

In area two, when asked if there was a gang in the area, Willy replied:

You mean fighting?

(Willy, 26, male, area 2)

Again Lewis stated:

See when you were fighting, would you have said you were in a gang?

Aye.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

For some young people there was no distinction between self-identifying as a gang member and engaging in fighting: one is synonymous with the other.

Interestingly, Al differentiates between seeking a fight, as opposed to the willingness to fight.

...we don't fight with them now, but if we see them we'd still be fighting, but we just don't go looking for a fight or anything anymore, know what I'm talking about?

(Al, 19, male, area 1)

When the willingness to fight ceases to exist, the self-identification with the gang also diminishes. Donna, when asked if her brother was still in the young team despite being older, explained:

Hmhm because if like all the [neighbouring area] were to come up they would fight with them...

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

The willingness to fight can for most young people still denote affiliation with the youth gang. For other young people when they did not actively seek confrontation, their self-identification with the gang ceased to exist, even though they would still engage in fighting if deemed necessary. Dylan recently left the youth gang.

No, no I used to be man but it's just not for me the fighting and all that, wa'nae for me man

(Dylan, 18, male, area 2)

This lack of willing to engage in fighting has made Dylan's self-identification with the gang end because he was no longer willing to show solidarity with other gang members if they engage in physical fighting.

John summed up the difference between gang members and pals:

Aye a group of pals, no they don't fight with anybody so they're no a gang, that's the way I see it.

(John, 18, male, area 1)

Jack, when asked if he was in the youth gang stated:

What, aye sometimes, well not really there no' sort of one anymair

How come?

It's still [research area]; still same pals just don't fight really as much

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Jack 'sometimes' saw himself as being a part of the gang, but not when he was not fighting. For others, if the willingness to fight still exists, there is still an association with the youth gang. According to Sammy:

No, well, basically, I'm 24/25 but I still see myself as part of the young team 'cause if someone comes at me I'm not going to back down

So you're still in young team 'cause you would fight if you need to?

Aye and plus I wouldnae...and I'm small as well and so they're going to go, but I'm not going to back down so they can go for it...

(Sammy, 24, male, area 2)

The importance of proving oneself, or not back down, may stem from the need to assert one's identity over others but also to provide self-identity. It shows others a sense of agency, as having control over their lives. To not fight is to lose face, and potentially not be recognised as being able to defend yourself, or your territory. This could result in the young people being labelled as weak or lacking the ability, or power, to act. It can also be an indication of young people lacking options other than fighting when they are trying to assert and prove themselves at a certain stage in their life and in certain community circumstances.

Fighting used as Labelling a Gang Member

Fighting was used as a self-identifying trait of being a gang member but also as a means to recognise other gang members from other areas.

...the ones that you fight with, you see them all the time when you are fighting so you know who is in that gang

(John, 18, male, area 1)

Once the young people are known for fighting, they described being 'othered' (Young, 2007) by the neighbouring youth as a gang member, which can have a lasting impact upon their lives. Jason explained:

No. I don't do anything now, I don't gang fight or anything anymore I have not gang fought in two year or something, a year and a half/two year, I don't hang about [research area] that much anymore. I hang about them occasionally...but every time I see someone from a different area they would obviously notice me and then they would want to have a fight with me

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Being labelled a gang member but not wanting the identity imposed will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage. Suffice to note that some young people had been 'othered' (Young, 2007) by differing groups of youth, resulting in difficulties discarding the label. Al explained how though his personal identity had shifted; other people's views had not necessarily corresponded.

We don't fight with anybody anymore but it's just were all together but people will look at us and say well that a gang aint they, know what I mean, like polis look in their cameras and go...phew...oh there's a gang, know what I mean, but it's no like that, it's just a crowd of us

(Al, 19, male, area 1)

John was asked if others still see him as a gang member and replied:

I think maybe adults do, the mums 'n das still see them as if they are a gang...because they walk about in a group and they are...looking boys from...they're young and most of the adults still see them as being in a gang but if they don't fight I don't see them as a gang I see them as a group of pals, I don't see them as a gang.

(John, 18, male, area 1)

The young people themselves know who is, or is not, affiliated with the gang because of their willingness or involvement in fighting, however parents and community residents may not be aware of this identity shift. The young people are seen as socialising in the same group and engaging in similar activities as they have done previously. Many residents will not be present when the young team are actually fighting and thus if an individual chooses not to fight the residents would not be aware of this change in status.

This identification with physical fighting resonates with part of the definition that was proposed for this research: '...is willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means and is recognised by others'.

Hagedorn and Macon (1988) found that the gangs they studied were nearly all "fighting" gangs, while other academics (Lien, 2005), have focussed on violence as opposed to fighting per se. Lien (2005) argues violence, as well as youth and crimes, are the identifying features of a gang. This data does not suggest that part of the group constitution is the committal of crimes beyond engaging in fighting. The notion that violence is the main 'purpose' of the gang can be misleading and results in a negative interpretation of the young people from the outset (Hallsworth & Young, 2008).

Mays (1956) definition of delinquency resonates with the collected data:

The gang or group meets the needs of the individual boy in a variety of ways, furnishing opportunities for display and providing occasions for earning the respect and affection of his contemporaries. The content of the group's

activities is largely determined by the environment as its ethics are regulated by social traditions (p. 149).

The fighting that many of the young people discuss is carried out as a means of asserting the identity of the gang, and area, over other neighbouring youth gangs and thus symbolically over their areas. To not fight when challenged allows others to assume victory and thus bring into question the individual's, gang's and territory's identity. Engaging in fights, or having the reputation of being willing to fight, creates solidarity within the gang, whilst simultaneously differentiating them from others. It is also used, as Sammy shows above, as a means of asserting the individual's ability to act, demonstrating that they have agency.

Mays (1956) suggests that the grouping provides positive stability through reassertion of identity and is a social process in which young people engage with prevailing social traditions. He acknowledges the importance of the environment, concurring with the views held by many of the young people. A crucial part of the proposed definition is that the fighting is based on promoting or defending a particular territory and thus simultaneously, the identity of the gang.

Many young people discussed being labelled a gang member as a result of their previous engagement, or current willingness to fight, despite their current self-identification being different. This process of being labelled as a gang member, notwithstanding shifts in self-identification, resonates closely with the work of Erikson (1964) who suggested: "Deviance is not a property *inherent in* certain forms of behaviour; it is a property *conferred upon* these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them" (p. 11).

This label of being a gang member may be hard to shift or move away from. Thus irrespective of the young people's personal feelings about gang membership their identity as a gang member, who is willing to fight, is recognised, albeit in a negative manner by others. Those who have been 'othered', who are victims of these often negative sentiments, harden themselves, often in a macho manner (Young, 2007), finding it hard to walk away from a fight if one should present itself, despite not actively seeking conflict.

Community Members- Fighting

It is also important to examine the views of community members concerning gang membership given that they are the essential other party to any concept of agreement:

...they stand altogether and it is basically one big gang, and it is because there is naewhere to go and nothing tae do. They cannae leave this place at all, they go to sign on and they have got to go in a crowd as well cause they fight with the ones from [neighbouring area], they cannae go to [street name] they fight with the ones up there, they cannae go near the [area] they fight there, the [area name], they cannae go anywhere they are stuck here in this space.

(Female community resident, area 1)

This view of the gang resonates with the statements from the young participants. In short, fighting with the neighbouring youth gang constitutes a large part of gang membership; however this interviewee also shows an understanding of how and why the gang develops and is maintained.

In area two, many community residents acknowledged that those young people, who they viewed as being in a gang, were the ones who fought with other gangs. As Josie, a community resident and sister of a young man who was involved in gang violence suggested:

Yep aye so you would have like, it was known as the [neighbouring area] [gang name], or [gang name] from here or young [area] or whatever they called themselves and then you would have [neighbouring area] that was like Young [gang name], but they were like known groups and they were like known people in groups and who would associate with those groups and then they would come and whether it was here in [research area] or at the bridge at [neighbouring area] or the myre at [neighbouring area] and they would like have fights, but I don't think that happens as much.

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Again Betty, an elderly community resident from area two when asked about her views on her area said:

...there is a lot of gangs and youth and years ago it used to be the [neighbouring area] came up and fight with the [research area] and then after that it was [other neighbouring area] came up and fight with the [research area] and the [neighbouring area], the [neighbouring area] and the [research area] all used to really fight.

(Betty, elderly community resident, female, area 2)

The repeated emphasis on fighting is clearly apparent in this set of community views, as is the recognition of labelling associated with gang membership. As Betty points out this is not a new phenomenon, but a community experience that stretches back over years, this introducing an inter-generational dimension.

Youth Workers- Fighting

Many of the youth workers' definition of a gang reiterates what has already been discussed above.

[Pause] I would say there is quite a lot that go looking for fights but there is some people who, there may be, as I said earlier, go into someone's area and get attacked, so it might be that they go looking for revenge so that might swing them [to] being involved in the gang, because they've got a common goal...

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

Chris, a youth worker in area two, again felt fighting was the key differentiation for who is in the gang and who is not.

Aye the ones who are gonna fight aye, it's the fighting

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

These youth workers are well placed to recognise the essential elements involved in being a gang member, given their professional relationship with many of the young people involved.

Although only one police representative from each area was interviewed it nevertheless provides an important insight into the views of the police who work on a day to day basis within each research area.

Police- Fighting

Not surprisingly fighting was raised as a main concern of the police in relation to gang activities. However, the police officer from area one did not use this solely as a sole defining criterion for gang involvement and rather suggested:

...they won't all be very active in gang fighting and stuff like that, but they are still a gang causing anti-social behaviour and the residents of the area will get quite sick of it you know.

(Police officer, male, area 1)

When asked directly how the police officer would identify who was in a gang or what constitutes a gang, he spoke of both physical and symbolic reassertion of the gangs and area's identity. The police officer in area two linked the level of fighting to economic deprivation.

I would only be speculating but I assume there will be some kind of correlation between deprivation and gangs and I don't suppose you will, you will not see the same level of fighting in an area like [wealthy area] or in an area with a lot of money, so I would probably put it down to that there will be a factor there

(Police officer, male, area 2)

For the police officer in area two, fighting was again acknowledged as an identifying feature of the gang, although the officer from area one still suggested

you could be in a gang without being involved in the fighting. Similarly both officers noted the use of symbolic representation to assert the existence of gangs. The officer from area one stated when asked how he identified what a gang was:

As soon as they start congregating on a regular basis in certain areas and they give themselves a tag, you know there is hundreds of gangs names in Glasgow and you start to see it getting written on walls with the graffiti...
(Police officer, male, area 1)

From area two the police representative again asserted,

...there is a lot of young people who associate themselves with that and a lot of graffiti tags in closes kinda [gang initials], see that quite a lot in closes that are insecure
(Police officer, male, area 2)

When referring to 'closes' the police officer is using a colloquial word for the communal entrance vestibule and stairwell of traditional tenement blocks of flats often found within urban Glasgow.

In short, the statements from the police officers show a nuanced understanding of the nature of gang membership, as well as an acknowledgement of the, multi-dimensional nature of fighting gangs, with the use of symbolic assertion of identity being as prevalent as incidences of violence. All participants identified fighting as a signifier of gang involvement and while some young people discussed inter-group fighting, it was fighting with people from outside the area which primarily contributed to making the youth group, a youth gang.

Identification with a Geographical Location Young People

An important part of the proposed definition for a youth gang was: '...a grouping of young people actively identify with a defined geographical space...'

When asking the young people in both areas whether part of the gang's definition related to a specific geographical space the majority of respondents answered positively. Jason when questioned whether anyone can join the youth gang clearly explained:

Just certain people, just certain people that are brought up with it, there are just...it is not people who just go "aw can I join the young team" know what I mean it is not people who just go "can we join [research area]" know what I mean it is like people who have been brought up around it know what I mean?

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Although John suggested being from an area did not automatically make you a gang member, the fact of fighting with other young people from the neighbouring area ensured that you were. This seems to demonstrate the territorial basis of the gang's affiliation and the rationale for confrontation with others.

...see if you're from an area does that mean you're part of the gang?

Well not really but that's what they thought with me but if someone from the [neighbouring area] and I was fighting, if they didn't fight with me then they wouldn't be seen as part of the gang

(John, 18, male, area 1)

If a young person from another area declined confrontation, John would no longer see that person as a gang member. However if they show willing to fight, they will be labelled a member of the gang.

Gang affiliation is two-fold, it is area based, but equally the willingness to fight alongside others from the area, against people from outside, is also important. Joe and Mark, both aged fourteen, explained that the fighting was clearly linked to where they lived. When asked who fought, they responded:

Joe: The [neighbouring area] and the [research area 1].

Mark: They just want to hit each other wi' bricks an' that, until they get done.

So it's not really about anything ...

Mark: Because of where they live.

(Joe, 14 and Mark, 14, males, area 1)

Al, a nineteen year old who had a long criminal record and throughout the course of the research had been in and out of prison explained:

Aye, I fight with [mentions opposing gang name], running about, people from [neighbouring area] and [neighbouring area] and all that that's all the gang, wouldn't sit talkin to them, the way I'm talkin to you...we'd be fighting man, that's just the way it is

(Al, 19, male, area 1)

Fighting based on territory allegiances is not a new phenomenon. As Mark and Joe state, the fighting is about where you live and for Al, 'that's just the way it is'. There is a clear identification with a defined geographical space. A youth gang in this study was not found to be nomadic, linked to sport or religion, but was based solely on the identification with a defined geographical space. This identification can restrict the movements of the young people but can also prescribe who they would/ should fight with and in so doing serve to re-assert their identity as fighting men.

Sammy summed up the 'othering' of people from a different area when he finished Willy's sentence and said:

Willy- No because people from different schemes...

Sammy- they live different lives...

(Willy, 26 and Sammy, 24, males, area 2)

The differentiation of others, reasserts the sameness of the group, be that the local gang or the broader community. Parker (1974) found in his work in Roundhouse, Liverpool in 1974 that the young males he worked with spoke of 'them' as opposed to 'us' in discussing different sections of the community. Arguably this again is reasserting the sameness of the group whilst differentiating themselves from others; an essential element in constructing identity to differentiate the specific gangs from others whose members may well share similar socio-economic conditions and life experiences despite living in different areas.

Community Members- Identification with a Geographical Location

Territorial affiliation was also a key characterisation of what constituted a gang for community members. The male community member in area one noted the importance of territory.

Well I don't actually know the names of the gangs, but I do know they are territorial and I have spoken to people that say oh yeah he comes from that area etc, so I do know that they are incredibly clued up and see territory as incredibly important but I don't really know who is who.

(Male community resident, area 1)

Many community members, from both areas, discussed territorial fighting. For Darren:

I don't think they are like the Famous Five or something like that where they have a constitution and stuff like that but I do think that they do use terms to describe themselves sometimes but I...my feelings are it's probably when they are actually up against another group of young people from another area and so I do think it is tied to territorialism and stuff like that...

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

The majority of community residents view the youth gang as specifically identifying with the local area, and that fighting with the neighbouring area is a mark of gang membership. When Josie was asked what she thought a gang was she noted:

I would say, just my kinda understanding of it, if someone said to me aw the young team in [research area] oh the [research area] young team, I would associate it with fighting I would associate it with a kinda gang, I would associate it with violence, about territorial, about a kinda group, that is just my understanding of it, that's what I would...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

This marries the notions of fighting (and even violence) and territoriality. Although Josie is clear about the territorial affiliation, many interviewees appear to take the youth gang's identification with a particular locality for granted. It is acknowledged that territorial fighting occurs. Some residents felt the fighting had subsided slightly, while others believed it was normal behaviour and still others blamed people from outside the area for causing trouble and inciting retaliation.

The territorial nature of the gang can also be viewed in a negative manner, something which Wallace and Coburn (2002) are keen to challenge. They argue that territoriality is an association with symbolic displays and ritualised action that the young people have engaged with and has been known to them from a young age; that they are socialised into. They also note that, this localised identification and knowledge, demonstrates connections with people within their community and thus facilitates the development of trusted community networks, or as Putnam (2000) would term it, bonding social capital. The importance of these localised connections is discussed in greater detail in chapter eleven.

This research shows that gang association is closely aligned with localised identification. Arguably this territorial affiliation, alongside the engagement in collective violence, increases the gangs sense of identity (Kintrea, et al., Oct 2008) as well as feelings of security (Wallace & Coburn, 2002). Darren, a

community resident summed up this proposition, reflecting the quandary that it could also present:

I think like em because people, it's a really positive thing that people become embedded within their communities but the negative thing is the parochial thing isn't it like and eh and that they don't realise that there is a whole world out there and that the world could be their oyster, I mean there is all sorts of structures that might hold them back but I mean by having the strong community kind of thing it keeps them in their place as well like you know. So I do think it has limitations on their lives, definitely.

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

The young people and the community residents acknowledged both fighting and territorial allegiances as key characteristics for the youth gang. For John, being recognised as part of the gang was directly related to fighting for your area. Arguably this recognition may be actively sought by many young people within the two research areas. As Young (2007) discusses people need, and strive for, the justice of recognition. Although for Young (2007) reward and recognition are active creations and relate to the response from broader society, "Recognition involves the notion of respect and status allocated to all...it also involves the notion of the level of esteem or social status being allocated justly" (Young, 2007, p. 61).

The manner in which youth gangs strive for recognition from others may not always be beneficial for the young people themselves in the long term as Darren notes. Nevertheless, recognition can provide a level of esteem or social status within the young people's own areas (Barry, 2006). Consequently there can be a quandary between the community level recognition that may be granted by others and the societal recognition which may not be accurate or allocated and/or distributed in a just or positive manner.

Youth Workers- Identification with a Geographical Location

The emphasis on recognition and identity necessitates a closer examination of identification with geographical location from the perspective of a number of interviewees that the young people themselves interact with.

Luke explained that gang fighting and territoriality affected ‘everybody’.

...there was a study done in this area a few years ago em with young people to find out how many young people are actually involved in gangs and this being a big area there was only actually 5% of young people directly involved in gangs, so but the other 95% are all em, no part of it but it has an effect on their life...

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

For Jan territorial alignment was crucial to the gang and can even impact upon those who do not self-identify as being in the gang.

I think so, because he, because he comes from an area you are considered to be a part of that gang a lot of time, even though you might no have involvement in the gangs, if you are a well known character you are just assumed to be one of the gang.

(Jan, full time youth worker, female, area 1)

This suggests that the gang is a clear way of gaining an identity. If the young person has a clear reputation, an identity as being a character it is assumed they are a part of the gang. This assumption suggests that the gang is the most tangible means of gaining an identity and that this is a recognised pathway by others outside of the gang.

Mel, resonating with many young people’s views, explained:

I think it is just life. It is passed down through generation and generation and family and family, “oh we don’t talk to that...”, “we fight with that street and

that street” or “when I was a boy I used to fight with that street” or whatever and I think it is kinda put down.

(Mel, full time youth worker, female, area 2)

For Chris, the territorial nature is actually promoted by the broader community.

As a species we are pretty focussed on that anyway, you know we are sorta, we focus ourselves in small communities and we very rarely move out of that and young folk just kinda buy in to that we are quite territorial anyway

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

This last statement begins to allude to a level of agreement between the youth gang and their local community. If territoriality is promoted by the broader community then the youth gang members may be conditioned to accept this perception and to organise themselves within this framing.

Police- Identification with a Geographical Location

Both police officers defined the gang as being from the same area,

... [I] would kinda say it is a group of young people, who maybe identify with something maybe the socially same area that they are growing up in, maybe got the same problems, the same background, identifying with something, it is like a kinda common thing to identify with

(Police officer, male, area 2)

This officer not only notes that the gang is linked to the area, but recognises that the gang is a means of gaining a collective identity for the young people.

The issue of territoriality based on area identification was raised by the officer in area one:

Well its historical between the [neighbouring area] and the [research area] [gang name], it has been happening for years, it is just all down to the area

they come from, they are quite close to each other, but the [research area] boys couldn't go into the [neighbouring area] and vice versa, and if they did there was always altercations between them and it resulted in fighting with weapons and stuff, all sorts, people being injured, you know so...

And so is it just territorial?

All territorial aye. And historical but it is that territorial, the reason it all happened you know.

(Police officer, male, area 1)

The officer from area two explained that

...in the past it is territorial you know this is our area or people going into other areas and getting assaulted, their kind of territory, what you doing here?

(Police officer, male, area 2)

The police officers both acknowledged the territorial element of gang affiliation but the officer from area one also suggested territorial affiliation was historical. This suggests a generational norm of youth gang activity based on territorial allegiances which community member, Betty, alludes to in her comments earlier in the chapter.

The data so far informs us that the youth gang identifies with a specific geographical space, is a continued social entity that is recognised by others and that fighting with outsiders to sustain the gang's and thus the areas identity is a large part of the gang construction.

Symbols

While anti-social activity, as referred to by one of the police interviewees, and fighting are commonly associated with gang membership and gang identities, the

symbolic representation must also be considered. As noted in chapter two, the need for collective identity is often created through symbolic means such as a collective name. This not only becomes a label to be identified with by the young people but can be used as a means of recognition for people outside the gang. When asking Al if there are any clear symbols he noted:

[Initials of gang name] or something, just put your name and underneath [initials of gang name]...just [name of gang] that's it man
(Al, 19, male, area 1)

This asserts the importance of a ‘...named grouping...’ as highlighted in the proposed definition. In area two the young people have adopted two names, one which they say refers to a type of music. Whilst working in the area some residents and a police officer questioned whether the label was also used as an acronym against people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The young people and youth workers deny this accusation and can explain in detail the origins and background of the particular music trend adopted. The other gang name adopted in area two, as was the case in area one, had a clear connection to the geographical area that the gang was from. These names were used as self-identifying labels but also used by others as a way of recognising which territory that particular gang was located within.

John notes the dual importance of fighting and having a name to graffiti.

Fighting and writing menties (*menties- mentions of your name or the gangs name*) like the gangs name or whatever so as people see it
(John, 18, male, area 1)

This further suggests that it is necessary to assert the gang's identity to others outside of the gang. It is crucial that people, inside and/or outside the community, know and see that there is a gang in existence. This supports the proposed definition of a gang as an identity within which the young people are “...willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic...means”.

Youth workers were also quick to recognise this phenomenon.

Youth Workers- Symbols

Luke associates symbolic demonstrations of the gang's identity as a characteristic of gang involvement, saying,

...there is a lot of young people who they maybe not know they are starting to be involved, but some young people, as young as five and six who won't be necessarily involved in gang fighting by throwing bricks or bottles or knife crime, however, they'll still shout their scheme name, their gang's areas name and they know who their rival area is so already they are sort like, going on into this gang member because of the way their mindset is because they are learning that off their peers and older brothers and sisters and some family and just other people out in the area that's what they know, as young as that, five and six.

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

Luke suggests that even if the individual does not self-identify with gang membership, the label imposed by others is enough to classify these youngsters as gang members. This can result in a number of young people being classed as gang members, when they have simply been shouting their area's name or getting involved in what could be perceived as a game, something which everyone else also seems to be doing. However, being labelled a gang member is not enough to warrant being in a gang, rather all elements of the definition must hold true to allow the young person to be recognised as a gang member by the gang itself.

Although there were no formalised symbolic rituals required to enter the gang, there was an element of having to asserting individual identity by proving a willingness to fight and/or protect the area in some means or manner.

I think it is just because they come from an area but I don't think that they might have to prove themselves as well, it might be fighting with somebody or else putting themselves forward to, I don't know, I know people who have

had their tyre slashed and things like that and I think a lot of the time they don't even realise they are being kinda initiated into the gang but they are.
(Jan, full time youth worker, female, area 1)

Luke explained a 'hardening' of the individual's image so others see them as willing to go along with the group activities and self-image.

...I wouldn't say there isn't any initiation or ritual or anything they would have to go through but I'm sure at some point certain people have to prove themselves, whether at eight or nine/ ten what ever they might have to just smash a bus window, steal 50pence from their ma's purse, something, to go and get stuff for the boys. There's always some people that have to do some stuff to prove themselves whereas some people might have bigger brothers who are already involved in the gang so they are just through, that's fine with them, but other people it might be a bit different and they have to prove themselves and it's, a lot of them get manipulated...
(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

There was a need for the young people to prove that they are prepared and have the ability to act in a particular way, congruent with the promotion of the gang. For Young (2007) many young people who feel uncertain or insecure will resort to 'hardening' their image to gain recognition or create an identity for themselves. The need to prove oneself either by being the 'big man' within the group, or fighting with others, may well be born from a feeling of ontological insecurity. The territorial aspect to the gang suggests that there is an 'othering' (Young, 2007) of those from different communities, and asserting oneself in opposition to them helps to create a 'secure base' within the gang. As noted above, these actions can be part of a process of self affirmation where there is a need to display external sense of security and identity, whether this be in a harmful or negative manner towards others, or engagement in personal risk behaviours to regain an element of control, ontological security and agency. This outward display can be accomplished through both physical and symbolic means.

The Origins of the Gang

Young people

Most young people suggested the gang had been around for a long time, alluding to learned behaviour from older generations. Some young people had more specific individualised reasons for joining the gang such as Lewis, who after the death of his partner became involved in increased risk behaviour and gang identification. However, Al's explanation was more typical of the views of young people involved in the study.

Fuck knows man it's been since I was a wee boy man they've been going at it know what I mean then I just started cause every cunt else is doing it...So it was like sound, man, cause all my pals were doing it I started doing it..

He continued:

...Aye it's the way you're brought up n all aint it, know the way you were brought up off your family, but just the way you're, who you're hanging about with what everyone else is doing, you just don't want to be the only one who's no' doing it, so you're just gonna do what everyone else is doing no what I mean

(Al, 19, male, area 1)

Sammy succinctly linked the importance of area and the generational nature of the gang:

...well if you are brought up in a scheme, then you are going to be a part of the team!

(Sammy, 24, male, area 2)

Dylan, pointed towards more structural identity based reasons.

Just through when I moved down here man, like if your not part of the gang kind of thing your no' from here, so I had to be a part of the gang and all that and fight for them and all that...

(Dylan, 18, male, area 2)

For Dylan, the identity of the gang was inextricably linked to the identity of the area. If you were not seen as being a member of the gang then you were not viewed as being within the in-group of the area. He, like Al above and Jack below, suggested joining the gang was a normalised action to take. As Jack explained:

It's a thing that has just been brought up years and years ago and they have always got to do it no matter what the polis say they have always got to do it so...

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Jack alludes to a lack of choice when becoming a part of the youth gang in the area. There is an expectation that he will get involved in the youth gang, that it was a path he was going to take irrespective of outsiders views on the behaviours. There is a belief that there will always be young people involved in the gang. Jack was aware that the police were critical of the gang activities but suggested that due to the generational and historical tradition it will be carried on despite the potential negative consequences. Again when asked if it would stop he stated:

No

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Dylan also said, when asked if the gang would ever stop:

No, no definitely no, because there is always new people coming into the gang and that so that'll continue, whereas the ones I used to hang about have grown up and my age and all that now, but there are younger ones coming up so it will continue, like generation after generation if you know what I'm talking about man.

(Dylan, 18, male, area 2)

Most of the young people suggested the gang would continue. The gang is not a new phenomenon but instead is a continuing social tradition or social process. Dylan also noted that as some young people mature from the gang there will be others to take their place. 'Generation after generation' the gang is recognised and exists. Although it may not manifest itself in the exact same manner in every generation, there is an entity that has a historical tradition, which has similar traits and is identifiable as a youth gang. For the young participants there is no suggestion that this entity will cease to exist in the near future.

While some young people's family were involved in the youth gang over previous years, this was not applicable to all and does not solely explain gang identification. Rather, being part of the gang is based on being from a particular geographical area and being willing to defend this area both physically and symbolically. Establishing this willingness may be due to personal trauma, as for Lewis, or from a feeling of peer pressure, as for Al. The young people who reject this behaviour may be questioned by other young people in their neighbourhood and would not be seen as being involved in the in-group. However, as noted above, the issue of demonstrating agency is also important, and various factors can reinforce this requirement. Once established as a gang member it is also apparent that it can be difficult to disassociate as some young people who no longer identify with gang membership may still be perceived as a gang member by others, particularly within the broader community or society.

The social construct of a gang has existed over time and must be acknowledged by others in order for it to continue to exist. The participants' comments already noted demonstrate the reality of this recognition. However, if the gang entity is generational in nature, the views of the community members can illuminate aspects that contribute to the agreement between the youth gang and their local community.

Community Members- The Origins of the Gang

Clare, a thirty nine year old who was born in area two and had also been involved in working with some of the young people, suggested,

...I think it has been learned behaviour with some
(Clare, 39, community resident, female, area 2)

Michael placed blame on the families for normalising behaviours he deemed unacceptable.

The only thing I would say about that, that there are people when I was younger and they now have kids and they don't act anymore responsible than their kids so what is going to happen is their kids are going to grow up thinking that being like that is alright, know what I mean.
(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

Whether families are involved or not, all the community members agree that a gang, in varying guises and degrees of seriousness, has existed over a long period of time and as such there is an ongoing entity that an agreement can be entered into with. As Pearson (1983) notes: "Across the centuries we have seen the same rituals of territorial dominance, trials of strength, gang fights, mockery against elders and authorities, and antagonism towards 'outsiders' as typical focuses for youthful energy and aggressive mischief" (p. 221).

This is not to suggest that gangs can be dismissed as the norm and should not be studied and analysed. Rather there is clarification, on the basis of the views of both the young people and the community members, that the youth gang is a social process whose existence is recognised by others. The gang exists as an entity, albeit a potentially changing and fluid entity, within the local area. Despite the diversity of views about the nature of the gang, it is a reality that must be recognised and engaged with in some manner.

Youth Workers- The Origins of the Gang

Chris argued,

...they just inherit what the gang is in that area that they are brought up in.

He went on to emphasise this point, saying,

...you are a part of a gang and you name yourself a gang because you're from an area. You associate yourself with it, whether you're a part of it or no, you associate yourself with it, so there is no structure in it, it's just [research area] young team and from here, the [gang name] boys are from [other area] and the [area name] are the young [gang name] and the [area name] are the young [area] Nazis...so if you come from that area you are a member, there is nae debating, nae getting out of it, nae membership forms nae initiation, it's just you live in that area, that is your team that is your gang...

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

Chris suggests that the local gang label is one that young people will identify with even if they are not actively a part of the youth gang. This categorisation - that if you are from an area you will automatically identify with the youth gang, has not been the view of everyone within the community, but there is still a danger that all young people from a certain area will be labelled and branded as gang members, particularly by external agencies.

Nevertheless, the views expressed do demonstrate that the geographical surroundings, as well as the symbolic community are both inextricably linked with the youth gang. It also suggests that the gang is a recognised entity within the community and is a tangible means of gaining a sense of self-identity for many young people. If young people are associating themselves with the gang, just because they are from the area, it assumes that they are getting something out of this identification. Arguably, they are strengthening their sense of identity; by saying they are a part of the gang, and thereby buying into the community that the

gang identifies with. They are becoming aligning with an entity that is already broadly recognised by the community.

All the community workers within both areas point to the gang being generational and inherited by the young people from others.

I think it is a generational thing, I think it is copied, I think especially the stuff to do with the territory and stuff, it is definitely generational, it is definitely coming from what their parents told them, who was in groups and who was...and it was glamorised as well, it is kinda made into something
(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

For Mel:

...a lot of this is inherited, this gang culture and their view, it comes fae growing up and thinking that is totally acceptable.
(Mel, full time youth worker, female, area 2)

Luke above stated that young people learn territorial behaviour and the gang name from an early age. Jan who also works with young people in the local schools explained:

... it has been passed from generation to generation, [gang name], [gang name], [gang name], [gang name], [gang name] and a lot of them don't know the proper name of the scheme.
(Jan, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

That many young people do not know the real name of their area suggests that the wider community may use the gang name as an identifying name for their community. Although Jan is discussing a larger geographical area that falls outside of the research areas, this hints to a clear agreement between the community members and the local youth gang. The fact that the youth gang name is used over and above the official area name suggests an explicit recognition of the gang's role within the community. This may be to potentially protect and

maintain the identity of the geographical area but also locates certain families as key community members, given their inter-generational association with the gang. It also highlights the role of the gang as part of bonding social capital.

The youth workers note that involvement in the gang is often from a young age and is not something that all make an informed choice about. The gang has been in existence for generations and is passed on to younger people through others in the community thus a young person may see this as a normalised grouping to be involved with and in some cases, even an inherited status.

Police- The Origins of the Gang

The police officer from area two also saw the gang as a cyclical process which can be passed on from generation to generation.

...you might see a cycle as some start to get older that it starts again... You do, sometimes it is families that you will sometimes see it with younger brothers or sister kinda, if an older brother has been a member of a gang they will maybe move on and the younger ones will maybe step into that void that has kinda been vacated and you get all their associates and friends and that, they all live in the area as well, all pals that go to the same school...

(Police officer, male, area 2)

Again the officer from area one emphasised the length of time the territorial and gang affiliation had been going for. He did not see this as a new phenomenon but rather,

...some of those gang fights have been going on for over a hundred years.

(Police officer, male, area 1)

Again these views reinforced that the gang has a historical identity within the research communities. There is an acknowledgement that much of the behaviour is territorial and that the areas identity is presented to others through both physical and symbolic means. Although the police were at pains to suggest that this type

of activity was diminishing both noted that was unlikely to go away indefinitely given the long generational history to the conflict and gang identification.

Gender

All Views

The role of gender within the categorisation of a youth gang has yet to be discussed. The proposed definition offered, is not gender specific as females may be involved in activities that could be labelled as gang behaviours and others may actively identify with a local gang. Those who were interviewed felt that girls tend not fight or identify with gang behaviour to the same extent as young males do. Donna, a sixteen year old, explained her view on the role of females.

No like the lassies don't really fight, they used to like the last lassies if you know what I mean, like the older ones that are pure 21 the now but they used to but it is not really a team of lassies who will fight

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

She continued:

Aye well it is just if the boys are fighting the lassies will jump in sometimes. But the lassies will get called the lassies and then the boys will get called the boot boys or something and then it will be like boot birds or something like that, just like, like the toy birds or toy boys...

And are you one of them?

No I don't fight but I do hang about with them

So is the difference then, them wanting to fight?

Yeah

Right ok, so there are some girls that want to fight and some don't?

Hmhm

Right and so do you ever get in trouble with any of them or do you get on alright with them all?

No I get on with everybody, but em they are my pals still like know what I mean, so obviously if anything happened to them I would still and try and help them if they were fighting if you know what I mean...

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

In cases where some girls did actively fight, or identify with the youth gang, they are known to sometimes adopt a name which differs though links to that of the youth male gang. As the girls spoken to in this research did not identify with the gang it is difficult to substantiate or clarify this view. Although Donna did not identify with the local gang she did it make it clear that she would engage in a fight if a friend got involved in one. This demonstrates loyalty and solidarity with friends, rather than being deemed to be gang related, as it was not carried out to promote the identity of the gang or area.

For Pauline:

No, there isn't really any lassies that hang about [research area] you get the odd couple who come down and hang about for 3-4 months and then they go away cause it is a bit too wild

(Pauline, 16, female, area 2)

Although these interviewees did not think gang identification was strong amongst females, others within the community suggested that they have a bigger role within the gang. Some community members implied that the girls start the fights but it is the males who get physically involved in combat with others as a result of this.

In fact a lot of the fights I would see in the street, if you walk by a fight, it is usually a lassie screaming at somebody, just cause she is drunk she feels like watching someone getting smashed in. A lot of the time lassies can be worse than the guys, it is just unfortunate that the guys are the muscle.

(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

Cher, a youth worker, said that girls had a limited role within the gang, but agreed that they could fuel territorial fighting:

...when the girls move on and pass on this information as such, that these other gang members have said about them and this and that, then it's causing more conflict. Plus it's been known for girls to carry weapons as well, in their handbags and stuff like that.

(Cher, full time youth worker, female, area 1)

Luke, another youth worker, suggested:

Some girls, there is a very, very small minority who are more and more involved in the gang activity, but there will be some girls that will fight with each other from opposite ends, there is only a few like this that struggle to go into different areas, but most girls for a time, depends how long they are with their boyfriends, are happy where they are but then they don't really have allegiances to stay if it doesn't work out, they can move to different areas and different boys. Girls are quite happy to move about where the boys are.

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

Given the more limited identification with specific gang activity it would seem that girls have more mobility and are less restricted in territorial terms than the male gang members. However one police officer felt that girls had an active role in the gang grouping and that this role was expanding:

...it is definitely getting worse the females, see the young teenage lassies just now, they are very active gang members...

Fighting and stuff?

They will fight but drinking really heavily as well. They will carry...it is known they will carry the weapons because they know it is more likely that the guys will get stopped and searched for a voluntary search...

(Police officer, male, area 1)

There is lack of agreement about the role females play within the gang, if any at all. Batchelor (2009) argues that there has been increasing attention on the 'violent female' with little justification. Talking with eight hundred females between the ages of thirteen and eighteen about their experiences and view on violence Batchelor, Burman and Brown (2001) discovered that while many females had witnessed violent acts and showed a high tolerance of violence in various guises, none reported being a member of a gang. This finding reiterates the views the female members in this study expressed. However, even if self-identification is not high, others (community members, police etc.) may view things differently and label their activities as being signifiers of gang membership. The limited data collected within this research suggests that although females may adopt a peripheral or supportive role, they rarely get involved in physical fighting and do not seem as restricted in their mobility between different areas because of gang allegiances.

Race

All Views

Gang identity based on race was not raised within area one. The demographics of the area are somewhat different and immigration was not as high as in area two. In area two there was some suggestion that gang identification was defined along racial lines.

You've got the likes of different gangs, you have got the white gangs like "get rid of all the Pakistanis" you've got the Asian gangs, you have the

[neighbouring area gang name], you have the [neighbouring area], so you have got the white gangs, the Asian gangs, so they are all divided.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

Similarly Rita stated:

I think so no I think so it's like the stick to their own sorta clans like the white people and then there will be the Slovaks along [street name]

(Rita, community resident, female, area 2)

The police officer interviewed also differentiated the local youth gang on the basis of race:

...The [research area] young team I would say would predominantly be white, Scottish youth that are involved, it is certain ages

(Police officer, male, area 2)

Although there were separate groupings and different areas of socialisation, gang affiliation was not solely characterised by racial differentiation. When Darren was asked if he felt race was a criterion he answered:

I don't know if it's a criteria because when you look at like, when you look at that group [young local lads name] and that I think they are people who are going to become the young team or are already on the fringes of it so to speak but they are still too young...but you see the way they have got people like [ethnically mixed young lads name] stuff like that are a part of the group and they are quite a coherent group.

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

Darren suggests that the gang was not solely established nor based on the race of its members. Notwithstanding this view, when speaking to young people, who identified with gang membership, there was an indication that many held racist attitudes against the Slovaks and Czechs but this was seen to be linked to particular tensions towards specific groupings that had arisen due to a sharp

increase in the number of immigrants in the area, rather than being seen as a key characteristic of gang affiliation. Notwithstanding these racial tensions, I did not discover that a criterion for joining the gang was that one had to be white, even if the gangs in the main reflected the white demographics of the area there was some Asian young people who also identified with the youth gang. Sharon explained:

...there is a territorial issue with [street name] that is where mainly Roma young people hang out and sort of places like, this end of [research area] the park area of [research area], [research area] park, and this side is mainly the white kids, I think it is north [research area] that is predominantly working class white communities that are there and then [street name] is mainly migration, like new migration. So there is distinction with territorialism to do with where people are living and where people have settled and stuff like that.

(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

This suggests that the racial tensions within this particular area are similar to the territorial behaviour demonstrated with regard to neighbouring communities. The young people were not happy that the Roma population have moved into 'their' area but whilst racial tensions were apparent within area two, and will be discussed in detail later, race cannot be elaborated as a key characteristic in the working definition of a gang.

Conclusion

In summary then, the proposed definition of what a gang is, was suggested as,

A youth gang is a social process in which a named grouping of young people actively identify with a defined geographical space, is willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means and is recognised by others.

This definition has been deconstructed and analysed, allowing conclusions to be drawn from the evidence on - What is a gang? However the evidence gathered has highlighted some interesting insights into the nature of agreement between the youth gang and their local community which will be discussed further.

Jenkins (2008) noted the continual social process in which young people identify as being a member of a gang and which also entails others acknowledging the existence of the gang. While this is a continuing social process, young people can at differing stages, in differing places and spaces, feel they are a gang member, and at other times, not. Despite characterisation of membership being closely connected with the willingness to fight with others from a different area, this could also be related to how others viewed or labelled the gang.

The evidence demonstrated that the youth gang has been 'othered' by people outside the gang itself, particularly by other youth gang members from different areas. As suggested in the theoretical framework this can result in engagement in particular activities, namely fighting. However, the 'othering' may also take place because of the fighting. Engaging in physical combat with other youth gang members demonstrates various levels of the 'othering' process. The young people have hardened their image, they have self-identified with the gang because of their willingness to engage in physical combat with others. And consequently their existence as a gang has been recognised by others. Youth gangs from differing areas have 'othered' the youth gangs from the two research sites, in that they are also willing to engage in conflict. This suggests that the 'othering' has been based on essentialist ideas. The opposing youth gang members have been stereotyped as being different, as enemies who should mainly be interacted with in a negative and aggressive manner.

This aligns with the final element of the working definition, which specifies that the gang is 'recognised by others'. The second level of the labelling process is that others acknowledge the existence of the gang. All community members, youth workers and the young people themselves suggest that there is an entity known as a gang within each of the areas. Although views and opinions of this entity may vary, the majority of people agree that it exists.

Nevertheless, not all young people perceived themselves as gang members despite being labelled by others as such. This again means that the young people have been ‘othered’ in a negative manner, a form of recognition that may not be desired – as Laing (1961) makes clear, “All ‘identities’ require an ‘other’: some other in and through a relationship with whom self-identity is actualized. The other by his or her actions may impose on self an unwanted identity” (R.D Laing, 1961, p. 82). The sheer fact of being labelled a gang member does not make it so. Both elements, identification and recognition, must be apparent.

Jenkins (2008) notes that being identified and labelled as a gang member by others does not necessarily mean the young people will adopt this identification and act in the manner expected. Instead young people like John, while acknowledging that some people still label him as a gang member, refuses to abide by the placed stereotype or to act in accordance with it. However as Jenkins (2008) further suggests the placement of a label, and the individual’s ability to contest such labelling will also depend on the power and legitimacy of the person/organisation involved in the stereotyping. Thus labelling and consequent actions, such as power of arrest and surveillance, etc imposed by the police will have considerably more impact on those young people seeking to move away from gang association compared to the views of a youth worker who might think that they are still a gang member. In essence then while the youth gang is a real entity, recognised by others, the evidence suggests that its composition at any particular time may not necessarily chime with how members of the public and/or the authorities perceive it to be.

For some being a gang member ceases to exist when they reach a certain age or maturity. A number of respondents suggested that age was not a definitive means of categorising the youth gang, but rather membership was more likely to be linked to maturation from the gang. While maturation can be linked to age, it cannot be taken as conclusive in every case. This aspect will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

Not receiving justice of recognition, of being viewed as a 'legitimate citizen' by society, can encourage engagement in activities that serve to increase the gang member's own sense of security and identity. This can result in the self-identification with a group as a means of gaining an increased sense of security. Kinnvall (2004) explains: "One main response to such insecurity is to seek reaffirmation of one's self-identity by drawing closer to any collective that is perceived as being able to reduce insecurity and existential anxiety" (p. 741).

This sense of self-identification as augmented through involvement with the collective can be compounded through the labelling process. The fact that others place labels upon young people and 'other' them, demonstrates there is recognition of the youth gang. However this only alludes to a one-dimensional, almost superficial, level of engagement between the youth gang and their local community. While this chapter set out to specifically establish the nature of a youth gang, some insights can be drawn into the more complex phenomenon of geographical identification that needs to be examined and analysed.

In both areas there was a named grouping of people, generally young people, who identified with a localised, defined space. This grouping associated with a name derived from the territory and identified as members of a youth gang. However, this geographical identification was inextricably linked to the gang itself in area one. Luke and Jan, local youth workers, explained that many young people did not know the name of their neighbourhood but rather referred to it by the name of the local youth gang. This not only demonstrates that the youth gang is being recognised by others but that the youth gang is so established that it has subsumed the name of the local area. It also implies that part of the implicit agreement between this youth gang and their local community is that there is broader community acceptance of the long term existence of the gang. If this were the case then the agreement between the youth gang members and the local community could be demonstrated by Figure 2, as depicted in the chapter five above, where joint 'othering' of people outside the community takes place by the youth gang and community residents. The community members, far from 'othering' the youth gang in a negative or essentialist manner, are using the name of the youth gang as an identifier for their geographical area. Although this

finding related to a larger neighbouring geographical area than the specific research areas, this finding is felt to be important in informing the potential agreement between the youth gang members and their local community.

This chapter has established that the youth gang is a social process, where a named group of mostly young people identify with a geographical space. The next section of the proposed definition is ‘...are willing to defend this space through symbolic...means...’ The use of symbolic means to assert the gang’s identity has been discussed by the young people in relation to graffiti. The community members mentioned it in relation to young people congregating in certain areas; the youth workers in terms of identifying with the gang name; and the police by noting the readiness of young people to be symbolically involved in confrontation without actually engaging with it. This demonstrates that the young people are willing to demonstrate the existence of a gang within a geographical space and that they are members of the grouping. However, the mere fact of congregating in an area and using graffiti to display the name of the gang is not sufficient to establish that there is a youth gang. From personal experience of growing up in Belfast I used to congregate with a large group of peers and occasionally individuals names, or political slogans, were painted on walls. Despite this we did not identify ourselves as a youth gang, we did not have a collective name, nor were we labelled as a gang. It is for this reason that the process of symbolically defending *and* physically being willing to defend the space has been identified as being important, rather than solely the former.

Willingness to fight was used as a self-identifying trait of being in a youth gang and as an outward display of affiliation to the local gang. However, it is not enough to simply state preparedness to fight as there will undoubtedly be an occasion where willingness will be translated into the reality of engagement. The fighting is carried out by gang members for a ‘purpose’, i.e. to defend their local geographical space. This again is based on the process of ‘othering’ arising from ontological insecurity as well as perceived expectations. If the young people are feeling targeted by others, or are feeling isolated through lack of recognition and opportunities, they group together to consolidate their identity within the youth gang. Once they have been ‘othered’ by young people from different areas they

will engage in symbolic and physical behaviour to protect their groups, and thus their areas, identity. These findings support the hypothesis that the physical and symbolic engagement in certain activities is carried out to affirm or defend the prescribed geographical area.

It has been demonstrated throughout this chapter that the proposed definition of the youth gang holds true within these two research sites. The youth gang is indeed a social process in which a grouping of young people actively self-identify with a defined geographical space; are willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means; and are recognised by others. However, importantly this chapter has also alluded to a depth of engagement between youth gangs and their local communities that must be explored further in the following chapters.

The next chapter will detail how this ‘othering’, and labelling of youth gang membership, can stop and who is decisive in this transition process.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Why stop?

Introduction

In order to further explore the parameters of gang membership it is important to consider when, and how, such membership is brought to an end. The emphasis within this discussion is both on the agency of the young people themselves in taking this step and how their relationships within their local community to replace their previous identification as gang members can be affected. This chapter explores why people stop identifying with the gang and if this solely relates to age or if there a deeper analytical understanding required. This chapter relates to the agreement by asking if young people choose whether or not they continue to identify with the youth gang, or whether once so identified, they have the power of choice. While the last chapter demonstrated that most young people engage in the youth gang as a means of gaining a place and space within their community, it was often not an overtly conscious rational choice decision, based on the weighing up of pros and cons. Instead the youth gang existed within the areas and as such it was a tangible and accessible entity to join. However, the decision to continue to engage with the gang or to limit identification does bring us into the area of choice and is the focus of this chapter.

The chapter begins by exploring the criterion of age as a primary reason for not identifying with the youth gang. There is then an analysis of fighting as a reason to stop identifying with the gang. The next section draws together differing views and analyses the notion of investment. It claims that identifying with the youth gang may be based on what one gets out of it. The chapter concludes by arguing that young people may no longer self-identify with the youth gang because they have found other ways to enhance and secure their sense of self-identity.

Age

The central focus of this thesis is on youth gangs, thus one would expect age to play a role within the proposed definition of youth. Others have also used age as a differentiating factor. The Eurogang suggest a street gang is a "...street-oriented youth group..." (Gemert & Fleisher, 2005, p. 12) as opposed to an adult gang. Having youth within the proposed definition focuses the research on a specific grouping of people. This does not suggest that other forms of gangs, of varying ages, do not exist.

In the larger area two, some of the young people interviewed explained how there were different generations within youth gangs, based on the differing age stratification. Donna explained the different groupings of the gang:

... it is like people who are like, say 30-40, it is all their children now, and then it is like so they'll just be like, some of them are just like drug dealers or whatever now so like they are not really anything, and then there are like people who are just under 30 and they are kinda like grown up but they will still come out for a drink sometimes like maybe ones with babies only younger, so then my big brother is like 26/25, that's like who he hangs about with but em there are people who are 19 and all that still hang about with them, then em there is the younger ones again that are like 16 to 19 no 18...

Is that your group then?

Huh huh and then there's some that are like 13-15 but like some like there could be someone who is 16 hanging about with like 13 year olds and then there could be somebody 15 hanging about with 16 year olds cause that is who they hang about with it doesn't have to be the right age, it is just the people

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

Although age is not a determining factor in establishing which particular group individuals associate with, most young people generally socialise within their own

age groupings.

In the smaller research area, area one, there was no such differentiation and a number of young people said they had grown out of fighting and thus identification with the single youth gang that existed in the area has ceased.

Many community members, within both areas, linked gang association with age. Josie speaking of her brother's identification with the local gang said:

I think possibly when he was a wee bit younger like, like a teenager when this was all happening quite a lot he would get involved but I would hope not now just for the simple fact that he was a wee bit older...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

The female community member from area one finds that people of all ages can be involved in the gang but that those who are older and still taking part in street fighting tend to be ridiculed and singled out as being different.

No the age is anything, like 12 to 20 odds and then that guy is like 30, it's mad, madness...

(Female community resident, area 1)

Mo and Rita felt that gang affiliation was defined by age and when asked if people then grew out of gang affiliation they said:

Mo- Aye

Rita- Like when they were younger they would all be daein it, but see now the younger ones are fighting they are like "see you, you better not be causing it with people," you know, they would shout at them

(Mo and Rita, community residents, females, area 2)

Rita suggests that older family members, who accustomed to fighting, would now shout at the younger ones to discourage them from fighting. Thus the decision to

be involved in the gang is often based on age. An individual can continue to engage in fighting or 'hanging about' with those people who were willing to fight, but this is not the norm. The people who continue this behaviour later in life seem to be looked down upon as being strange, or certainly engaging in activities that are not seen as appropriate for their age.

The youth workers felt the youth gang was clearly identifiable by age;

...yes there is a young team and there seems to be a generational thing happening. There is a young team who are between the age of 19 and 25 I would say... But we also have another young team who are between the age of about 14 to 19/20 you know that sort of overlapping thing, so there are two groups of what they would put themselves in teams, they would call themselves that.

(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

This view, denoting different youth gangs within the same area, resonates with the views of the young people within the area. In area one there was only one gang but age still impacted upon the type of involvement the individuals had. Luke explained:

They start at a very young age where they think it's just a bit of a game, a bit of chassies where they start throwing bricks at each other miles away and you're very lucky if anybody gets hurt, ever. But then get a wee bit older and it gets a wee bit more organised, people get wee bit more clever and they get more involved and there is more different weapons and more people get hurt.

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

Although young people may engage in gang fighting from a young age, Luke does not specifically suggest that people necessarily grow out of their affiliation once they reach a certain age. Nevertheless, throughout all the interviews there was an underlying assumption that street based gang fighting generally occurs between groups of young people.

Both police officers also linked youth gang affiliation to a specific age range.

They ranged from probably 12 into their early 20s.

(Police officer, male, area 1)

When asked to define the local gang in the area, the police officer from area two specifically mentioned,

...it is certain ages, sort of up to the age of, I'm just kinda guessing, but kinda up to the age of late teens early twenties...

(Police officer, male, area 2)

Most participants suggested that when people get to a certain age, or a certain stage in their life, they tended to no longer identify with the gang. This is not to say that being involved in the gang is an indication of immaturity but rather relates to current responsibilities; the deemed requirement to assert one's identity; or because there are other activities and opportunities to invest time in. The reason people stop engaging with the gang may relate to perceived reciprocity as a result of their actions.

...when I was in the jail, [girlfriends name] was saying you're talking about wanting to have a wean but you're in and out of jail, what sort of Da are you gonna be? I was like [girlfriends name] I'm gonna try and screw the nut, obviously if you fell pregnant I would phew...everything know...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

If the responsibility of fathering a child became a reality for Lewis his focus would shift and his identity would be tied to being a dad rather than a gang member. He was also being placed under peer pressure by his girlfriend in place of his previous gang co-members. Similarly Willy explained his focus had shifted now that he is older, although this is not necessarily a uniform experience.

There are certain people that are like, they just like sitting in and having a smoke, but we like going out having a few beers, we like going out, getting the girls, going to girls houses whatever. You have other ones who just like walking about scheme hopping, fighting and these are the people that just...
(*Willy, 26, male, area 2*)

While age cannot be the sole criterion to categorise youth gang affiliation, it is still persuasive given that older people get more access to different experiences and opportunities, as Lewis noted:

...Everyone has grown up now but just if you see them in the town in the pub or in the dancing in the town obviously tumblers and bottles are going to get thrown about.
(*Lewis, 25, male, area 2*)

‘Growing up’ alludes to both physical and symbolic maturation. Lewis can now drink in town and socialise in different spaces which impacts upon his identification with the youth gang. There is also a change in responsibility through this symbolic maturation. The place of socialisation is no longer framed by a small defined geographical area but has broadened geographically. Nevertheless, although there has been a move from actively seeking street fights with the intention of asserting both group and area identity, there might still be confrontation if “you see them.” Once identified as a gang member from a particular area the fighting will possibly continue irrespective of location. This suggests that there is still a need to engage in conflict with those who you have been ‘othered’ by and/or have mutually been ‘othered’ by your gang.

The ability to socialise in different spaces and with different people was also highlighted by Willy:

...what happens now, is see when were walking down the street, we are not wee guys anymore, we are in the pub, sometimes we are drinking with guys of our das ages but there is a respect there, and if we see them well say, “oh how you doing? Who do you fancy tonight?” [*referring to football*] and

they'll be like that "oh fucking feel like were going to get humped or whatever" there is a respect there, know but if we are fighting they know it is for a reason it is not as if we are just running about fighting for no reason. They know that we are no' all NEDs cause we have sat in their company and they know that we are good boys, but they obviously know if we're fighting, it's for a reason and we'll say to them afterwards, look they were trying to come at us know what I mean?

(Willy, 26, male, area 2)

This suggests that when there is more access to space within the community - which arguably is related to the respect ascribed by others, there are fewer requirements to demonstrate, or reaffirm, individual or group identity by engaging in street based fighting particularly fighting for no purpose. While both Lewis and Willy suggested that there is still a certain imperative to protect personal identity, the drive behind the related actions is deemed as being different. This respect comes partly from being able to engage in normalised social activities with the local men due to age; in this case drinking in the pub. Thus the maturation is not just physical but also symbolic. Although Thrasher (1927) suggested that it would be a minority of gang members who would remain in gang related criminal activities past a certain age, the findings here push the analysis further, holding that the real reason is not only physical maturation based on age, but alongside this symbolic maturation, rooted in new responsibilities, opportunities and/or new social roles plays its part.

This also links to the work of Barry (2006), who notes that, "Social recognition can be a helpful concept in understanding desistance amongst young people in transition because it expresses the capacity and need that young people have for longer-term *reciprocal* relations of trust and responsibility within the wider society" (p. 136).

Although Barry (2006) is referring to the ending of offending behaviours the same premise may be applied to gang identification and affiliation. By being respected, given new responsibilities within the wider community, young people may stop engaging in actions linked to the youth gang. However this respect and level of

responsibilities is often tied to an age categorisation as either set out legally, i.e. age of going to the pub, or socially, i.e. not being viewed as a NED. A 'NED' is a Glaswegian word thought to stand for Non-Educated Delinquent. There are variants used around the UK such as 'Chav' in England and 'Millie' or 'Steek' in Northern Ireland, all of which are derogatory terms for working class young people who have a particular type of dress, listen to specific music and come from deprived urban areas.

By being granted respect, and not being viewed as a 'NED', these interviewees have been granted space and place within their broader community. In the local context, as the young people physically grow older, and are symbolically recognised as being able to engage with older residents within a pub setting, the expectation is that they will no longer be engaged in street fighting.

Fighting

Some young people, like Dylan, did not want to be involved in any affiliation with the gang and was unwilling to fight. In contrast others, such as Sammy and Lewis from area two, were older in age, but were still willing to be involved in the gang should they feel that either they, or their area, was under attack. Nevertheless, their willingness to seek confrontation was not as pressing and thus they dipped in and out of gang identification depending on the circumstances.

Some of the young people said that they no longer had the energy or the drive to engage with street based fighting. Joe noted:

Fuckin' fed up wi' it.

(Joe, 14, male, area 1)

For Willy:

I've been there done that, fucking I've been done, so fuck that.

(Willy, 26, male, area 2)

Sammy emotionally explained that, although he felt the need to stand up for himself, he had moved out of the area to physically remove himself from engaging in the activities he had been involved with previously. He told me:

...aye they know you need to stand up for yourself and you need to go but sometimes I'm like that, I cannae cause these people are more dangerous than what I am going to be cause...I'm pretty scared they are going to stab me in the wrong place and they are going to take me out, cause I don't want my ma to look at me on a slab, dead, know what I mean. My brother is in the jail as well and I don't want to cause her any more stress, and she is always greeting "you better get a grip of yourself" and I'm like that I will, I will, and she is like that "you are not listening" and I'm like that, I am listening.

(Sammy, 24, male, area 2)

More than simply being bored with fighting, like Joe and Willy, Sammy does not want his actions to impact negatively on his mother. He implies his actions may impact on the security and identity of his mother if he died, particularly whilst his brother is still in prison. Sammy has been 'othered' because of previous actions resulting in the potential for others to engage in conflict with him. If he does not respond it will be his own identity and security that will be at risk, but by doing so he is now more conscious and cautious of how his actions might affect others. Sammy now has more responsibility in having to look after his mother, thus his focus has shifted from gang activity to meeting personal responsibilities.

The repercussions and benefits from individual behaviour change can be affected by symbolic and physical maturation and are reflected through the eyes of broader society. Puntteney (1997) found in her research that many young mothers thought gang violence was acceptable in young adolescents but once they got older it was no longer appropriate. Once the community screen has shifted, actions which once were accepted and tolerated are now seen in a negative light.

Mark and Lewis were trying not to engage with certain actions to prevent them from returning to jail. Lewis recalled an interaction where he chose not to fight:

I'm just out of fucking jail and I'm out on recall, if I even get caught for pissing in the street I need to go and do another 9 months so I'm trying to screw the nut and that is it. Half of the cunts from the [neighbouring area] all know, I'm not pure trying to be big heided, but they are probably be glad I never turned and started fighting with them

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

This moves from identification on the sole basis of age to a level of maturation and decision-making based on a sense of enhanced personal responsibility and an awareness of the repercussions of previous behaviour. Lewis was no longer as concerned about affirming his personal identity to the neighbouring gang members but was more focussed on the likely personal consequences. Previously Lewis' priority may have been on ensuring the consolidation of his personal identity through protecting the geographical space identified with collective gang behaviour. Now his focus had shifted due to the increased responsibilities, recognition and opportunities granted by the broader community; and going back to prison would undermine this new 'status', as well as limiting opportunities.

Investment

Many of the young people concerned seem to be balancing up their options and evaluating the pros and cons of still being involved in certain behaviours, or being aligned with the gang. Lewis, now he was released from prison, was going to do his best to stay out. Sammy was worried about the impact that his death would have on his mother; whilst Willy did not want to damage the reputation of being seen as "good boys" by others. This did not mean that their identification was conclusive; rather they all dipped in and out of the behaviour based on circumstances. These interviewees differed from Dylan, who never engaged with the gang anymore, or Jason who was clear about his affiliation with the local

gang. Interestingly these three interviewees were older than many of the young people who were still passionate in their identification with the gang.

Although these interviewees were trying not to engage with gang behaviour, as much, they were at pains to suggest that this did not mean they could not, or would not, stick up for themselves or others if deemed necessary.

I've screwed the nut but I just, I still wouldnae take any shite, say I was walking down the street and...or see like how in a pub the now and somebody said something, I would try and say here mate just calm down, try and give me peace, I would try and just say to them here what you all about, unless they just really bugged me I'd probably go off my nut man.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

This again may be a process of weighing up the pros and cons of being involved in confrontation. If Lewis did not defend himself at all, he would lose credibility or be seen as having no ability to act, thus leaving his identity open to question. This investment process was clearly demonstrated when he explained:

...people from [neighbouring area] came up and they brought golf clubs and all that, I was standing at the shop, and it was all people I used to fight with years and years ago and they are all about 23, I am 25 now, and see wee [mate's name] said oh you [interviewees name] you shite bag, and I went a shite bag, I bet you I would chase every fucking one of them right now if I wanted to, I said you are all the shite bags that are getting chased about then they were like that aeww, and then I ended up...know we [mate's name], think that's how I ended battering [mate's name] cause he was like ahh you shat yourself...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Lewis felt to be labelled by others as not fighting was a risk worth taking, as he knew others from his own area would continue to fight, preventing the gang or area losing face or being labelled as scared. However, he still chose to beat the young man up who brought into question his ability to engage in conflict, to

ensure that he would not lose standing or be treated differently or negatively in his own community. Lewis was reasserting his identity and demonstrating to others that he had not lost his sense of agency, but could use it when he decided it was necessary and not when he felt it was pointless or personally too risky. In this instance Lewis was clearly exercising individual judgement. Equally the people that Willy drank with, in the pub, expected and understood the need for him to defend his identity and honour if questioned, but this should be done in ways that did not mean reverting to age inappropriate, street based fighting. As Horowitz (1987) found there is an acceptance that if a man's honour is questioned in public then he has the right, or moreover, is expected, to resort to violence as a response.

Peirce (1995) also refers to the concept of investment when researching female immigrants' process of learning a second language. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) cultural capital, where certain forms of cultural capital are identified as having a higher exchange value in particular contexts, Peirce (1995) argues,

...if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital...I take the position that this return on investment must be seen as commensurate with the effort expended on learning the second language (p. 17).

Linking this to young people who are no longer identifying with local gangs, there is an arguable weighing up of the return on their investment in differing actions. If engaging in gang activity, including fighting with other areas is seen as commensurate with the effort expended on the fight, then it may be worthwhile to maintain involvement. However if the effort or investment is not seen as beneficial, i.e. there is more to lose than not, then they may distance themselves from identification with the gang.

These findings also chime with the work of McKay and Wong (1996) who studied Chinese immigrant young people in California and found: "Agency-enhancement and identity-enhancement rather than investment-enhancement, appear to be the

paramount consideration in our study” (p. 603). Both agency and identity-enhancement were crucial for the changing social identities of immigrants in relation to the varying discourses at play. For Lewis and others, the investment in the gang is also an investment in the individual’s own social identity. If promoting or investing in the gang’s social identity is important to the individual gang member, in order to gain agency or identity-enhancement, then they may continue to invest in the gang’s promotion. If the investment is no longer providing agency-enhancement and identity-enhancement, then the investment will not continue. If the commensurate effects of other actions provide a better investment return for the individual’s agency, then they may move away from the gang.

Dylan no longer identified with the local gang but suggested that investment in the gang had potentially positive outcomes:

Aye if you are in a gang and all that, you get more opportunities of trying to get you ain wee life, and all that, and you ain wee job, and all that, if you are already in a gang...but see when you are no it is harder to get those sort of options, and that, unless you ask for it man

(Dylan, 18, male, area 2)

Dylan was suggesting that agencies spend more time with gang members, thus opening up further opportunities to gain employment and training. Although there were youth services working with these young people the actual opportunities gained were often minimal and short-term, despite Dylan’s more positive interpretation of this. Notwithstanding this, for Dylan the investment required to engage in gang behaviour was not significant enough to go back to being in the gang; rather his priorities had changed:

I just keep myself to myself, so I’m like in the house sometimes or I’m in the park with my girlfriend drinking with her pals and that and it’s nae bad man.

(Dylan, 18, male, area 2)

Dylan would rather have an identity that was not tied to the youth gang and was about spending time with his girlfriend. He argued being in a gang gives more opportunities from youth workers and community centres, but despite this he does not want to engage in gang activities anymore. Dylan has analysed that he was not gaining as much agency or identity-enhancement from continuing to be a gang member as he would gain from an investment of time with his girlfriend.

Similarly John no longer identified with the gang because of new opportunities.

... [L]ast November I stopped fighting when I was at my first college, doing the motor vehicle maintenance and then into my second year of it so 14/15, no 16 or so

(John, 18, male, area 1)

John got an opportunity to express himself in a different way and to gain more access and control over his life through education. His experience reflects the findings outlined by Monica Barry (2006), who explains why some young people may stop engaging in certain behaviours:

For those who stopped offending in their twenties, many had found opportunities to accumulate capital through means other than offending, opportunities which did not result in criminal justice system involvement, a lack of control or wider social disapproval (Barry, 2006, p. 136).

For Barry (2006) the accumulation of capital, derived through increased opportunities, can encourage some young people to refrain from criminal involvement, but there are others that this does not work for. She theorises that social recognition may be a way to understand why youth crime is often temporary. Social recognition is "...the attainment of a combination of accumulation and expenditure of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital that is both durable and legitimated..." (Barry, 2006, p. 136).

The social recognition afforded to Willy and Sammy in the pub, offered alternative opportunities to gain the type of capital outlined by Barry (2006)

whilst also providing the scope to use or expend this capital, consequently social recognition can occur and discourage engagement in certain gang behaviours. Instead of investing time on gang behaviour, the cost-benefit analysis favours the new means of achieving social recognition which results in an increased sense of identity and self-agency.

Where people do not have the ability to gain and expend capital, or have not been granted symbolic maturation paths, it is more likely that they will continue to identify with the gang and engage in gang behaviours, as this is still their main way of enhancing their agency and identity. Those that rely on the association with the gang as the best, or only, way to gain identity may not always be accepted as community residents as the female community member in area one explained:

... there is a guy who has come from somewhere and he looks to me to be about 35 came from [outside Glasgow], he can hardly breathe when he runs but he runs down to fight with the [neighbouring area] and I think it is so stupid, all he is doing is giving himself a showing up, but he makes out he is a big man and there is one that size [hand gestures small size] who is nearly twenty and he comes back and goes “oh I done this one and I done that one” and we all laugh at the way he walks and you know...

(Female community resident, area 1)

The actions of the two older men are not seen by some community residents as being the norm. This female resident showed how these men are ridiculed for still being involved in certain behaviours despite their age. Interestingly the woman noted the physical height of one man and described how he would come back and boast about his actions. Fighting in this street based manner may be how this man proves to himself that he still has a community identity and agency. Similarly, by engaging in these acts, he is reasserting his identity to others. Maintaining involvement with the youth gang provides him with security identity enhancement. Clearly he has not found alternate paths for achieving these objectives, and as such, still acts in a way deemed childish or immature to community residents. While he has physically matured through age, he has not

symbolically matured and continues to demonstrate this 'immaturity' to other community residents by engaging in 'age inappropriate' behaviour, which, in turn, limit his alternative opportunities.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights a number of interesting points that directly link to the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. There is not one definitive answer as to why people either choose, or are afforded the opportunity, to stop identifying with youth gangs. The findings are twofold. Firstly, there is the change of personal focus based on a weighing up of investment opportunities and costs; and secondly, there is the changed context of being afforded greater social recognition, responsibility and access to economic and social structures and opportunities while not apparent in every case, this change of focus and means of recognition generally relates to the age of a person.

The shift in terms of self-identification occurs for a number of reasons and is closely linked to the personal change of status within the community. Providing alternatives to gang membership as a way of gaining identity, accessing agency and feeling secure was felt to be important and was thus linked to the notion of rational choice investment, discussed above. If the young people have new ways and means to enhance their own identity and their own agency, then they will no longer chose to engage in gang activity.

Where the young people can gain justice of recognition (Young, 2007) through alternative means then there is not as much impetus to engage in gang activities. The notion of justice of recognition closely resonates with Barry's (2006) concept of social recognition. If capital can be legitimately gained and expended in ways not linking to gang identification then this identification may no longer be required. However, the processes of gaining capital and expending it are linked to the broader community narrative and understanding, generating further insight into the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities.

The local community has a major role to play in providing social recognition and identity-enhancement opportunities to the young people. Thus self-identification may not solely be an individualistic choice but part of the relationship between the individual young person and their community. If the community provides opportunities for individuals to mature, be this symbolically through differing forms of socialisation and identity-enhancement, then identification with the gang is no longer necessary.

However, the process of being ‘othered’ as a gang member by those outside the community can still have a lasting impact on the young people even if they no longer identify with the gang. As Lewis and Sammy admit, they would still fight with those they have ‘othered’ them if deemed necessary. There are times when a calculated decision has to be taken, like Lewis choosing not to fight on one occasion but then adopting a different course of action when his identity was questioned. If the young people were to walk away from certain fights there can be repercussions for their own identity which might still exacerbate their feelings of ontological insecurity. As suggested by Willy, the men in the pub expect that defence of an individual’s identity will occur but they do not expect street based fighting to continue indefinitely. Once such fighting is no longer seen as the norm, according to the definition, the individual is no longer a gang member as they are not physically or symbolically defending a geographical space by fighting. Instead they graduate to being community members, who may still feel ontologically insecure as noted below, but do not feel the need to defend their space in the same manner as previously; possibly in part because there are younger youth gang members who will engage in these activities. This highlights the cost-benefit calculation in investment decision-making, but also the need for the broader community members to offer the relevant decision-making milieu.

Thus part of the agreement is that if the local community and broader society provide opportunities and space for alternative identity-enhancement and social recognition, then the young people, as they physically and symbolically ‘mature’, will often cease to self-identify with the youth gang. However, if these opportunities are not afforded, and recognition or distributive justice is not granted, then gang engagement may be maintained over a longer period. In

practical and policy terms the implications of these findings are clear. If young people are given better options in terms of agency and identity formation then they are less likely to join the youth gang.

However, another element of ontological insecurity and social recognition is the ability to gain and expend economic capital (Barry, 2006), or have access to distributive justice (Young, 2007). Although some participants did not have access to legitimate economic capital they no longer identified with gang membership, demonstrating that community-based identity-enhancement and social acceptance was sufficient for them. And while some young people may turn to other illegitimate means of gaining economic recognition, there is no evidence to suggest that any part of the gang activities, within either research area, directly link to the conscious accumulation of economic capital.

Instead the demographics of the communities would suggest that alongside the youth gang members, the overall community members are being 'othered' as being part of the 'underclass' by broader society. Young (2007) referred to this situation in the theory of ontological insecurity. As hypothesised in chapter five, the community members as a whole, are similarly ontologically insecure due to the lack of societal distributive justice or positive recognition. Thus it is likely that although young people may no longer identify with gang membership because of the additional opportunities for agency enhancement within their local communities, they, in line with their localised community, may still feel ontologically insecure in relation to the broader society. However, the repercussions of this ontological insecurity are no longer played out in a street based, youth gang manner. This notion of broader community ontological insecurity, and the impact this has on the youth gang members, is discussed in the following chapters.

However the next consideration is to ascertain the agreement between youth gangs and one important institutional aspect of broader society – the police.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Agreement with the police

Introduction

The agreement between the youth gangs and the police emerged as an extremely important issue in the overall agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. The police have so far been categorised as a part of the broader societal structure but it became apparent that their presence and engagement within the researched communities was particularly pertinent to this study. This chapter aims to explain this complex interplay and to consider whether, and how, this impacts on the ontological insecurity of the youth gang members and/or of community residents.

This chapter considers six main themes- trust/mistrust; treatment and experiences; “snitches get stitches”; “snitches get stitches” (unless it is for your family); good cop/bad cop; and prejudicial policing. Within each theme the views of the police, young people, community members, youth workers and, where relevant, my reflections have been included.

Trust/Mistrust

As discussed in the chapter six, the officers interviewed identified the youth gang as a grouping of young people who were actively involved in anti-social behaviour. In regards to the relationship with these young people the officer in area two said:

Probably, you can have an OK relationship with them, I wouldn't say it is the greatest, I wouldn't say they trust us, probably no trust there. Aye I mean a lot of the community officers do have relationships with them, speak to them and that, we are well aware...they are known to us [laughs]

(Police officer, male, area 2)

The statement ‘they are known to us’ could be problematic for young people, as when labelled in this manner, negative perceptions may be hard to change. The officer went on to suggest that

...there are issues in their background that a lot of people aren’t aware of, maybe they have been let down somewhere, broken families, but I try to have as good a relationship as I can, you know that kind of part, with the young team, but there always will be a barrier, the mistrust of the police because you are a cop

(Police officer, male, area 2)

Similarly in area one the police officer noted:

Unfortunately in this area there is a lot of people who get involved in criminality you know so, they have all been through the system and for whatever reason they have learned to distrust the police or whatever you know so...

(Police officer, male, area 1)

Both statements indicated a lack of trust within the relationship. This mistrust is insinuated to be passed through generations or from “being through the system”. Although the police analyse the relationship as being based on mistrust, it is also important to analyse if other sections of the community agree that there is a general mistrust of the police.

Youth Workers- Trust/Mistrust

Chris when asked about this relationship responded:

Very negative, but then again so is their parents. In communities like this the police are known as the enemy and that is right through from adults to kids. It is hard to get kids to have respect for the police when they kick their doors

in and drag their parents out, or kick their doors in and drag their brothers out, know what I mean. How do you build that respect if that is the response of the police to your family, know what I mean, it's like...

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

Chris viewed the mistrust, or lack of respect, for the police as being generational and born out of previous poor experiences. If young people have heard stories about, or witnessed others, having poor experiences with the police then any relationship is likely to start from a negative, rather than a positive, understanding.

Community Members- Trust/Mistrust

Darren echoed this analysis.

I think that is a general lack of trust in the police. I mean eh that's across all generations in this community...

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

In a situation where there is inter-generational mistrust of the police then it is not surprising that this lack of trust resonates within the views of the young people. However, in area one a male community resident suggested:

I don't know if it is a part of the gang mentality or I don't know...yeah, yeah, it probably is a part of the gang mentality, I don't really know. But I do know that basically it is traditionally that they utterly hate the police.

(Male community resident, area 1)

This statement questions the notion that the broader community mistrust the police and instead places the emphasis back on to the youth gang members, however equally the views of community members will be influenced by their own prior experiences both with the police and potentially as gang members themselves when they were younger.

Young People- Trust/Mistrust

When asked about their views of the police many of the young people immediately responded with expressions of mistrust and/or dislike, sentiments that were common within both research sites. In area one Tam described getting chased and threatened by other young people during a police run football diversionary event, a place where he was meant to be safe and secure.

That's why you can't trust them, that's why they are arseholes

(Tam, 16, male, area 1)

Tam's automatic response was to blame the police for this negative experience.

Donna said:

I don't like them. I hate them.

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

Similarly for Sammy and Willy:

Sammy- Fuck them they are all dirty bastards man to be honest with ya,

Willy- Don't like them

(Sammy, 24, Willy, 26, males, area 2)

Jason agreed:

Police? I don't like them much no [laughs]

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

When asked to explain why they did not like the police many of the young people provided examples of negative experiences. Thus the lack of trust in the authorities is not solely derived from learnt behaviour, but is augmented by personal experiences with regard to the police treating them badly or unfairly. However, if the basic agreement between both parties is rooted in a premise of mistrust, then negative experiences may be cited more frequently in these

communities and become accepted folk wisdom that creates its own framing narrative.

Treatment and Experiences Young People

The treatment and experiences of the young people from the police impacted greatly on how they viewed and engaged with the authorities. Jack from area two explained the repercussions of the police 'knowing you':

... [F]or nothing, they see you walking down the street and they pull you for nothing, cause they know you...Cause they know us all and that's probably why they pull us up

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

The police officer, above, also suggested that they knew the young people who were engaged in the local gang; this labelling by the police resulted in many young people feeling unfairly targeted when walking around their areas. If mistrust is the basis of the agreement between the young people and police then arguably most of the young people will be viewed as acting suspiciously by the police when they are out and about, resulting in them being subjected to stop and searches. In contrast if the starting point between police and young people was positive then there would be less official perception of suspicious behaviour and less use of stop and search powers.

Just as young people's experiences may be negative the same can be true for the police, who may be drawing on repeated negative encounters with particular young people. Anderson and Kingsley et al (1994) find young people can create stereotypes of the police, whilst simultaneously the police are drawing on stereotypes to target certain young people, setting up a cyclical reaction of lack of trust, reporting and strained relationships. Although this is a two-dimensional interaction, the police hold the balance of power making it an unequal relationship; thus the onus must be on them to act ethically and professionally

towards the young people. Anderson et al (1994) also suggest young people, at times, describe horror stories about police relationships which are often not derived from personal experiences, causing negative expectations. The police, for their part, create 'folk devils' (S Cohen, 1973) or 'usual suspects' (Muncie, 2000). Consequently, the manner in which each views the other can be amplified resulting in a negative impact.

Throughout the research young people did provide repeated reports about actual negative experiences with the police. Many young people interviewed had feelings which resonated with Bob and Tam from area one:

Bob- Aye, they stop and search us for nothing

Bob- Aye tell us to move

Tam- Aye, I know tell us to get out of our own street and all that
(Bob and Tam, 18 and 16, male, area 1)

This process of moving young people on was discussed by Adam Crawford (2009) when analysing dispersal laws within the UK:

The group focus of dispersal powers means that for some young people their first adversarial contact with police and entry into police records may be on the basis of who they associate with and the locations where they 'hang out' (p. 19).

Although dispersing young people is not a new phenomenon Crawford (2009) notes, "The anti-social behaviour-informed justification of preventive intervention, or 'preventive exclusion' in the case of the dispersal order, provides a new legitimacy to the traditional targeting of youths as 'usual suspects'" (p.19).

This chimes with my own research findings but also with the views of the police above, who asserted somewhat resignedly that there would always be barriers between them and young people. This reinforces the premise that the treatment of

young people usually originates from a negative perception. Subsequently the police target certain young people in particular areas and accepted wisdom is also generated and transmitted within local police stations. Rab, while admitting that some of the young people had previously been caught carrying knives, felt that he had been continually targeted.

... [I]t's annoying when it has happened in the space of an hour or something; you've been stopped and searched about six times.

(Jack, 17, area 2)

Similarly, I witnessed an incident where the police had followed a group of four young men and searched them because they looked, or were acting, in a suspicious manner. I wrote that evening:

One of the police men walked straight into the youth project and, without even acknowledging the worker, called one of the young men into the street. He searched the young man, took his details and phoned the station to do a warrant check on him. When the young man asked why he was being searched the police responded that he was looking and acting suspicious.

(Personal observation and reflection, 08-09-09, area 2)

This further demonstrated the impact of the relationship of mutual mistrust. If the police start from the premise of mistrust, most of the young people, particularly if they are 'known', will be viewed as acting suspiciously. Jason outlined a more serious negative encounter with the police, stating:

...But naebody sees, naebody sees what the polis are like when it is just us, know what I mean, we were sitting drinking down a lane one time and the polis told all my pals to go away and they kept me there and then the polis guy was like something like "I don't like you, I hate your wee guts" and all that, and I was like that "and? I hate your guts but I keep my opinions to myself" know what I mean, and he got pure raging and he banged my head off the wall and I hit the ground and I got back up and was like "what you doing?" he was like "I seriously don't like you" and then tripped us up again

and kicked us and then “on you go before you get beaten” and then I just ran out of the lane. Know what I mean naebody knows what the polis are like when it is just us, know what I mean, the polis are bad, know what I mean.
(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Many of the young people spoke of being moved on, stopped and searched, or ‘hassled’ when they felt they had not been doing anything wrong. This blanket assumption of mutual mistrust with the police being seen as asserting disproportionate levels of power, results in feelings of antagonism.

Youth Workers- Treatment and Experiences

All the youth workers agreed that the young people got treated unfairly by the police. They noted how this can have a lasting impact upon how the young people will respond to the police. Mel explained:

They are walking down the road with their pals or walking home and they are getting pulled aside and they are getting hassle by the police. So why not drink and get pulled up when you are drunk? You are going to get pulled up if you are not drunk so why not. That is their attitude that is the way they look at it. They are like there is no point, it doesn’t matter, you get pulled no matter what you do...and it is, it is just absolutely mental and you are like how...police especially, the big kinda figures in the community, they are making more problems for themselves than they are fixing them, they are building up this whole we hate the polis thing. Rather than breaking that down they are just reinforcing it every time they do something stupid...it’s not real man.

(Mel, full time youth worker, female, area 2)

This supports the view that police hold the predominant power and need to be taking the initiative to break down ‘barriers’ rather than creating them. It is recognised that it can be difficult to change a longer relationship of mistrust, but the relationships could be improved if the stereotyping and negative reaction towards the young people could be at least challenged. In area one many of the

youth workers felt that the police treated the young people with an unwarranted use of power.

It's not just the way they treat them it's the way they speak to them as well, its like they have this badge and this hat and they think that they can just speak down to them as if they are a piece of dirt and no wonder the young people feel worthless and low self-esteem because they have people like this talking to them in this way and its bound to have an affect on them...

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

The youth workers felt that the police treat the young people with a lack of respect and understand why this treatment results in the young people feeling frustrated, resentful and gave them a sense of worthlessness.

Chris suggested a class based distinction, holding that the treatment experienced by young people in more deprived areas differed from those in wealthier parts of the city;

...there is a lot of reasons for that and a lot of them are justified, a lot of them arenae, but a lot of the reasons are justified for it because it is their experience of what policing is all about. I mean you don't go in to a posh area and have the polis following groups of young folk around with cameras, it just doesnae happen although there are issues there as well. So they feel victimised as well because they feel as though, why are they following us about, know what I mean, why are we constantly getting moved on? Why can't we just hang about our own scheme? Why do we get searched every time we walk through the park? Know what I mean, why do we get it all the time?

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

This statement resonates with the view expressed by Tam, who felt frustrated that he was moved from his 'own street'. While this demonstrates that the police are often considered as 'outsiders', it also highlights what Chris noted about the young people within that area being specifically targeted and 'othered' because

they live in a deprived community. This again aligns with the sentiment of Young (Young, 1999b, 2007) that the 'underclass' are 'othered'. This 'othering' only serves to consolidate the mistrust and negative treatment and experiences.

Community Members- Treatment and Experiences

Community members reinforced the view that young people were often treated unfairly in area two. Clare a community resident remarked:

Every time you speak to young people they feel the police are always on their back.

(Clare, 39, community resident, female, area 2)

Rita said how

...they kinda drink in the park and that and then the polis will come and move them out of there so they end up in the street aye because they have no where to go know what I mean

(Rita, community resident, female, area 2)

Josie reiterated that the police have treated young people in this manner for years.

And I think like as well because we did hang about in groups and kinda stuff the police would come along and like separate you or come along and target you or even just ask you what you were doing or what you been up to tonight and it was just this constant people on your back or people...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

She went on to suggest that this targeting happens to young people who are 'known' by the police, a fact that was confirmed above by one of the police officers interviewed.

Target them? Aye I would say so. Aye I would say.... I think even like [brother] and that, there are times [brother] has been pulled for things and

silly things, like really, really stupid things and he has been kept in for the weekends and all that and you just think, know how, I don't know, you just think because you know him again...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Lyn Hinds (2007) describes the relationship between police and young people as a socialisation process that is established from early childhood. She finds, as did this research, that young people's relationships with the police have often been problematic, shaped by both individualised experiences and the collective neighbourhood context.

Hinds (2007), having collected data from surveys carried out with fourteen to sixteen year olds in 2005, finds that general attitudes towards the police are heavily influenced by personal prior experiences and not from just witnessing police conduct. She argues: "The importance of police use of procedurally fair practices in their dealings with young people is strongly supported by the significance of negative contact in shaping young people's views of police" (Hinds, 2007, p. 205-206).

John Muncie (2000) writes about the over policing and control of young people in Britain. This again has been reflected in this study, where young people feel overly targeted and harassed by law enforcement. Muncie (2000) argues that most of the work on young people focuses on them as offenders and that,

...the role of police is pivotal. Through routine surveillance, targeting and reporting practices the 'usual suspects' are identified. But such 'knowledge' is then passed on to other institutions, such as schools and social services, to 'calibrate the degrees to which the chosen few should be excluded from social life' (p. 21).

Drawing on the findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, McAra and McVie (2005) suggest that police tended to distinguish between those young people deemed respectable and those seen as troublesome. They found the police disproportionately targeted certain groups who, as Muncie

(2000) notes, may be seen as the 'usual suspects'. The young people targeted tend to be male, from lower class backgrounds, live in areas with high levels of social deprivation and generally socialise on the street. Once these young people have been highlighted to the police through offending behaviour, the status sticks and they seem to be targeted regardless of future behavioural patterns. Although the authors (McAra & McVie, 2005) acknowledge that the Scottish system, informed by the principles of Kilbrandon, attempts to avoid criminalising young people it can also result in the police creating their own suspect grouping.

The police in this context act less as legal subjects and more as class subjects-enforcing urban discipline, labelling and keeping under surveillance a group of permanent suspects. That this may have a negative impact on the subsequent behaviour of young people, suggests that the policing of children may serve to sustain and reproduce the very problems that the system ostensibly attempts to contain or eradicate (McAra & McVie, 2005, p. 28).

Anderson et al, (1994) drew on a range of data including self-report victim surveys, 892 questionnaires, 120 interviews and informal discussions with young people to throw light on the historical context and current reality of young people's engagement with the police in Edinburgh. They found that young people were far more likely to have a form of adversarial contact with the police than adults. Although they did not find that specific areas were a significant factor in this experience they did discover that boys have more adversarial contact than girls. The authors (1994) suggest that this may be a result of boys more often being deemed as troublesome as well as incidences of physical violence more often occurring between groups of males than females.

My own data suggests that in both study areas the young people related tales of adversarial contact with the police. The nature of the area is clearly significant. If the police are creating 'usual suspects', as Muncie (2000) argues, then this may be influenced by the neighbourhood in which there is a more concentrated police presence or intelligence. This labelling may also be based on gendered, race or class lines and, importantly, goes some way to explain the inter-generational lack of trust towards the police.

My data acknowledges the importance of individual experiences but also suggests that a negative socialisation process can occur through growing up in certain areas that have a long history of adversarial relations with the police. In addition the stories or witnessed accounts of police mistreatment will have an impact on how young people view the police. Similarly the police are aware that they are often starting from a basis where young people have been told not to trust them, making the building of a positive relationship more difficult. The repeated reports that the police create, and target, the ‘usual suspects’ builds resentment and it is thus important to consider if this lack of trust has an impact upon the willingness to report criminal instances to the police.

“Snitches Get Stitches” : The Consequences of Informing

The danger of experiencing negative local repercussions if information about criminal behaviour is given to the police was a recurring theme described by the young people. Many told stories of when they had been personally injured in a fight or attack yet would not contact or report any details of the incident to the police. Sammy described his reaction when he got stabbed in the back repeatedly:

...but if you got done in, like I did, and the polis came to my door with a book and done that “do you know any of them?” I’d went it could be any one of them pages but I don’t know who it is, I wouldn’t stick them in anyway, I’d rather get them back...

(Sammy, 24, area 2)

This was a common story from many of the young people who had been personally injured. If they got attacked they would deal with the incident themselves or through their own networks as opposed to telling the authorities. This theme of not ‘snitching’ or ‘grassing’ was consistent in both areas of research.

No naebody is a grass, not here nobody is a grass. See if you get pulled up for fighting and it wasnae you it was your pal, if you grassed then they would just get you as soon as they could

(John, 18, male, area 1)

The idea that there would be repercussions for ‘grassing’ was constantly repeated by the young people. John, and youth workers in the area, told me of a young man who was sentenced to two years for an assault and robbery which he had not committed but had still refused to either tell, or cooperate with, the police. I reflected on this,

Another young person was put in jail for apparently stabbing a young man in a nearby street for a mobile phone and money. However, there have been a few conversations suggesting that the young man who got sent to prison was actually innocent but was not prepared to grass the real perpetrator up to the police.

This sense of loyalty is something that I am aware of throughout groups of young people. When I was growing up it was drilled into us that you never told on anyone. In fact, I remember actively being told that if I was caught with alcohol at a young age I was to say it was the people from the neighbouring estate who bought it not the people from my local area. Nevertheless, this loyalty has obviously been pushed to the extreme in the above instance and I’m not sure our allegiances would ever have stretched far enough to go to prison for two years for a friend. In fact I question the term friend in this instance as I wonder if this person was really a friend wouldn’t they have stood up and took the punishment themselves? Anyway, the main thing from this is that under no circumstance do you align yourself with the authorities. You certainly do not tell the police any information that may get others in trouble.

(Personal observation and reflection, 26-08-09, area 1)

The youth workers and the young people all told me that they knew the man who had been sentenced for two years was innocent of the crime and yet nobody was willing to share this information with the police for fear of negative repercussions.

The 'snitches get stitches' headline is taken from a comment made by Rab, a seventeen year old who had recently been released from jail. He explained that even when he got stabbed seven times, aged fourteen, he did not contact the police. Instead he 'dealt' with the situation himself, and said of his friends:

They went back down there and then they got done in...the boys who done it to me...They are all walking about with slash down their face
(Rab, 17, area 2)

The young people relied on their own capabilities to 'sort' out problems, without the aid of the police. Rab told me that he was relatively safe in prison as he has a cousin and a friend in the same corridor, but I wrote:

He told me how if you were in on your own you got bullied by the other inmates. They would make young lads sing lullabies out the windows to humiliate them and give everyone else a laugh. He said that you would never snitch if you were being bullied as you then get put in with beasts and people will think you are a beast, referring to paedophiles. He told me that other inmates would also steal your mattress and make you sleep on the floor under your bed rather than on it.
(Personal observation and reflection, 23-03-10, area 2)

I also reflected,

It was interesting that the battering and fighting that can happen was not of major concern to this young man, but the idea of being humiliated and bullied obviously scared him somewhat.
(Personal observation and reflection, 23-03-10, area 2)

This brings together, both theoretical insights and the results from the evidence collected. This young man was not scared of street fighting, he was open and frank about being involved and being the victim of serious incidents of knife crime. What Rab seemed most afraid of was losing, or being seen to lose, the ability to defend himself. If this happened his identity and the agency to look after himself may be classed as being lost or certainly questioned. Other people being humiliated, having all sense of agency stripped from them, was something that frightened Rab. I noted the honesty and self-reflection this young man showed when he admitted to me:

If I went in there by myself I would be a lost wee boy.

(Rab, 17, male quoted in Personal observation and reflection, 23-03-10, area 2)

Rab had the identity of a ‘hard’ man in the area. He was seen as being the person that other young people, who were not in the youth gang, were scared of. Ms. Mehta told me-

...you know like [Rab] the one who just got out of jail, the stabbing and everything, they are all terrified, the minute they see them.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

To disclose that he would be lost without family and friends in prison demonstrated the fear this young man had of being humiliated. It also highlighted the fact that Rab has generated a hardening of his image, through being part of the youth gang, to protect himself and to give him a greater sense of security and control over his life.

Despite the fear of being humiliated in prison, none of the young people would ‘grass’ to the police if it was an incident that directly impacted on them. The young people faced negative repercussions if they were caught being a ‘grass’, a risk that was seemingly too big to take, unless the incident in question was committed against a family member.

“Snitches Get Stitches” (Unless it is for your Family)

Rab made it clear that he would be prepared to contact the police in the case of a serious issue affecting his family or people in the community close to him. He was not the only one whose stance on contacting the police changed if a member of their family had been injured or involved in an incident. Although this did not emerge from the findings in area one, nor can it be asserted as a universal response amongst young people, it is worthwhile reflecting on it given that it highlights another nuance to the relationship with police.

Willy- People say they hate the police right, but see the first thing is see if your daughter or some goes missing who is the first person you are going to phone...

Sammy- Polis

Willy- Somebody breaks into your house, who's the first person you're gonna phone?

Sammy- Screws

Willy- Someone rapes your daughter who's the first person you are going to phone?

Sammy- Drop squad

(Sammy, 24, Willy, 26, males, area 2)

Similarly Lewis when asked if he would phone the police responded:

No, would I fuck man, fuck that. If I seen things in the street but, nothing to do with me but, like a guy battering a woman, I would phone the police, otherwise I would run over and batter...try and get the guy...see a lassie, my next door neighbour was, arguing with his wife and you just heard her

screaming and doors getting banged and my Ma was like that- leave it out but the guy down the stair phoned the polis but I was about to phone the polis in case he was battering her.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Lewis himself was not concerned about contacting the police in this particular situation as he was not personally, directly involved in the incident. He would not run the risk of being labelled a grass in this context by others. Similarly, his mother asked him to phone the police rather than enter into a fight with the neighbour; this chimed with his own concern about being arrested.

There was a certain dichotomy between the fact that, on the one hand, many of the young people felt they were unfairly used as a scapegoat by police, whilst on the other, they acknowledged that they needed the protection and intervention of the police in certain circumstances. Thus while many of them would never contact the police concerning a personal issue, they would be prepared to do so if it was on behalf of their family or other community residents. This ambivalence shown towards the police varies depending on the perceived seriousness and circumstances of the crime and victim. If the victim was the young person themselves, they would not report the incident given the agreement within the group that if they 'grass' when it is a personal attack they will be negatively labelled and may face repercussions. However if the attack is not personal, and is deemed more serious, then external agents of control may be required to become involved.

Community Members on "Snitching"

The views expressed by the young people seemed largely reflective of the opinions held by members within the local communities. In this context Darren said:

I think the general feeling in this area is that em your better dealing with things through your own channels rather than the official channels kind of thing.

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

Josie agreed that there was generational acknowledgement that you don't 'grass' on each other and you deal with personal issues outside the authorities knowledge. If a person did become known as someone who reported incidents to the police Josie described that they could become ostracised and targeted.

I think a lot of young ones definitely like just wouldnae say anything, just mind your own and like it is one of them ones...like when my dad was younger and that I think it was just one of them ones that you just don't do it, it is just pure dunno rules of the jungle or something... He said that like when he was in the jail and he was saying that guys would come in and were known as a grass and like just been like battered and like beat up really bad and like but naebody says nothing because they are a grass and that's it and they kinda deserve that kinda thing...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Josie went on to describe how her brother, Lewis, was slashed down his face by a young person from a neighbouring community and it was not reported to the police.

Aye, cause I like, I know who the boy was and I have seen him and stuff and it's like, you just cannae do nothing because of just what would happen next...I think more likely what would happen is that there is mair chance that [brother] will go and get him back or go and get somebody to get him back than it going to court and going to...it seems to be that they deal with it themselves and...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

This supports the views expressed by the young people that there is an agreement that the authorities are not informed in cases of personal attack and that failure to abide by this agreement would invite repercussions. It is clear that the nature of this agreement is known by community members.

Youth workers did not comment on the nature of the reporting to police but were clearly aware of the levels of mistrust and hint that they recognised that young people would not go to the police readily.

The findings of other studies are contradictory. Carr, Napolitano and Keating (2007) drawing from a multi-wave comparative study in high-crime neighbourhoods in Philadelphia analysed young people's experiences with the police and their views on how to reduce crime within their communities. They found that less than ten percent of young people would call the police in any circumstance. However, while Anderson et al (1994) also noted that it was not easy to suggest that young people never report crimes, as this is dependent on the seriousness of the crime, the attitude towards the police and the implications of reporting. Interestingly, these researchers found that over half of the young people involved suggested they would feel safer if there were more police on foot in their areas suggesting that young people may be ambivalent towards the police. In general Anderson et al (1994), argue that young people feel that they are not listened to and this can result in unwillingness to report personal experience of victimisation.

The research findings drawn from the two study areas suggests less ambivalence on the part of both young people and members of the community with regard to reporting incidences to the police. The basic premise is not unless the incident is serious in nature; inflicted on a family member or close neighbour, and cannot be more effectively dealt with locally. In certain circumstances there is a recognised need to intervene, but on the other hand there is an acceptance that such intervention can further curtail local agency. The two identities ascribed to the police, one as protector and peacekeeper and the other as the antagonistic external force, is seen as standing in opposition to one another, resulting in a sense of ambivalence. Consequently, the concept of ambivalence is a useful analytical tool in seeking to explain and understand this complex relationship.

Ambivalence in Practice: Good Cop/Bad Cop Young People

This concept of ambivalence was further seen in practice given the experiences reported by the young people of their relationships with individual police personnel as distinct from the police as an institution. Many of the young people differentiated between the police who were seen as being decent, fair and friendly, compared to those who were seen as bad, unfair or unreasonable, as Lewis explained:

I'm not a big fan of them! I wouldnae start being cheeky to them, I would try and be as civil as I could then, but you get some fucking dirty screws...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

To publicly acknowledge liking the police may make the young person stand out from their group and may not be acceptable. As such it is an understood, agreed norm, that the young people from both areas do not like, nor trust the police. Jack noted:

Just don't like them at all, none of us like them. One or two of them are alright and the rest just arenae

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Jack points to an agreement based on mistrust that causes solidarity amongst the peer group. From personal, witnessed or related experiences and stories, there is a community based agreement that the police are generally viewed in a negative light. However, it is not conclusively adopted in practice, as some are deemed as 'alright' and at times are needed, but the basic premise is negativity, creating a 'them and us' mentality.

Donna differentiated between the good and bad officers.

...You get some that are like pure easy to talk to and they will just be pure fine with you, they will just be like, "get away from here" but some you will get and they'll just be, like there is no need for, like they will just take your

booze and put you in the back of the motor without even I.D.ing you or taking like your age or anything and just be pure dicks.

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

Willy also noted differences in approach:

...we used to have a copper in [research area] called [name of police] right, and what used to happen was he used to catch you drinking right and he used to walk around right, but he was fair with you, he would say look it is my job to take the drink off you but he'd be like that look I'm getting hassle, go somewhere where naebody...

(Willy, 26, male, area 2)

This raises the question of continuity of community policing in the area. The officer discussed by Willy had rapport with the young people and was deemed as being "fair" for not removing their drink. The notion that the officer was getting hassle also raises the question if this was from reports from community members, or from other officers.

The same theme emerged in area one where many of the young people got on with specific police officers but not others. In this community most young people preferred the community police officer who they had built a relationship with.

They're bastards. There's only one polis that's alright, [community officer].

(Joe, 14, male, area 1)

If rapport or familiarity is built with the police then the cyclical relationship of mistrust can be altered. Willy explained how he felt more comfortable in reporting or speaking to individual police officers about any problems happening in the community.

...[Y]ou could go to him and you could say look I was having a bit of hassle know what I mean, or you could turn round and go like that look see there is an old woman the road there is somebody that keeps hitting her windae's

with stones, all that young team, keep an eye on them or something and you could do that and you could talk to them, but see now you don't get it. You walk down the street and the polis are like that, "where were you?" and you're like what the fuck has it got to you?

(Willy, 26, male, area 2)

For Willy there has been a shift in policing practices which makes him feel less capable of building rapport with the officers. This statement also demonstrates that Willy did report certain incidents to particular officers and also showed he felt it necessary to protect the more vulnerable residents within his community. This latter finding will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter ten.

Community Members- Good Cop/Bad Cop

Talking of her brother's relationship with the police, Josie reiterated the difference mutual respect would bring about.

I think he just thinks they are here and we need them sometimes but sometimes they can be arseholes I think sometimes he has not got a lot of respect for...but then there are ones that he will go "aw he is alright him, he is decent". I think it is a lot to do with know how, his personal experience and I think if people are alright with him he is alright with them but if people are nasty with him or maybe targeting him then they will not have much respect for them back and I think that goes in all walks of life if people are alright with you, you are kinda alright back...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

The personal experiences of Josie's brother were central to his future interactions with the police. Many residents felt if there were police that were better known in the community there would be less problems.

All I have seen is random police on the street and I'm thinking I don't know any of these police and we should be knowing who they are and there is just no sense of community here at the moment I don't think, none

(Clare, 39, community resident, female, area 2)

Similarly in area one the female resident noted:

Aye, aye, but they have just disappeared, [police name] I used to talk to her all the time, em she got moved to [police station] and [police name] he got promoted or something, so there are different ones now, so you don't know who you are talking to now.

(Female community resident, area 1)

Again this raises the issue of continuity of policing. There was trust and rapport built with a particular officer but then this person was removed from the area, leaving community members resorting to the basic premise of mistrust due to lack of knowledge of the new officer.

Two interviewees in area two felt the police did not have enough power to deal with the young people who were causing problems within the community and did not differentiate based on whether they knew the police or not. Ms. Mehta explained:

They have started this with the police walking about but it has no helped, how long have they been doing this? Oh go to your local policemen, oh we have two...oh you have the local community...I have spoke to the local community; as soon as they walk by they are back out at their backs. They are there with the sticks...do you know I have seen them with their drink in front of the polis make a fool of the polis at the park and outside the park and they are standing "eh, eh, eh", doing all this at the polis, nothing is happening.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

Michael noted that it is

...just gonnae continue until either the government steps back and gives more power to the polis again or the area is just going to end up like shit, it is simple enough.

(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

However he went on to suggest that the police often act indiscriminately without thinking about who is actually causing the problems;

...it just seems like they go about with blindfolds on and the first thing that comes to hand they grab, know what I mean...

(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

The community residents, as well as the young people, often start from the premise of mistrust. However this can change if rapport or trust is built with a particular officer. Part of the broader issue thus is the continuity in policing. The officers who have built a positive relationship with the community are more likely to gain information from the residents, and potentially from the young people, but if the officers are continually moved on the default position of mistrust will be reinstated.

Youth Workers- Good Cop/Bad Cop

Most interviewees differentiated between the police who actively tried to engage with the young people and broader community, compared to those who started from negative perceptions and consequently often acted in a manner that was damaging to the relationship.

I think there's a small minority of police who do try and do good community work but I think there is a bigger majority who do make them look silly because they have a bad attitude toward young people a very bad attitude and I've experienced it myself, just the way they speak about them and how they do think the best thing for them is just to arrest them there nae rehabilitation, there's nae diversionary, its just jail them and that's it. They think that sorts

everything and they wonder why local people as a whole in the community, not just young people, have a really negative opinion about the police.

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

Chris, the head of a youth project, agreed that some police were better than others, although in general, most youth workers had more examples of poor treatment of young people as opposed to positive stories. This story exemplifies poor policing and targeting of young people.

We have a classic example the now, we have a young boy running about who the polis are chasing, trying to get a hold of, he has a court case coming up, he had been in and out in and out, he has got real family problems about who looks after him and he kinda flips about sleeping with different people, and then what happens is he has a court case on his 18th birthday and that is the polis rubbing it in to him, right and the prosecutors, because they have obviously done a deal where its like you are getting it when you are 18.

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

As mentioned, the personal experiences, together with the area in which the young people live, can both have an impact upon the reactions and relations with the police. However Carr et al, (2007) found that young people often did not generalise about all police but rather differentiated between different types of officers, e.g. those viewed as crooked cops as opposed to ‘superhero’ cops. In relation to the perceived fairness of police, Anderson et al (1994), similar to Carr et al (2007), found that groups of young people tended to differentiate between good and bad policing, a finding which resonates, in part, with the evidence gathered in this study. Although the young people did differentiate between good and bad police practices they still started from the premise of mistrust of the institution as a whole.

From both the literature, and the conclusions presented, the need to establish better relations between the police and young people who identify with gang membership seems to be a policy and practice priority. Many young people held

that having better rapport with police officers, as well as experiencing situations where they had been treated fairly, would contribute towards more positive relationship.

Prejudicial Policing Young People

The issues of potential prejudicial policing, based on racial differentiation, is also important to consider particularly given the changing demographics in area two. Though the issue of racism was only apparent in area two, a frequent report from the young people was that they felt they were being treated differently from the Roma, Slovakian and Czech young people in the community. Jack noted:

...they'll just pull ya cause they have nothing to do, the polis have nothing to do so they pull us but in [street name] they'll no pull them out of [street name] (*referring to where the population is mainly Roma*).
(*Jack, 17, male, area 2*)

Pauline similarly said,

...see if all the boys down here were to stand at the corners, we would all get the jail but see if you walk down [street name] they are all gathered at the corners and naebody says anything about it, naebody does anything about it

Do the police do anything about it?

No...see as soon as you pull them up they just use the excuse that they cannae talk English.
(*Pauline, 16, male, area 2*)

These views have to be put in the context of not only reported experience but also the clearly expressed view of many young people in the area that their community

was changing in demographical terms and that they were in danger of being further disadvantaged. Consequently 'othering' can become the easy reaction.

Police View- Racism

In response to the accusation that the police treat certain young people differently than others due to their race or culture the police officer responded:

No I don't think there is any difference, if they are on the street corner and there is any kinda of disorder you know anti-disorder we will ask them to move on, other times it is just about speaking to them you know basically saying more kinda trying to advise them you know people are trying to work...I mean with the Roma community there is never an issue when you try and talk to them you know if we disappear, five minutes later they are probably back singing and playing their guitars and that, it is not criminal in nature and obviously with the pressure in the housing situation, if you have twenty people living in a two bedroom flat you are going to go outside and maybe have a smoke maybe just to get away from it...no any kind of criminality or disorder we will move people on but if not it is just a kinda case of speaking to the Roma community, or youth or any other type of community, most, when you speak to most people they are kinda happy and they will move off, it's not usually an issue for somebody

(Police officer, male, area 2)

The response of the police officer shows an understanding of the conditions under which the Roma live which is potentially more insightful than that expressed by their neighbours within the community. This however does not completely negate the local experience as reported by youth workers.

Youth Workers- Racism

Sharon, a community worker, also suggested that the police treat the young white people differently.

Yeah I think they do, yeah. Because they treat...if you see one person getting treated differently from another then you will be like “why are you treating me differently?”

(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

Mel agreed that differential treatment took place within area two.

... [T]hree or more is a gang and they are lifted or they are told to disperse or they are lifted and then you have the other cultures, where their culture involves them going about with their whole family from two year olds right up, but they can be left...They can be left because that is part of their culture. But what is our culture? What is Scottish culture? Why can all young people not hang about in their wee comfort group, the group that they feel comfortable in?

She continued that

...they feel that they are pushed aside and em like the Roma community and stuff get more favoured by the police and local places

(Mel, full time youth worker, female, area 2)

The views of the youth workers were also reflected by members of the local community.

Community Members- Racism

Betty again felt that the young white boys get treated differently from the Slovakian youth.

I think the boys do think, in fact one day there was a crowd of, I don't know a family or crowd of Slovaks, just one day here and they were drinking on the corner and I saw the police coming and then I saw some of our boys nicking up cause they saw the police coming, you know had a bottle, going

to the far end of the park up there and what the boys then said to me after it was [name] we saw the police walking by them with the drink, yet the police stopped them and took the drink off them..

(Betty, elderly community resident, female, area 2)

Rita, Marie and Mo all felt that the police treat the white young people differently than the ethnic minority youth in the area.

And do you think the police seem to target the white...

Rita, Marie, Mo- together- Aye, aye

Rita- I do think so

Mo- The do don't they?

Rita- Aye but you if you go up [place name] you see them all smoking hash n there's things lying everywhere, so they just took over

(Rita, Marie and Mo, community residents, females, area 2)

For Ms. Mehta and all the residents interviewed, the police did not do enough to combat the problems in the community and felt that differential treatment happened because the police were scared of the ethnic minorities within the area.

People are saying that the police are scared from them, nothing is happening, they are still loitering our streets, they are still dirtying our streets, people are unhappy now. Do you know people actually...and you're not allowed to be racisms...they hate them! And by law they are not allowed to say these things and everything, and they are so scared.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, area 2)

To what extent such views are influenced by a degree of local racism over the changing nature of the area must be an issue to be taken into account.

My Reflections- Racism

In a recorded reflection on the issue of differential treatment I had noted after speaking to a young white man who was angry about his perception of unfair treatment from the police. This young white man, who identified with gang membership, also agreed with Ms. Mehta suggesting that the police were scared of being accused of being racist.

The man also questioned why he and his pals get moved on by the police all the time but the Slovaks are never moved on. He said that when him and his pals are standing in more than a group of three the police stop and search them and warrant check them, yet the Slovaks stand in groups of ten and twenty and they never get moved on.

Arguably it is the culture of the Roma people to congregate in groups but arguably this is the culture of Glaswegian people as well; particularly teenagers and those in their early twenties. This young man obviously felt victimised by the authorities and felt that there were double standards in the policing in the area. The guy also told me that the reason he thought the police didn't arrest or stop and search the Slovaks was because they were scared of being racist and that if they did arrest them they would have to get translators in and that was too expensive for the police. He said that many of the Slovaks pretended not to be able to speak English to avoid getting in trouble. I asked the boy, in a jokey manner, had he ever tried that excuse? He laughed and said he had but then he got arrested for being cheeky to the police.

(Personal observation and reflection, 08-09-09, area 2)

I also recorded a note from a night at the football session where I, and another worker, went to see if the Roma youth wanted to participate in the evening. The young boys asked if both the police and we would be in attendance for additional protection. I recorded:

We walked with the Roma guys over to the park and when two police officers walked past he asked if they were going to be coming to the diversionary initiative...I asked one of the boys why he wanted the police to be over at the initiative and he told me it was because it was his family member who had been threatened with a bottle last week at the football event. He said the same person was badly beaten up last Christmas by the same group of young people who threatened him the previous week...I had never thought that the young Roma boys may well have a different relationship or view of the police than what the young white boys have. The fact that they actively have asked for police protection shows that they must trust the police and feel more secure when they are present. This somewhat contrasts with the general feeling I have heard from the young lads who were born and brought up in Glasgow.

(Personal observation and reflection, 04-11-09, area 2)

Many community residents, youth workers and young people expressed the view that the police treat people from different ethnic backgrounds in an inconsistent manner. It was unclear if the young Roma males were more comfortable with the police because of potentially positive experiences with them or if they felt that police have the power to protect them.

The majority of literature relating to ethnic minority youth suggests that they have increased negative perceptions and experiences with the police. Hurst, Frank and Bowring (2000) in their work in the United States argued that race was a significant factor in the experiences and views towards the police. Equally, Sharp and Atherton (2007) drawing on interviews with 47, fifteen to eighteen year olds, found that the treatment of young black and ethnic minority groups by the police is of great concern. Many of their participants criticised the police and felt that they were motivated by racist attitudes resulting in young people from black and ethnic minority groups being targeted without reasonable suspicion. They also found that many of the young black respondents had a lack of confidence or trust in the police and would prefer to sort out crimes against themselves, or their families, on their own terms rather than referring the crime to the police. The same finding was found in this study of young white youths.

In contrast Hinds (2007), while noting that many studies upon the relationship between young people and the police have analysed the importance of race and ethnicity, found that, “Individual-level characteristics of gender, age, part-time employment and ethnicity, did not significantly influence young people’s views of police legitimacy...” (Hinds, 2007, p. 205).

My data does not contradict that, derived from studies in the UK or US, there is mistreatment of ethnic minority young people, however, it does suggest that the white community residents and young people from area two felt that they were unfairly targeted in comparison to the young people from ethnic minority communities. It is difficult to ascertain the true extent of this perceived difference in treatment or whether the feeling of differential treatment is itself based on racial prejudice towards the Roma community from the broader white community. Despite being refuted by the police, the reports of differential treatment were consistent from both the white young people and community members and as such are important to report. Whether real or perceived there is a clear need for further work to be undertaken by the police to allay these concerns.

Conclusion

The evidence gathered suggests that there is an agreement between the youth gang and the police but one that is fraught with certain ambiguities. Moreover there is a recognised, albeit unwritten agreement between community residents and young people about how they engage with the police, an aspect that will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

The agreement is underpinned by the agreed premise of mistrust. Although the young people are more open about this mistrust, the police officers also assumed the existence of the barriers due to perceptions about, and the responsibilities of, their job. This assumption subsequently makes experiences and interactions between the two groupings more negative. There is a process of mythology or essentialised ‘othering’ happening on both sides, from the police to the youth

gang members and vice versa. There is a circularity of 'othering', resulting in both taking stances and behaving in particular ways which maximises negativity.

Some community members also note that they do not trust the police, with Darren suggesting that the mistrust persists across all generations within area two. Similarly in this context the mistrust apparent is cyclical and is held by some community residents as well as youth gang members towards the police and vice versa. The existence of this broader community based mistrust of the police entails the young people have grown up with the expectation of maintaining this attitude.

When young participants were asked to explain their sense of mistrust, many told stories of ill treatment and negative experiences. The youth workers and community members interviewed also felt that the young people who identified with gang membership were unjustly targeted. The youth workers in both areas referred to the power the police had compared to the young people and Chris, noted that this negative treatment was specifically focussed in areas of deprivation. This would again align with Young's (2007) notion that the broader society, 'other' the 'underclass'. The police are an integral part of this 'othering' as they arguably are the enforcers of societal views and policies.

However, the use of police power was, on the one hand, criticised for abuse in implementation, i.e. stop and searches, but on the other was welcomed if a serious incident occurred which was deemed to be outside the control or 'remit' of the youth gang. The youth gang members have established norms about not reporting incidents to the police if they relate to personal injury or the injury of someone within the gang, as this would be an admission that the individual/gang could not look after its self. Such an admission has both physical and symbolic consequences, specifically that of giving up the power to retaliate affecting both personal and collective agency. Reporting the incident to the police would, in short, be a reduction in local power to act and thus access to agency. Analytically though, this does not adequately explain why young people would report certain offences, whilst not others. I argue that the young people will only report cases that are neither personal nor deemed to be within their remit of control. For

example, if two young people fight against each other the offence is personal; however, where it affects a community/family member, is not gang related and is deemed to be serious in nature, then the young people are more likely to be willing to corroborate with the authorities.

While an attack on a family member is still personal, the reporting of it would not result in the same victimisation, reprisals or possible accusation of criminal involvement (Anderson, 1994). Equally, if the crime is considered to be of a serious nature, it can no longer be seen as a personal matter and the need for police intervention is acknowledged. Thus there is an agreement about what crimes are serious enough to report to the police and what crimes should be handled locally where reporting would result in the individual being labelled as a 'grass', with potentially negative physical or social repercussions.

This highlights ambivalence towards the police. Their power and capabilities are necessary and required in certain instances, but when applied towards the youth gang can be seen as unfair and unjust. The disproportionate level of power held by the police means that the onus is on them to use their status to engage positively with young people who identify with gang membership, rather than harbouring and escalating the 'othering', underpinned by mistrust. Where the young people feel 'othered' through negative treatment and experiences, the cyclical nature of the relationship with police suggests they will harden their image and respond by 'othering' the police, thereby reducing levels of engagement. However as is demonstrated under the good cop/bad cop analysis, the police do have the ability to engage with the youth gang members when desired, with some of the latter admitting that they would be more likely to report incidents if there was a rapport and level of trust with individual officers.

This agreement, notwithstanding the levels of ambivalence, between the youth gang and the police highlights a deeper agreement between the youth gang and the local community residents. The community residents were aware of the 'no snitching' rule between youth gangs and, at times, were actively complicit in maintaining such a rule. Josie told how she knew the people who had stabbed her brother but would not tell the police for fear of being viewed in the community as

a grass. While this is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, it is worth noting that the community members seem to compound and possibly even augment the reluctance to report incidents to the police. Yet again this suggests that the community members are implicit in the gang decision not to grass, but equally that the young gang members are acting in line with sentiments and views already well established within their community. It is well known amongst the young people that there could be repercussions if they are labelled as a grass, be this from other young people, family members and/or community residents.

There is an agreed premise from both the community members and the youth gang within the two study areas that the police are not to be trusted as a rule. However, if there is a personal rapport, or the circumstances of reporting are deemed to be acceptable, then this rule can be broken, creating a situation of enhanced ambivalence. Irrespective of this, the generalised 'community line' is that the police are outsiders and as such should not be involved, publicly, with community matters.

On initial examination of the data it would be easy to conclude that the agreement between the police and youth gang members was unambiguously one of hatred and mistrust, passed on through generations. However, as noted at the start of the chapter, this relationship is a complex social interplay that is underpinned by a series of accepted and tacitly agreed norms. There is a basic premise of mistrust. However, there are nuances in this largely adversarial relationship depending on the context. There is an acceptance that at times the police are required to protect the community in ways that the youth gang may see as being beyond their remit or control and outside of their individual and/or collective agency. Thus while the agreement between police and the youth gang members may be mistrustful it is layered due to varying circumstances; but essentially it takes the form of an agreement based on ambivalence.

The police are seen as outsiders. The fact that they are not part of the community yet have powers to impact it perpetuates ambivalence as the form of the agreement. The local communities have their own ways and means of dealing with intruders to the community, as will be seen in subsequent chapters. This

self-protective capability is evident when the young people and community residents discuss the norm of not reporting incidents to the police. This is furthered when the young people discussed engaging in 'tit for tat' retaliation acts against other youths from differing areas. The capability that the community has to protect themselves means that the police are not called upon as a general rule. However, at times this rule has to be broken if the incident is deemed serious enough, as will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Irrespective of this, the young people and community residents in these two communities rarely experience any positive aspects of having a formal police force. Rather, as demonstrated in the negative experiences section, the communities generally witness and experience negative interactions with the police. Thus from a lack of trust they often resent or resist the policing practices they have encountered. This means that they rely on their own capabilities and coping strategies to deal with incidences within the community. Thus, although the agreement takes the form of ambivalence, the underpinning reason for this is that the police are viewed as external agents of control, who generally bring negative consequences on to the community and fundamentally are a force who threatens the security of the community. Despite this, the known powers of the police, granted by the broader society, means that they are rarely confronted with physical attack, rather there is a norm of lack of co-operation, lessening the potential effectiveness of intervention within the community.

Founded on a basis of negative experiences and lack of trust, the agreement with the police takes the form of ambivalence. This is due to the communities need for self-protection and security as they feel they cannot rely on a police force that at times compounds and actively undermines their security and safety.

This chapter has also highlighted that the complex agreement with the police directly links to the nature of agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. The next chapter will examine another facet of such an agreement, whether, and in what circumstances, community members would report incidents to the police that are carried out by the youth gang in their area.

CHAPTER NINE

Community Members Reporting Incidents to the Police

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that the community members were aware and at times complicit in the 'no-grassing' rule to the police. This led me to question if local residents would hold the same 'rule' in relation to the activities of the youth gang members within their neighbourhood. This chapter will assess if there is a joint, communal based agreement towards not reporting incidents to the police or if this 'rule' is only prevalent between youth gangs.

The chapter analyses key themes drawn from community residents on the decision making process about reporting an incident or not. The first theme for community residents with regard to contact with the police was based on the seriousness of the incident. The second theme is entitled- 'labelled a 'grass' and anonymity'. This picks up on the concerns discussed by some residents in the previous chapter and refers to fear of gaining a reputation for reporting incidents to the police. Related to this is the prospect of anonymity and whether residents felt more comfortable reporting incidents if it could be done secretly.

Seriousness of Incident

The seriousness of the incident clearly impacted on whether community residents would report certain actions or behaviours to the police.

If I thought there was going to be a lot of trouble, somebody was going to get hurt, severely hurt or killed, yes I would phone the police. Not because of what that person could repeat being what had happened Sinead, does that sound daft? Repeat what had happened, I would still if I thought that person was getting, was going to get their head kicked in, yes Sinead I would phone the police, because I couldnae live with myself if I thought, say it was a

Roma, Slovakian or anybody, I mean I couldn't live with that knowing I watched that and never done anything about it, no, no I would need to try and help in some way.

(Betty, elderly community resident, female, area 2)

Betty differentiates between incidents which should be reported and those which should not. This suggests that the normalised stance is not to call the police if an incident is not deemed serious. Similarly, Mo, Rita and Marie would contact the police if there was constant disruption which was seriously impacting upon them.

Would you ever contact the police on them?

[Pause]

Mo- No, no but it depends what they were doing if they were just hanging about then no

Rita- See cause it's my sister and they drink n that but they are just like anybody else know what I mean

Mo- If they were just minding their own business then no

Rita- They are just the same as anyone else

Marie- To be honest if I stayed in a place and there was a gang fighting outside my windae and sitting out in my close 24/7 aye I'd phone the polis

Rita- Aye if it was constant aye

Marie- Aye if it was constant

Mo- Constant aye

Marie- I would, I don't care I could get my windae's smashed whatever but if I couldnae get to sleep and my neighbours were bouncing the music every day and every night...

(Rita, Marie and Mo, community residents, females, area 2)

The fundamental position is not to report incidents to the police. However, if the incident involved serious injury, or was having a significant impact on the lives of the community residents, then they would report it. Interestingly, Marie is aware, as seen in the previous chapter, that to make a report to the police, and to be known to have done so, can result in retaliation on her property. These statements contradict the findings of Waiton (2008) when he argues that people are more reliant on the authorities to deal with all types of 'antisocial behaviour'.

When Children swore and dropped litter or neighbours were noisy, people were expected to act themselves to discuss and resolve such behaviour. Today we are less inclined to act; indeed we are discouraged from doing so (Waiton, 2008, p. 160).

Within my study the residents would only rely on the authorities if the incident was deemed serious. They would rather take personal charge of reacting than involve the police for minor incidents. Waiton (2008) found that by not acting, or not taking social responsibility, the individual's subjectivity became diminished. In contrast, these community members are maintaining their subjectivity, are taking responsibility and are willing to act; but only to a point.

This point is established by making an assessment on the seriousness of the incident and the potential negative repercussions faced if one was known to report an incident to the authorities. Many residents expressed concern at being labelled a 'grass' as a potential negative consequence for reporting minor 'anti-social' actions.

Labelled a 'Grass' and Anonymity

When asked if she would phone the police on the local youth gang, Josie responded:

Aye I think I would I think I would phone and I think my mum would phone if she seen something that was happening that shouldnae be happening, aye it's no' like she is like "I'm no phoning because I don't want to be known as a grass" or anything like that, know how I think my Mum would be quite, aye if she seen something happening that shouldn't be happening aye she would phone the police and I would do the same.

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Although she also suggested that

Even as much as I am saying that and I go "oh no I would phone the police" but then sometimes I would worry about like my wee brother then being on the receiving end of that, or my mum or other people being targeted know how...but if I seen something that totally wasn't on, wasn't acceptable and was out of order like somebody like doing something in the street or whatever then aye I think I would phone the police

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Josie is differentiating between incidents she would report and those she would not depending on the seriousness or impact of the occurrence. She is also aware that there could be negative repercussions not just to her, but to her family, if she was known to go to the police.

One means of reporting incidents to the police without being labelled a 'grass' is to make an anonymous report. In area one the female community resident said on reporting:

Well as long as I can do it anonymous, I wouldnae give my name, I have always asked not to give my name because I have got kids to think about,

you know? But I have phoned them for up the stair and them bringing people into the close. As you know I don't keep well now anyway so I cannae go out and argue with them but at the same time I don't want my boys going out and fighting with them so do it the quiet way and let the polis deal with it, but they know when the polis are coming in cause they all let each other know so by the time the polis get to the close they are off anyway so most times they don't get them so...but sometimes it is all night and the whole scheme don't get to sleep.

(Female community resident, area 1)

If in better health this resident would personally deal with the disturbance rather than contacting the police. However as she does not want her sons fighting she feels her only option is to anonymously contact the authorities. Interestingly though, she suggests that there is a quick response within the community when the police become involved and people are warned in advance to prevent them from getting arrested. Jankowski (1991), as noted within the literature review, suggested that one of the fundamental reasons for the gang to maintain a close relationship with their community was linked to the broader relationship with the police. Community members can not only withhold information by not reporting incidents but can proactively contact the gang members if the police are entering the area. It is not clear in this instance if the community members tell the youth gang members directly or if the information is relayed by other youth within the area. Irrespective, this data demonstrates that there is an agreement amongst the community that they would not generally report incidents to the police unless it was done anonymously or the incident was deemed to be extremely serious.

Josie noted:

Yeah I think more people would feel more confident more comfortable doing it anonymous, I think a lot of people like more people than no would phone up, like not have any qualms of phoning up but giving over their names then no, cause the whole going up to court and being a witness against somebody and it just gives you the...what would happen next to them. *she continued...* Aye I think people would phone no bother but when it came to

giving their name and statement and going up and standing on trial in front of people and stuff I think that is totally different and that is when you have got the whole bit of people just not wanting to get involved cause they can see what could happen kinda next.

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

This raises the question whether the agreement around reporting incidents is based on fear? Despite all residents and young people describing the negative repercussions of being labelled a grass, it must be some of these same people who are perpetuating the negative labelling and/or punitive repercussions for this behaviour.

Ms. Mehta herself had no problem with phoning the police and repeatedly told of instances when she had contacted them; however, the following statement shows that her mother warned her about potential repercussions from the youth gang, saying,

...the next minute three polis vans came, my mum says you better get away from the window they will think you have phoned the polis and then they will do you in.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

To prevent these repercussions the community resident in area one told how information can be passed without gaining the reputation of being a 'grass'.

Aye I do cause you know that you can talk to them, I used to say to [police name], she would say to me "so what's happening today" and I would give her a wee bit of info out there without anyone knowing cause everybody spoke to them so it was not as if they were going "oh look at her talking to the polis" everybody did, she stopped and spoke to everybody and made it a point, you know. So they found out who was doing what just from talking to people and then you wernae getting the blame of being a grass cause you were outside talking to them know what I mean?

(Female community resident, area 1)

This again shows that being labelled a grass was a negative signifier within the community. This label affords stigmatisation that may be difficult to escape. As Yates (2006) found through ethnographic research with young people in a marginalised estate:

It was evident that the application of the label 'grass' signified untrustworthiness and this could have potentially negative consequences for the individual involved and possibly their family. Being labelled as a 'grass' carried risks both physically and socially as it jeopardized the networks of trust embedded on the Estate (p. 199).

Although both Ms. Mehta and Marie alluded that it was the young people who would take the action of smashing windows or physically inflicting negative repercussions against those seen as being a 'grass', there seems to be an underlying community based agreement that to report incidents to the police would result in being labelled a 'grass'. Thus this labelling must be perpetuated by community members as well as the youth gang members, although it is more likely to be the latter who respond in a physical manner in order to reinforce the understanding.

Conclusion

This relatively brief chapter confirmed that generally community residents would not report incidents involving local youth gangs to the police if they could deal with them personally. The residents will pass information to the authorities if the incident is deemed to be serious or if their lives are being seriously impacted by the actions of the youth gang. This information would not be passed without due consideration and the majority of residents prefer to give information anonymously. There was an acceptance on the part of both the young people and the community residents that to be labelled a 'grass' was extremely negative and could result in both social and physical reprisals. Yates (2006) explains:

Central to understanding the importance of the ‘no grassing rule’ on the Estate is the need to appreciate its significance as a cultural norm. Young people were socialized about the cultural taboo of grassing through the informal community networks on the Estate (p. 201).

All residents discussed the negatives of being labelled a ‘grass’ almost as if it was something that did not involve them. However it seems that the community members, like the young people, have been ‘socialised into the cultural taboo of grassing’ (Yates, 2006), they actively buy into this taboo by constantly perpetuating the fear of being labelled a ‘grass’. Moreover by perpetuating the fear they themselves are actively involved in transmitting the community belief in the negative social repercussions of being labelled a grass. In essence this cultural norm that Yates (2006) discusses is not just accepted by community members and the youth gang, but is perpetuated by both. They both treat the police as an outside force who should not be trusted and should only be given information under certain restricted circumstances. They also both agree that if information is passed and the informant identified that person is likely to face social, and possibly even physical adverse consequences.

Thus the agreement between the community and the youth gang in relation to the police is that they jointly ‘other’ the police. Jointly holding similar opinions and feelings in relation to the police means that a connection is effected between the two, augmented by the fear of possible social and physical reprisals which both acknowledge as an accepted reality. While the community members and the young gang members may act in different ways in the case of reprisals and in their interactions with the police, their joint ‘othering’ creates the basis for a unified agreement against an external ‘other’, the police.

CHAPTER TEN

Young People Protecting Their Area

Introduction

As established in previous chapters summarising the research findings, there is a common position adopted by both community residents and the gang members towards people deemed external to the community. This chapter poses a number of questions concerning the nature of agreement within the communities themselves. One key emergent theme was that some young people felt they were protecting their area against ‘outsiders’. If the community members and youth gang members jointly have ‘othered’ the police and have similar views concerning how to engage with them, this chapter examines whether equally there is agreement with regard to actions taken by the youth gang in relation to protecting the community.

Initially the views from the young people will be explored, particularly where the young people were reflecting on their role in protecting their community against outsiders. Following this, the views of the community residents are discussed to ascertain if they feel their area, or they themselves, are protected by the youth gang. The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of the views from the police, youth workers and my personal reflections to gain additional insight into the concept of protection.

Young Peoples’ Views

The bulk of the evidence presented on views concerning the issue of protection, and the youth gang members views on this issue, has derived from the interviews conducted in area two given the larger sample available in the study area. John was the only young man from area one who reflected on this issue, stating:

Em well the [neighbouring area] used to come in and write menties and smash things up, like my pals motors and stuff like that so we used to see it as keep them away and they won't do it, so like protecting motors and stuff like that. They all stood outside my house as well one time and they were all trying to smash my windaes (*windows*) and that

And did you stop them from doing that?

Well me and about 15 to 20 of my pals went over and chased them
(*John, 18, male, area 1*)

John felt that he and his friends were protecting items within the area. Interestingly when asked if he felt the community residents saw him in this role he responded:

Well probably they do think it is stupid but at the time they are probably seeing a group of young boys that they don't know that are standing there and they don't know what is going to happen, but if the local ones come in and chase them then cause we know them then don't feel as scared. They might see it as stupid but a good thing as well for chasing them away cause they don't know what's going to happen to their windaes or anything.
(*John, 18, male, area 1*)

John feels his actions are not only about protecting the area, but are making the residents feel less scared by fighting off people who are outsiders to the local community. For John, his role is to protect the residents from other young males who are unknown within the community. He also feels that although the residents may not actively encourage the young people to fight back they will be 'less scared' knowing people from outside the community are being chased out. John sees his actions as protecting the community from outsiders; a role that has a residual positive impact for the members of his own community.

A similar sentiment is reflected in the interviews with the young people from area two:

If they came to my door, if they came to my windae, if they came to my street then aye I wouldnae think twice about doing anything to them.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

He goes on to describe what happened when the neighbouring young people arrived at his house;

A few times when I was like 19/20 and we used to fight with [another neighbouring area] and that and they were all outside my house, “ah I’m gonna ah and I’m gonna put your windaes in”, my wee brother, my Ma was downstairs, and I was like that, you’re not putting these windaes in and that is how I ran out with a machete and end up fucking hit one of them right on the shoulder...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Lewis feels protective of his family and clearly sees it as necessary to defend both his house and family against outsiders to the neighbourhood.

Often within area two, the ‘outsiders’ or those who were ‘othered’ were individuals from a different ethnic background. Although this has already been referred to and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 12, Jason (cited below) discussed how he protected certain individuals within his area against ‘them’ referring to the Roma community.

...I can’t remember how long ago, and there were all like wee old women going to church in the morning and me and my pal were walking down the street and there must have been, no lie, about 40 of them, and they were all battering this old guy and he was drunk and they were battering him trying to rob him and we ran over to him and chased them and there was only like two of us and we chased them all and we picked up the old guy and took him haeme and picked up the guy and brought him home cause there was like 40 of them attacking him and trying to rob him. Thing is we have been growing up in the community so we know a lot of people know what I mean, cause

they are...Like we cause hassle, we drink and we all end up doing somebody know what I mean but they like, they just like rob old women, know what I mean, like wee old woman got robbed going to church in the morning, early in the morning and they got robbed off them

So do you kinda protect then the people that you know then?

Hm hm aye cause like I don't know what it is, we don't really like them, we don't get on with them at all...

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

While Jason and his friends can start trouble in their neighbourhood, there are certain limits and parameters to the hassle directed at residents. The idea of robbing an old woman or a drunken man is out of the question. These members of the community are vulnerable, not able to stand up for themselves, and should be protected rather than attacked. Jason views his actions as protecting his own community residents against those who are outsiders; those who are different who are 'othered'; who don't hold the same values and identity as his community.

These statements demonstrate that the youth gang feel they protect their community. In addition to this, Rab suggested that the community residents are complicit in this and have used the youth gang as 'muscle' in removing outsiders; in this case the Roma community.

Do you think you kind of protect this area?

I don't know... Everybody else who stays about the scheme, even women in the street, old women and that are like try and get these bastards out cause they came up and raped [girls name] as soon as [local girls name] got raped it's just all their...all their motors and that got petrol bombed and their windaes and that smashed and seen about sixty weans of them all sitting in the one house...

And do people say to you to get them out?

Aye old women and that all the time

Is that why you fight with them...

That's why I hate them so much...and then did you hear the other day two old women got robbed their handbags? The beasts...off eastern Europeans they said so who do you think that is? The Slovaks again...

So people in the community want you to go and fight with them to get them out?

Aye and I'm talking about mad snitches and all that as in the ones who try and pure give us ASBOs have walked over to us and said get these bastards out

Right so these are people like...

But how do we...they are like what's the matter with ya's, they all just get stuck in [research area]

(Rab, 17, male, area 2)

Rab was the only person who suggested the community members actively requested the youth gang to remove the Roma from the area. Nevertheless, other young people hinted towards the broader community not liking the Roma population and understanding why fights might occur between the two groups. The young people feel that they are protecting the area from outsiders, be that ethnic minorities or people from a different neighbourhood.

The youth gang have 'othered' those not from their area and feel that to engage in conflict with these groups protects their area, their family and their reputation, while also maintaining the security and integrity of community residents. This finding resonates with the work of Zatz and Portillos (2000) who carried out research in Phoenix and found that "...the youths are adamant that protection of

the community is still one of their primary responsibilities. In this sense, they are an integral component of parochial social control” (p. 382).

However, it is also important to explore whether the community members saw these allegedly protective actions in the same positive light.

Community Members Views

In area one the female community resident interviewed did not feel protected; rather the youths’ actions were depicted as a display of personal strength.

What they do is they ask “who is he with?” and it all depends, same thing, it all depends who they are with then they get to stand there, but if they don’t like the look of them or they don’t want them there and it is somebody stupid that they are no scared of, aye they will batter them and chase them.

(Female community resident, area 1)

In comparison in area two some residents felt the fighting was linked more to personal satisfaction and bravado, but did still acknowledge that protecting the community may have a part to play.

Mm, I don’t know, it could be some of that, but I think a lot of them just like to do it for the adrenaline and the buzz, you know, cause I have done stuff with them and chatted to them like “why do you fight?” and they are like “...because we like the buzz and we like the adrenaline.”

(Clare, community resident, female, area 2)

However, this male resident did feel the youth gang protected the people they knew within the community:

I think they protect the community in, for example I think they do, they don’t do it in this kind of having a glass wall around the community because a lot of people end up coming pals with people in the community and they sort

of...it's actually a really good way of becoming a part of the community through sharing friendships with some of these people you know what I mean. And just looking at myself, see the bunk beds in my house for my kids that was given to me by [name of young team] you know what I'm saying, these people helped me out when I was coming in to the community because I knew them from way back. So you could probably say that is protecting the community, well certainly in that instance and just the way people help each other out do you know what I mean it's almost like a self help, social welfare kind of thing.

(Darren, community resident, male, area 2)

Similarly in area one Jan, a youth worker and parent of a young man who identifies with the local youth gang suggested:

I think there is a lot of fear among people as well that if they come out and say something, like I'll feel quite safe because I have got a teenage son, so I know if anybody...a lot of young people wouldn't say anything to me, but I know they have a lot of respect for me cause of the job that I'm in, but they know I have a teenage son who they know has been involved in gangs so they'll no, they'll no be cheeky to me cause they know he is there but there is a lot of, there is people who do feel totally intimidated because they have no got that kinda protection that I have got.

(Jan, youth worker, female, area 1)

Both residents allude to the importance of knowing the youth gang members and how this can ensure their protection. For Darren knowing them means they will include him in the community, provide support and not target him as an outsider. For Jan, her job provides some level of protection, but the fact that other young people know that her son is associated with the youth gang prevents her from getting hassle and keeps her protected. The issue of 'knowing' the youth gang will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 11, however these statements demonstrate that having reciprocal relations or a personal connection with the youth gang can provide a level of protection, or certainly create conditions of less hassle. Consequently these community residents acknowledge that the youth

gang feel they are protecting the community and, at times, have felt personally protected through their engagement with them.

Another resident felt it was not about protecting the physical geographical space but more about the name, or identity, of the youth gang itself.

I don't know, I don't know if it is about protecting that area or the people in the area, because I think sometimes and all now, I don't think a lot of the young people have a lot of respect for the area, know how...people still cause trouble in the street when people are asking them not to or to move on and they will give the people abuse or they will smash up the park or whatever, so I don't think it is about protecting the area, I think it is about protecting the name they have got rather than the area itself but...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

However protection of the name and identity of the youth gang is arguably necessary in order to protect the identity of the area and, as such, protecting one is protecting the other in the eyes of the youth gang members. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 13, some participants felt that the maintenance of the gang, and thus the potential to fight with outsiders, is an important element in the protection of the residents.

As the young people noted above, many community members appeared to understand why, the predominantly white, youth gang fought with the Roma community.

They stand there and they verbally abuse you, I have walked by them and you get a mouthful, they are either eyeing up the girls, whistling at them, or giving them abuse, you're walking by, if you just look at them you get a mouthful in their language back and you have just to walk by and take that? There must be times people just snap. Can you imagine the white gang and they are saying that? That is it, it is World War three and I have seen it in [street name] and you are so scared that you just want to get home.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

Although expressing an understanding of why the local gang fought with the outsiders, Ms. Mehta did not feel any greater sense of security or protection, instead she felt increasingly scared and fearful of getting caught in the middle. Betty is also sympathetic as to why the youth gang fight with the Roma, and while she does not overtly state that she feels protected by their actions, she feels the Roma are exacerbating the poor image of the area and diminishing the opportunities of the white youth.

...it was a conversation I had with them one day, a proper conversation and they said [name] they don't want...most of them don't want to integrate. They have, said that, stated that to them. "We don't want you white bastards", that was the words used from them to ours, you know and they are here they get money, they get housing, they don't pay for anything, they get money to feed on and that is their priority. That is what they were told again and you go well, what is this, is this our boys thinking we want to get jobs and we can't get jobs and your saying you don't like us and calling us white bastards and...I think it's quite hard Sinead I don't know. I know that [research area] is getting bad, it's getting bad.

(Betty, elderly community resident, female, area 2)

This indicates that the broader community often differentiates between 'them' and 'ours'. The youth gang are seen as having a rationale for fighting with the Slovakian youth. Although neither Betty nor Ms. Mehta are overtly promoting these actions, or suggesting they feel protected by the youth gang's activities, there is an underlying sympathy and condoning of the actions. Interestingly Betty noted previously that the issue is based more on territory than on race. The Roma community have moved into their area, have taken over part of their community and thus are being blamed for broader community frustrations relating to access to housing and employment.

Police Views

The police officer in area two acknowledged a form of gang protection, stating:

I think it might be protecting their own kinda territory, not so much the community as a whole but more this is our kind of space, you know different things...like this is our kind of area, you know it is like “what you doing here?”...

(Police Officer, male, area 2)

This resonates with some community views that the young people are not necessarily protecting the whole community but their geographical space. Although Josie suggested that damage to the physical geographical area showed the young people were not protecting it, it could be argued that it is more the symbolic space from outsiders that they are protecting. The fact that the young people smash up the park, or shout abuse at residents, is their own prerogative, but if someone from outside was to carry out the same actions there would be repercussions. While not all community members feel protected by the actions of the youth gang, the young people feel that by protecting their territory they are also protecting those within it. They are, after all, keeping strangers and outsiders from entering the area.

Youth Workers Views

Some community residents understand why the young people fight with the Roma community in area two. Rab said community members had actively asked them to protect their community by trying to get the ‘othered’ Roma out of the community. Mel, a youth worker in area two, corroborates this and explains that some families are not just sympathetic but actively encourage the young people to fight with the Roma. This statement from Mel cannot be referring to Rab as from working in the area I know he does not have any contact with his father.

And I think there are a few of them, this conversation only happened really recently, and they were saying their families, their Dad was encouraging them to go and do it, “just smack them out of the road and tell them to go back home.”

(Mel, youth worker, female, area 2)

While few of the community residents, when speaking to me, said that they felt protected by the actions of the youth gang, there is an underlying understanding as to why the young people would fight with outsiders. There are also a number of statements that suggest that some community members might actively encourage the young people to engage in conflict with the Roma community. If this is the case, then the youth gang are proactively being pump primed to carry out the desired actions of the residents. In these circumstances residents would be actively ensuring the youth gang are maintaining the local community within an established identity by the exclusion of perceived ‘outsiders’. However, the data is not extensive enough to conclude that the community members are using the young people as ‘the muscle’ to re-assert local values, feelings and prejudices. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is worth noting and reflecting upon.

The evidence gathered suggests that there is sympathy for the gang’s actions towards outsiders. Irrespective of these sentiments some residents still feel frightened by the actions rather than protected.

However, Jan a youth worker did feel the youth gang were protecting their area and maintaining pre-prescribed boundaries.

I think it is all about protecting their scheme and things like that, they don’t like...that is their territory and they don’t like people coming in that they don’t know about it

(Jan, youth worker, female, area 1)

Chris similarly argued that the protection is based on individual or group pride in their area and the need to protect their space.

... [A]lot of young people who we work with in that area are grown out of it however if the opposite gang, they'll no go looking for the fight, but they come over they're dead protective of the area it's like they feel degraded if they can come in to their area and walk about, so it's like, get them out so it's like a pride thing then they would be involved and get back involved and stuff like that.

(Chris, youth worker, male, area 1)

The young people feel undermined if others are seen to have free access within their area as both the gang, and the area's, identity is being brought into question. If other youths can enter the area this suggests that the local young people are either unable, or unwilling, to protect their own territory, thus bringing their reputation and sense of agency into question. The ability to maintain a gang that has the potential to remove, or attack, outsiders reinforces both local sense of identity and provides a clear purpose. The gang clearly associate fighting off external threats and protection of the territory with the protection of community residents within.

Sharon, a community worker from area one, again asserts the importance of knowing people within the community (the concept of 'knowing' will be discussed in the next chapter), Sharon suggests this may make people feel more secure within their area.

Maybe yeah, maybe, cause there is a sort of thing about when you are part of a group or part of a community and everyone knows who you are and then you feel protected by that and I think there is that in [research area] I think there is a sense of people know each other and they feel like...like I feel particularly safe walking in [research area]...

(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

As expressed by some community residents in area two there is often a racial aspect to the 'knowing' and protection, as Mel explains:

Aye definitely, I think that is where when you are having conversations with them you get a lot of their conversations leads to their racial kinda views and stuff and they feel as if...this is Scotland, this is [research area], this is their area. And I think, and they are protecting, they want to protect their area and they know that problems come with every area, but as I said they as young people are stereotyping as well and they are fighting against stereotyping for themselves but they are stereotyping everyone else with their attitudes as well but they do get a really good sense of protection. Like I know with the project, they come in here and they are like “this is our project” and “we have had this project here for years and this is our area”, and “what do you mean you are letting other people in?” and this is “[research area] project and this is for me” and they take a real sense of ownership and ... aye they totally feel their area is kinda getting took over in a sense and they try to fight against that.

(Mel, youth worker, female, area 2)

Mel sums up the theoretical proposition posed by Young (1999b, 2007) on the process of ‘othering’. The young people are ‘othering’ the Roma community for not being Scottish, for being different to what they know, yet they are also fighting against the ‘othering’ they are themselves receiving from outsiders.

‘Othering’ defines and secures one’s own identity by distancing and stigmatising an (other). Its purpose is to reinforce notions of our own ‘normality’, and to set up the difference of others as a point of deviance. The person or group being ‘othered’ experiences this as a process of marginalisation, disempowerment and social exclusion. This effectively creates a separation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Grove & Zwi, 2006, p. 1933).

Mel refers to the cyclical nature of this process. While many residents and workers suggested that the young people were protecting their area as opposed to the people in it, for the young people themselves both area and residents are viewed as synonymous with each other. By protecting the identified boundaries, and by fighting with people who are jointly ‘othered’ by the young people and the

broader community, they feel they are protecting the people within their community.

My Reflections

From my own recording on 5th May 2010 I wrote:

Another interesting thing happened while I was interviewing the two men; another young man came up and said to me "Sinead watch your phone", as it was sticking out of my pocket. He said, "there are thieves about" and I retorted "you wouldn't take it on me though!?" to which he replied that of course he wouldn't take it from me but there are other thieves about that I should watch out for. I felt in this one act that the young men were watching out for me and my belongings. To even be warned about the potential of danger in this way made me realise that I had a relationship with these young men.

(Personal observation and reflection, 05-05-10, area 2)

I felt safer and more protected in the area knowing these young men, rather than not knowing them. This young man was protecting me within his area, a role he obviously felt comfortable with or, at least, felt was necessary to do. A similar incident occurred one evening when my partner picked me up and we got talking to one of the young men, I reflected:

The man was always very polite to me and my partner and said that if we ever were drinking in the area and had any hassle or needed anything to use his and his friend's name and everything would be sorted. This again showed a level of acceptance, whilst also telling us that if you were on his side he would certainly look out for you.

(Personal observation and reflection, 11-03-10, area 2)

This showed that if you are known, or seen as an ally, you will be protected and looked after by the young people who identified with the youth gang. It

demonstrated that the young men were willing to vouch for me, but also showed that the young men felt that by using their names it would ensure my protection.

Conclusion

This chapter found that many youth gang members felt that being within a gang meant they could protect their area. Similarly many young people felt that they gained additional respect through being seen to be actively protecting their area and that they were also protecting the community members and not just the physical geographical space. The protection of the space, through the expulsion of outsiders, was linked by many of the young participants as a means to ensure the safety of their community residents.

In contrast not all community members made this connection nor felt protected by the actions of the youth gang. In both areas the community residents acknowledged that the young people may feel that they are protecting the area and could understand why they fought with outsiders to the community. In area two this understanding was based on a process of essentialised 'othering' where the Roma community were blamed for bringing down the reputation of the area; for causing trouble; and for committing crimes within the area. This 'othering' was carried out by both the community residents and the youth gang members. Arguably this arises due to ontological insecurity where the residents and young people feel that their area is being taken over by people who do not hold the same values or identity as they do; they are threatening their security.

Despite this joint 'othering', and joint differentiation, no community resident interviewed reported asking the young people to remove the Roma from the area, despite showing a degree of sympathy and understanding as to why the white youths fought with the Roma. Nevertheless, both Rab and Mel recounted cases where the residents had actively supported or requested the young people to fight with the Roma. If community residents were asking the youth gang to actively engage in conflict to remove the Roma community then there would be a clear agreement that the youth gang were being used as a source of protection/local

muscle. If this was the case then the findings of Jankowski (1991) are relevant; "...the residents in their communities have often viewed members of the gang as merely local boys who can be counted on for help when needed" (p. 209).

Given that this statement is only derived from two sources, and is not confirmed by others, it would be misleading to draw conclusive findings regarding these actions. However, if the young people are hearing negative sentiments towards the Roma community they might well feel that they are being given implicit permission to fight with them, and that by so doing they are abiding by the wishes of the broader community.

This is where the notion of the agreement needs to be reiterated. The agreement is not necessarily of an overt nature which might suggest that the community members actively engage in a conscious deliberate pact, rather it is implicit aspects of agreement drawn from the deep relations that are often seen as normalised behaviour that are being explored. Thus, in this case, although the community members may not feel that the actions of the youth gang are explicitly protecting them, they can be supportive of the overall rationale for these actions thus providing implicit justification. As has been seen the community residents, alongside the youth gang members, may feel that their area is getting taken over by outsiders. They have essentialised the differing culture of the Roma, who have been set up as a group that is portrayed as undermining the ontological security of the community. As such, some residents sympathise when the youth gang members engage in physical fighting with this group.

Similarly in area one, the residents understand, albeit to a lesser degree, why the youth gang fight with other groups of young people who are not known in the area. They comprehend that failure to fight would bring into question the identity of the individual gang member, that of the gang and have an impact on the security of the area.

Although the community members may understand, and at times sympathise, with why the young people engage in these activities not all of them feel protected by them. Some, like Ms. Mehta, feel that the fighting endangers her further. But for

others the process of knowing the youth gang members, or being a part of the protected community, makes them feel safer. This links to the findings of Puntteney (1997) who found that mothers who had a personal connection with the youth gang were not as concerned for their own, or their children's safety. From my own experience within the community I felt that the young people were acutely aware of who was an insider and who was an outsider to their in-group. Once I was considered safe, I was actively watched out for; I was protected and was warned about dangers, as well as told names to use in order to protect me if an incident should occur.

In conclusion then, whilst not all community members believed that the actions of the youth gang protected them, the ontological insecurity and 'othering' carried out by the residents is inextricably linked to the actions of the youth gang. This 'othering' of outsiders, particularly in the example of the Roma community, creates solidarity and cohesion between the youth gang and many of the local residents, "One of the things that people have in common in any groups is precisely the recognition of other groups or categories with whom they differ" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 23).

The young people are aware of those that the residents perceive as outsiders and they act on these feelings accordingly due to their commonality. The youth gang and their local community generate a united 'other', as was also evident in relation to the police. The young people feel that by acting on these broad premises they are keeping the community safe. Although the majority of residents have not asked the youth gang to adopt this position, few actively criticise the actions taken, and may often sympathise with them. This means that the young people feel their actions are both justified and have a positive impact on the residents. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily follow that the residents are happy with the violence that can often result; but they understand why the young people engage in fighting as these actions are underpinned by the same feelings and values, related to the joint process of 'othering', that the residents are also party to.

This reinforces the conclusion that the agreement between the community and the youth gang is not based purely on the notion of protection, as this is a one sided view of the gang activities. Rather the agreement between youth gangs and their local community is based on the joint 'othering' of the same groups, creating cohesion and similarity of views and sentiments between both sections. The element of ambivalence within this agreement relates to the implicit nature of the shared framing of concerns and the fact that many community residents fail to take any responsibility for the actions of the youth gangs despite contributing to a framework of justification. However, given the experience of the community residents themselves and both the implicit and ambiguous nature of the agreement, it may be unfair for them to be expected to take responsibility for all the actions of the youth gang.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Knowing Young People Who Identify with Gang Membership

Introduction

Evidence derived from the interviews conducted suggested that many residents referred to the notion of 'knowing' the young people who identify with gang membership. The impact of a personal relationship's between the youth gang and the local residents was important to the subsequent agreement(s). Throughout the interviews it was frequently found that if the residents knew the young people who engaged with gang membership on a personal level, then this would change their perception, as well as how they reacted and engaged with them. This chapter explores the significance of personal reciprocal relationships and whether this has a significant impact on the overall agreement between youth gangs and their local communities.

The chapter begins with the concept of 'knowing' and what is meant by this. Following this are the perceived positives from community members on knowing the youth gang members. Subsequently the views of young people on knowing community residents are explored, as well as the perspectives of youth workers.

The second theme is entitled- mutually reinforcing treatment and examines the consequences if the youth gang do not 'know', or get on, with particular community residents and vice versa. The next section explores the potential negative repercussions apparent if there is no working relationship between a resident and any of the youth gang members. This section suggests that the relationship between the youth gang members' personal knowledge of community residents, and vice versa, is cyclical. The 'knowing' of the youth gang demonstrates the symbolic engagement with the broader community in-group, rather than being excluded and/or 'othered'.

The chapter concludes by highlighting the impact of alcohol and drugs. This has deliberately been left to the end as often the impact of alcohol and drugs undermines the previously established agreement(s) between youth gang members and community residents. Despite the prevalence of alcohol and drug misuse within the study areas, particularly in area two, there is an understanding that the consequences of this misuse has an impact on the accepted norms within the community.

What Does Knowing Mean?

There are a number of levels of 'knowing' someone. This knowledge impacts upon the degree of social engagement between the community residents and youth gang members. Tönnies (1955) identifies five dichotomies to analyse how we know people - acquaintanceship and strangeness, sympathy and antipathy, confidence and mistrust, interdependence and social relationship or bond connection. Participants did discuss various levels of 'knowing' each other but the agreed basis is having some form of connection with the other. This can stem from knowledge of the individual through mutual connections, to in-depth engagement with the person. Importantly though, having a form of reciprocal relationship or social links with the youth gang has a significant impact on the broader agreement(s).

Positives of Knowing Young People Community Members

The interviews conducted explored both the positive and negative aspects of knowing the youth gang members.

I think, it kinda depends, I think if you know them or you know maybe certain members of them it would make it a wee bit easier, or if they know you it makes it easier but like it would be fine for me because I have always lived here and people know me and people know my brother and know my mum and that and all that and they would go "alright sorry" know how. Or

like if you go down and you know one or two boys and you would say “listen son gonna say to the boys to move on” or whatever I think that would make it a wee bit easier but for a stranger maybe moving into the area and going down to approach a group of young people I think it could be quite intimidating for them and would maybe be quite scared of going down and facing a group of young people who were maybe quite rowdy and drinking and...

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Josie is discussing an acquaintanceship on the basis that she is known from living in the area and through knowing the young people, is more willing to approach them. Foster (1995) suggests that links with people reduced the potential of “hostile encounters” (Foster, 1995, p. 580).

Betty noted:

See the ones I know, like [names] I get on great with them; they never ever give me any cheek, or any hassle or any bare ball abuse. There I mean I could safely walk up the road with any of them, seriously at night on my own I could. But I’m talking about the kids, the ones I don’t know...*She continues...* I’m being honest, they don’t seem to care about anything really, well that is the impression I get, em if you look at some of them the wrong road it is, “what are you looking at fucking you old cow!” and you’re just walking.

(Betty, elderly community resident, female, area 2)

The sympathy towards those with whom Betty has an acquaintanceship makes her feel confident and safe that she would not be harmed. In contrast the lack of mutual knowledge, or strangeness (Tönnies, 1955), between those she does not know makes a mutual feeling of mistrust which can result in aggression or unwarranted antipathy. For Carol,

...there is another woman on the opposite side and she wouldn’t mind if the young ones hang about outside her close and drink, as long as she knows

what they look like and who they are. She will say to me, oh I know their faces; they are fine, I'll not shift them.

(Carol, community resident, female, area 2)

While Carol does not have an acquaintanceship with the young people, she has confidence in them due to her neighbour's experiences. If a social connection or social knowledge can be drawn upon from another person, then there is a certain level of trust apparent (Tönnies, 1955). However Marie suggested being nice to the young people and engaging with them in a certain manner meant they would respond positively in return. The mutual relationship would result in increased confidence, or in this case positive interactions.

...my daughter was like that aw ma what you doing letting them in your house n that and I was like cause they were nice and they are only young boys n that and then after that they were nice to me and just say hiya and if they are out the back and that can just give them a brush if they made a mess just clean it up n all know what I mean

(Marie, community resident, female, area 2)

If the community members have personal rapport, or know the youth gang members, they will be more likely to experience positive interactions with them.

However, this relationship will also be based on the young people differentiating between who they deem to be part of their community compared to those they do not.

Aye if I seen some of the young boys drunk or whatever and I was like that and I had the weans with me and I was like "want to stop swearing" or "want to get that bottle away" I think they would maybe do it, not because they are scared of me just because they know me and because I'm apart of the area as well, because of that not cause of anything else

(Rita, community resident, female, area 2)

Those community members who are considered by the young people as being a part of the area, the in-group, will be treated with respect and generally engaged with in a positive manner given a greater likelihood of mutual trust, as Clare notes:

Yeah ...cause obviously I know them and they are more respectful if you know them maybe.

(Clare, 39, community resident, female, area 2)

However, if they are not a part of the collective in- group, be this because of territory, race, class, or lack of any social connection then they may be treated differently. While they may not actually be treated negatively, there is not the same imperative to treat them positively.

Young People's Views

Many of the young people explained how they knew the majority of residents within their community and how this affected their perceptions and behaviour.

Aye every wee wean to every old age pensioner I think I know.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

The parameters of who was recognised as being a part of the 'community' was based, for some of the young people in area two, along race lines. When Rab was asked if he knew many residents he responded:

Aye mostly, except for the refugees

(Rab, 17, male, area 2)

The Roma population were not considered as part of the community that Rab, or other young people interviewed, identified with. The social connections between the in-group are not apparent between the youth gang and the ethnic migrants in the community. There is no social history, no acquaintanceship (yet) and these young people do not have close social bonds with the new arrivals within their

geographical space. As Brent (2004), a senior youth and community practitioner suggests, “Community’s main import is the way it affects the relationships and lives of the people taking part, and the relationships they have with other people and social forces” (p. 221).

It is as a result of these relationships that many of the young people differentiated between who should be engaged with and in what way. Willy and Sammy explained:

Willy- All our parents all know each other, they can all say aye I know such and such and such and such, and you can say I was out with such and such and they would know who we were talking about and they all know where we are and we’re no...but there are certain people from the scheme that we don’t get involved with because we know they are dangerous...

Sammy- Dangerous...

Willy- They are out to seriously cause trouble and we like that, we are trying to avoid that like the plague

(Willy, 26 and Sammy, 24, males, area 2)

Some community members have a reputation, or are known in a particular way, resulting in the young people engaging with them differently. This demonstrates that people do not have to be seen as being within the in-group due solely to positive reciprocal relations; rather such relationships can be based on reputation or fear which results in particular types of interaction. While Horowitz (1987) was specifically discussing gang violence, her notion that gang members read the social situation or context and in turn act in a particular way, resonates with this study, “The ability to understand varying audience definitions of gang violence allows gang members to adjust their conduct towards the audience found in a particular setting” (p. 441).

Donna demonstrated that she changed her actions based on the audience:

Oh right like, there is like people who will walk by and like they will know my ma so I will put my bottle down or something, like she knows I drink but I wouldnae want to give people who know her the wrong impression of her daughter, like so like I wouldn't want people to pure think her daughter was just pure walking about the streets with a bottle, just things like that

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

Many of the young people had clear guidelines as to who they would react negatively or positively towards. Knowing the residents, having a social bond with them, means that they are more inclined to listen to them.

...they all know all the neighbours most of us know everyone in the street, if they asked us to go away and stop fighting we'd probably do it. We would move away from there, we would still fight probably but move away from their area

(John, 18, male, area 1)

The young people also differentiated between community members who should be treated positively, respected and looked after.

No never like that, if it was somebody like younger, know what I mean, like if it was a guy being cheeky to us, not old, we would never do that, we would never hit an old person, know what I mean, but if it was a guy our age or older, like wee bit older than us, we'd fight with him if he tried to fight with us, cause it tends to happen there is people that are a wee bit older than us and they are like "shut up" and they will say "shut up you wee dicks or something" and then we will react to it but we will never just for nothing run over and do somebody, know what I mean.

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Pauline, who does not identify with the gang, but who socialises with them, also noted:

...it's not as if they cause problems, see if somebody says something first then aye, they will bam people up from the hostels and that but not just normal people, like they are quite decent that way and that, like see if an old woman was to walk past you and all that they wouldn't say anything they are alright in that way

(Pauline, 16, male, area 2)

This resonates with the findings of Horowitz (1987), when she argues that non-gang youths often react to the gang members with positive toleration. Pauline is affirming that the young males are 'quite decent that way' but also distinguishes between people who are seen as 'fair go' and those who are 'off limits'. People who are within their community, who they have reciprocal relations or social bonds with are treated positively compared to those not seen in this manner. This in turn reflects how the community members engage with and treat the young men. If there are social bonds, whereby both are deemed to be a part of the in-group community, then generally the interaction in itself will contain a higher level of understanding, tolerance and positive engagement between both sections.

Youth Workers- Knowing Young People

Jan, recognised this differentiation of role or status made by many of the young people towards residents;

...I have a wee neighbour who is elderly and if anyone hangs about her gate she just comes out and tells them and they... they respect her. So I don't think for a minute the young people would turn on anybody but I do think people do think they will turn on them, do you know what I mean?

(Jan, full time youth worker, female, area 1)

Chris also explained this complex interplay and differentiation of residents.

It depends who they are, if it is somebody who has got a reputation in the scheme and are known and comes out and challenge them they wouldn't bother, it would be "aye no bother" and walk away. But if somebody...if

they think they can win it, they'll batter you, they will make your life hell, but if they think there is a threat to them then they will walk away. Do you know what I mean, there are certain guys who live on the scheme who if the young team were hanging about in their close it would be "oh you, you beat it" they would be away in a shot, but there are other guys who would come out and they would just attack him or ridicule him, depending on the mood they were in, depending how much alcohol and drugs they had taken.

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

An aspect of the agreement is thus based on who the youth gang see as being a part of the community and the status afforded to the member. If the community member is 'respected' by the youth gang, either for positive or negative reasons, then they are likely to engage in a positive manner towards them. However, if the young people have calculated that they will not face negative repercussions then they may react more negatively towards the resident. This distinction can be influenced by alcohol and drugs as Chris suggested and will be discussed in greater detail below.

My Reflections

Within area one I reflected on this concept of knowing and the positive impact this can have.

Another thing I noted whilst sitting in this woman's house was that most people who went past waved at the boys or at the mum. The neighbours were close or certainly knew each other and what each other were getting up to... *I continued...* The woman commented that she often sleeps on the sofa with the door wide open showing that she is not scared of being robbed or broken in to. It seems that there is an element of the community policing itself or certainly community members making it their business to know what is going on with everyone else. There seemed to be a kind of village attitude to each other's business despite being in the centre of a massive city. The lives of the people in this small area seemed somewhat confined to this small area. This may be due to territorial issues felt by every community

member or may just be that many of the people don't often get the opportunity to leave this small area.

The only way I can relate to this is that when I was growing up in Belfast there was never really a sense of needing to lock the door or be worried about leaving your door open whilst you were nipping up to the shops because you knew your neighbours and knew they would look out for your house. Despite the broader violence that was happening you were still relatively safe from petty crime in your area. I get the feeling that this is similar to this area, that people wouldn't necessarily commit serious crimes in their own area to their own neighbours but would be violent or fight with others from different areas. Nevertheless, I would need to confirm this within the more in-depth interview.

(Personal observation and reflection, 31-08-09, area 1)

This reflection suggests that the female community member was considered as a member of the in-group within this community. Potentially if the resident was not known by others she would not feel as safe leaving her door wide open. It is interesting that this woman had two sons who were known for gang involvement, despite recently moving on from this form of identification and involvement.

Mutually Reinforcing Treatment

As noted, community members may treat the young people differently if they know them, or have an acquaintanceship or social connection with them. This behaviour also has a role in the interactive process. If the young people feel labelled, victimised or treated negatively their reaction often mirrored this sense of engagement

... if somebody goes "get out of the close" then you will go out, but if they go beneath the line, like if they come out with a weapon or something or some of them will come out screaming and start just telling on people like, "aye you, you fucking idiot" and all that em then it just starts and then they

say they will phone the polis and then that is when we start...*she*
continued... Well we will argue back with them cause I mean sometimes they
can just start for like no reason...

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

Donna depicts a negative portrayal of engagement with particular residents. While positive engagement often elicits a positive response, if a resident is unknown or approaches the young people in a negative manner then it is likely that the young people will respond negatively. Rab described being labelled, or taunted, by residents, which evoked an angry response:

Like I've ended up fighting with people up at the pubs and that, like when they are and with it and they all start trying to get wide, try to call us wee NEDs and all that and bam us, so we fight with them.

(Rab, 17, male, area 2)

Chris corroborated the importance of how the community members engage with the young people and how this can impact on the response received in return.

If you come out screaming and shouting at them, "I'll leather you, I'll batter you, I'll do this to you, I'll get the polis" and do that, they will react to that. If you come out and have a reasonable conversation then 9 times out of 10 they'll go "aye alright mate, see ya later" and it is about how you deal with it. But what people will do is they'll go "I'm not putting up with that" right, and they'll go out and...and that's what you'll find it is when...you hear all these stories about innocent people getting stabbed or getting beat up, what you tend to find when you hear the whole story is that they came out and antagonised them.

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

These statements suggest that the young people can assert their when they are antagonised by community members. This sense of power and the recognition of its potential consequences leads Marie to suggest a deliberate, more complicit reason for being nice to the young people.

Aye you learn, you learn know what I mean, be nice know, that's how I'm like that and I don't get any hassle know what I mean

(Marie, community resident, female, area 2)

If community members actively 'learn' that to be nice results in less 'hassle', then this has great significance for the agreement between the youth gang and the local residents. It suggests an underlying power dynamic or control mechanism that the young people can either physically or symbolically employ when they have a mind to. Thus it should be questioned if the youth gang are applying a level of fear to the community members who they do not know or like.

Negative Repercussions

Marie feared negative repercussions if she did not act in a certain way and used her neighbour's experiences to exemplify this:

But the[y] were cheeky to the wee woman up the stair but then she was at the windae shouting and bawling at them, know what I mean?

(Marie, community resident, female area 2)

While not the same as the findings discovered by Whyte (1943), there is similarity in the tacit normalisation of certain actions carried out by the young people. Marie was normalising the 'deviancy' (Whyte, 1943) imposed by the young people. Other residents also noted the potential negativity faced,

Mo- I think if you're alright with them

Rita- I'd say if you didn't know them and you did tell them to move on they'd probably go aye fuck off

(Mo and Rita, community residents, females, area 2)

Interestingly there is an underlying understanding as to why the young people may act negatively towards certain community residents, particularly if they are not known by the young people. This again resonates with the work of Horowitz (1987) who found that many community members were willing to put up with gang violence providing it did not impact on their social world. In this study violence was not the sole focus when examining relations with the community, as this often happens between conflicting sets of young people rather than impacting on community members. The focus was based more on averting unwanted 'hassle', aggravation and potential aggression.

...there will be sometimes that people, if you're walking down the street will give you a bit of hassle but it's very rare and if they know who you are definitely not going to get any, you may get cheek off one of them who doesn't know who you are but then the others will be like no this guy is alright kind of thing you know em so they don't really, although they engage in a bit of violence, it's not really to the extent that people might perceive them to be engaging in and they don't really cause any problems beyond a bit of graffiti here and there and stuff like that you know.

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

Although some residents may get hassle, Darren knew he would not because he had a relationship with some of the young people who identified with gang membership. The notion of someone being 'alright' suggests that there has been a sense of sympathy, tolerance and confidence placed in the person based on previous experience.

Similarly Marie, Mo and Rita all acknowledged that the young people at times act negatively towards other residents, but not to them.

I get on alright with them aye, but all because my sisters hang about with them, aye and I grew up with them but I do imagine, it is a shame n all cause some of them can be mouthy

(Rita, community resident, female, area 2)

Here there is a familial link to the youth gang whilst also an acquaintanceship based on knowledge of Rita's family connections (Tönnies, 1955). Michael explained some potential repercussions as a result of challenging the behaviour of young people that he did not have a personal connection with.

You cannae, you can go out and shout as much as you want but all you are going to do is get abuse back which is probably going to get you into a fight which is probably going to get you hurt.

(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

Again he was not deemed to be part of the community; consequently there was no established social relationship. This lack of knowledge can lead to mistrust and antipathy (Tönnies, 1955) and, as such, unwarranted actions may occur. The male community resident from area one also reported feeling reticent about approaching the young people, although he again did not have a personal relationship with, or knowledge of, any of the young people who identified with gang membership in the area.

I have eh, I have gone out when there was kids been hanging about a close and walked them outside, well they have just left when I have been there, and then deliberately locked the door in their face and that kind of thing. But no I don't...I think that eh that their sense of, their sense of injustice when they get approached by authority would make me...would make me reticent about approaching them because of the possible repercussions for doing that.

(Male community resident, area 1)

This expectation of negativity is corroborated by many of the young people.

Like we are walking down the street and a guy turns round and says "wana not do that, shut up stop shouting" everybody ends up just giving him pure abuse for it and then it ends up turning into an argument and then ends up turning into a fight, he ends up getting a doing or something know what I mean?

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

When asked what would happen if a community member was to shout at them, Rab stated:

They wouldn't try probably; if they did we would probably end up boxing with them.

(Rab, 17, male, area 2)

Conclusion

This chapter indicates that part of the agreement between youth gangs and their local community is linked to the prevailing reciprocal social connections and the nature of the relationship based on these connections. Residents, who do not 'know' or do not have a reciprocal relation with the youth gang are not deemed to be part of 'their' community. Alternatively residents who are seen as treating young people in what they class as a negative manner could face negative repercussions. However the engagement process is more complex than this. It is cyclical.

Some residents, particularly those who know the young people, are often sympathetic or understanding of the young people's actions, even if harmful towards others. This may develop as a mutually protective attitude between the residents and the young people they know, or have a social bond with. These close connections and knowledge mean that there is mutual trust and confidence. Although internal divisions may occur within the youth gang, they are generally unified against 'others'. In contrast, those who have moved into the community, namely the Roma community, are not deemed to be part of the accepted, normalised in-group. Rather they are 'othered', often based on essentialist views (Young, 2007) that comes from a lack of knowledge and knowing of the 'strangers', who are consequently treated with mistrust and antipathy (Tönnies, 1955).

However, this is too simplistic when trying to fully comprehend the complex agreement between the youth gang and their local community. For some residents, a conscious decision is made to keep the young people onside to prevent aggravation. This suggests a level of potential power and community control exercised by the youth gang that may be misleading. Instead, there is recognition that symbolic engagement with the young people who identify with gang membership will reinforce broader community engagement. Friendship with the gang, and their related neighbourhood connections, can serve to maintain connections to the community in-group. Those who do not maintain such connections, or ensure a reciprocal relationship with the youth gang will often be treated with mistrust.

Perceived to be peripheral within the community undoubtedly will increase fear of negative repercussions with regard to relations with the youth gang. The youth gang in that sense do hold a certain amount of power to intimidate and create hassle for those they do not have a reciprocal relationship or acquaintanceship with.

Many of the young people have a working relationship, and unwritten agreement, with those community residents they know and who they bond with. This does not mean that they are any more than acquaintances, but they are still people who are known, or recognised as community members, who are secure in the knowledge that if they were subjected to negative treatment this would result in negative ramifications for the youth gang members. Thus, as discussed in Chapter six, the community is about commonality (A. P. Cohen, 2007) and a sense of belonging rather than being deciphered by stringent lines of demarcation, "...community may be understood as a communication community based on new kinds of belonging" (Delanty, 2003, p. 187).

This relationship is mutually reinforcing, a cyclical relationship apparent. The residents assume the young people will engage in fights, or negatively react, towards people they jointly 'other', be that from neighbouring areas, or in area two as a result of different racial identity. This is not necessarily vocalised, as Rab suggested, but there is certainly a notion of difference rather than similarity.

Jenkins (2008) argues that the young people, and the community members, are part of a recognised group and differ in relation to the categorisation they place on others. The youth gang is a group, within which the members know each other and usually have a relationship. Similarly, the community are recognised as a group by the youth gang and are again based on recognizable social bonds. However those who are ‘othered’ are also categorised, as the members may not know each other and may simply have been grouped together by sections of the community. For example the Roma community may be classed as all being the same even if they do not know each other. Jenkins (2008) recognises that members of a category can be aware of their categorisation as a result of the imposition of others. Similarly McAlister, Scranton and Haydon (2010) in their work in Northern Ireland note - “Internal divisions are evident, often visible, in all the communities. Particular neighbourhoods or clusters of streets have developed distinct identities and reputations, with consequences for individual and collective identity” (p. 98).

Broader societal norms within the community also inform the young people who they should, and should not, engage negatively with. The youth gang have clear parameters as to who can be treated in particular ways e.g. the elderly, children, and people they or their connections have social bonds with; known groups are protected. This can explain why some residents understand, or are sympathetic, to the behaviour of the youth gang members, as Luke explained that

...there is quite a lot of them who went through the exact same thing, stayed in the same community and went through the exact same thing and they remember that being them so they think that is just a part of life.

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

This was an insight, also discussed by Jankowski (1991), which he entitles the resistance component - where community members empathise with the feelings and frustrations of the young people given that they have experienced them as well, “Thus they identify with the gang because they are sympathetic to the members’ attempts to resist their poor socio-economic position” (Jankowski, 1991, p. 182).

Moreover, the young people symbolically, and at times physically, represent the norms, views and feeling of sections of their broader community. Often the people who are subjected to an aggressive, derogatory or ridiculing reaction may be experiencing a response that would not be accepted, or explicitly agreed, by broader community members. Notwithstanding this there may well be a certain tacit, underlying agreement that encourages young gang members to feel that they are acting within an accepted community ethos.

Impact of Alcohol and Drugs

The consumption of alcohol and drugs can negate these perceived tacit agreements. As demonstrated in the demographics outlined at the beginning of the thesis, the level of alcohol and drug admissions to hospital in both areas was well above the national average. This implies that many of the youth gang members, as well as the community residents, will be affected by the excessive use of such substances. Lewis recounted an interaction with his mother, saying:

I ended up she tried to grab money out of a wee tin, know how I was saving money up cause I owed her money and she tried to grab it and I grabbed it off her and I shoved her.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

However Jason also noted that due to the reciprocal relations, gang members will try to watch out for each other and prevent unnecessary conflicts from occurring.

Sometimes that happens like if the person is drunk they will end up starting on somebody but the rest of the pals won't, the rest of the pals will pull him back and go "what you doing" know what I mean

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

The level of drink or drugs consumed does alter the perception of the community members and how they will interact with the young people, as Pauline acknowledged:

No, not much like that, see if we were all drinking, like drinking in a back garden or something like that, they wouldnae come out they would just phone the polis and then the polis would come
(Pauline, 16, female, area 2)

These residents also noted:

I think there would be more likely to be negative kinda reactions if there was drink and drugs involved I would think.
(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

While Michael related the difficulties of engaging with the young people, who identified with gang membership, particularly if there was alcohol involved.

...if they are outside door drinking or fighting you can't really go and move them on because they will just turn on you, know what I mean
(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

Ms. Mehta also felt threatened when the young people were taking drugs.

The white gangs, the [nickname] gang, I have seen, we once went to get out of the car and my son said to me "mum don't get out of the car, he carries a screwdriver" you know a screwdriver, he said "mum he is doped up he will just stab it in you" I had to sit in my car for five minutes while this guy passed by
(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

Interestingly the same level of fear was not apparent when drink and drugs were not involved.

Oh the [initials of the gang] gang if the [initials of the gang] gang weren't on their drink or their drugs or that...or if I seen them I would try and cross the road, I wouldnae deliberately walk by them.

(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

When the young people have consumed a lot of alcohol or drugs, many of the community residents chose not to engage with them in the same way as they would had they been sober. When the young people are under the influence, the rules of engagement are altered and perceived differently by both the community residents and the young people. In these instances there is an assumption of negativity on both parts. Nevertheless, as Jason suggested above, the young people try to keep their peers in check to ensure that they do not negatively interact with people who they would generally have a positive relationship with. There were also occasions, though they were rare, when the influence of alcohol seemed to encourage some of the young people engage in a more positive way with those who were generally 'othered'. I reflected,

At the start of the evening I went to the Roma drop in, in the local community centre and asked if the young people wanted to come and play football, unfortunately many of them wouldn't come over because there were going to be Scottish young people there. The level of tension and racism is really quite worrying.

However then one of the local young females came along to the football and was telling us about how they were all steaming drunk on Saturday and they were all trying to play football but it wasn't happening because of how drunk they were. Then interestingly she said that some of the Roma boys came over and they were all playing together on Saturday night. I can't work this out, sometimes they seem to play alright together in football and then at other times they seem to outwardly spout venomous comments about each other. I'm not sure if the drink just played a part and made them forget their fighting or if there is a level of acceptance being built between some of the communities.

(Personal observation and reflection, 25-03-10, area 2)

The influence of alcohol undermines the generally agreed norms apparent within the community. This was not the only occasion where alcohol or drugs resulted in the two groups engaging in a positive manner, again I reflected:

I also noted that there was drug selling happening between the Roma and the white guys and as such I wonder if the Roma youth have now chosen to get along with them so as they can get drugs and have a less hassled existence within the community.

(Personal observation and reflection, 05-05-10, area 2)

The young man selling drugs did not identify with the youth gang, nevertheless this interaction demonstrates that alcohol and drugs, or the accumulation of capital through the selling of drugs, can override the 'othering' often apparent. This interaction also supports the above findings. These young men, who were selling drugs, did not have as close a relationship with me but through the acquaintanceship and trust relationship with their friends I was not seen as a threat and they continued to sell drugs in front of me.

While the differing means of engagement, based on reciprocal relations and knowing each other, have been explored within this chapter, the next chapter seeks to unpack the familial relations of the youth gang members to ascertain if this has an impact on the agreement between the youth gang and their local community.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Family Relations

Introduction

As established in Chapter ten many young people who identify with gang membership feel that their actions within the community have a protective role. Through the combination of data analysis and consideration of this broad theme of protection, young people spoke about the importance of familial relations and the enhanced duty of protection that they felt these relationships gave rise to. This chapter analyses whether familial bonds, and sense of duty, have a role to play in the broader agreement between youth gangs and their communities.

The chapter begins by examining the theme of familial protection by explaining how many of the people interviewed referred to the accepted cultural norm of protecting their own family from others. It became apparent that where this value based expectation was realised as a duty, it was likely that the young people would become involved in conflict at particular times.

The second theme explored is the nature of the personal relationships between the young people and their families. Delving into this in greater detail leads me to analyse the families' views over their young people's engagement in fighting. The views of mothers within the research sites are briefly explored, as are the views of fathers, providing an insight into existing familial relations.

The chapter continues by analysing the theme of normalisation of aggressive or violent behaviour. This includes consideration of both cases where there was evidence of active encouragement for such behaviour, but also where a more tacit expectation of aggressive behaviours was expressed by some family members.

Protection of Family

Many of the young people interviewed explained that loyalty and protection of their families was of paramount importance. Although at times there were problems or issues in the relations, the young people frequently discussed protecting or defending their family.

Aye but no you know what I mean, if like my brother, like [brother name] got in a fight with somebody know what I mean obviously I would have to back him up

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Lewis also explained:

My wee brother and all, he is going to get a clip around the ear so he is, I keep telling him, I was like that, look don't think your mad because you have got a big brother, cause he obviously knows I would do anything for him, if anybody at all tried to wind him up...I'd take a run up but...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

This applies to the broader family as well as their immediate family.

Aye, my cousin, he's an older one, he is 19/20 now and he was fighting with his pal but his pals ended up stabbing his pal in the stomach and then chopped my cousin in the heid, he has got a scar down here on his heid and then em they ended up going back and then they ended up having to fight with them know what I mean so they ended up stabbing them, so it ends up like a big war know what I mean...*he continued*...see like, see since it is my cousin, obviously I need to get involved know what I mean? It is like if your cousin is involved in it you are involved in it; it is not just one of youse

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

These statements demonstrate that the need to protect the family was not necessarily a choice, but was an expectation and requirement. If the youth gang

members did not protect their families then their familial identity, and thus their personal identity, would be questioned. This protective element was prevalent both within and outside the community. In a reflection I noted how Rab told me that

...he was ok in jail because he had a cousin and a friend in the same corridor as him...

(Personal observation and reflection, 22-03-10, area 2)

This highlights the importance of close relations and as Rab also made clear, if he had not had this protection he would have been lost within the jail system and would have faced repercussions for being isolated. I knew that Rab did not have a father, and that his mother lived in England, so to have a cousin and a friend who could protect him was crucial for his survival.

Rita and Marie explained the norm of protecting one's family, as if it was an unwritten agreement that was accepted within the community.

Rita- The younger ones, if one of them was fighting then the others ones would jump in even if they weren't getting a doing

Marie- Aye you would have to do that cause they are sisters n that

(Rita and Marie, community residents, females, area 2)

The three women continued to explain that because Rita's family do not live in the area they need to identify alternative protective mechanisms themselves.

Marie-...it's good that they go to karate know what I mean and they are learning something

Rita- That's why we take them to karate

Mo- Oh aye, you need to

Marie- Aye she doesn't have family over here so I need to know they can look after themselves

(Rita, Marie and Mo, community residents, females, area 2)

Protecting those close to you was frequently raised by the young people and acknowledged as a necessity by community residents. The conversation between Rita, Marie and Mo highlights an assumption on the part of residents that their children will face conflict, or potentially find themselves in dangerous situations, and thus need to be able to protect themselves, particularly if they do not have family in the same community. Marie was not originally from research area two and was acutely aware that she had neither relations nor the same level of protection within the area. Having had negative experiences as a result of her family's reputation she was ensuring her children could protect themselves by making them learn martial arts.

Marie- Aye in [neighbouring area] they are all [gang name from neighbouring area] and [gang name from neighbouring area] and my brothers were all in that but then as I got older and I got married and moved out people would be like that, when you end up chatting, and they would be like that you know find out your name and that and they would know my brothers and they would be like oh right cheerio

(Marie, community resident, female, area 2)

Many young people felt obliged to engage in conflict if their family members were involved in conflict with others. Nevertheless, these relations were not unproblematic and participants spoke of difficulties in engagement and memories of emotionally traumatic events relating to their families. Despite this, the fundamental expectation and duty was to protect the family even if there were personal disagreements. The expectation of familial protection did not solely link to the youth gang, but potentially those involved in the youth gang needed to be more acutely aware of the need to protect their family, and vice versa, because they were more likely to be engaged in confrontation than others.

Personal Relationships

Some interviewees had little connection with their immediate family or did not have a close relationship with them.

My ma stays in [names another area of the city] I don't talk to her, I've only seen her twice or something and my Da's dead, my Da's dead aye
(Al, 19, male, area 1)

Donna also had a poor relationship with her mother and stated:

Aye and she doesn't like me, cause my big brother [name] is like in a college, and he doesnae like, well he is a pure stoner and all, and she thinks that [other brother] drinks every day and all and smokes hash and she thinks I am just like the two of them
(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

However the majority of young people who were in contact with their parents, irrespective of the closeness of the relationship, still had a protective attitude towards them and their broader family. Lewis, out of all interviewees, was the most vocally passionate about protecting and looking after his family.

I think I have, out of everybody, obviously everybody thinks they have the best family but my Ma is funny as fuck, pure down to earth, brand new, dead funny, my wee brother- cracking, my Da- used to be a pure psycho, now he has calmed right down, goes on holiday every year and tries to take me, my sister- beautiful and fucking pure smart as fuck and cousins and that are all brand new
(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Despite this positive depiction of his family he also explained that he

...used to go up to my Da's every weekend and my Da robbed drugs off some cunt [neighbouring area] and when we were up one time someone

kicked his door in, chopped him up, stabbed fucking the life right out of him nearly, more or less. He never died but it's just all the mad shit that I have seen. I had to go to the High court for my pal, [name] got stabbed four times and got murdered, had to go to the High court for that, seen umpteen shit, it's just hundreds getting slashed right in front of you and phee...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

This was not uncommon within interviews. Many young people told of family members who had been either victims, or perpetrators, of violent acts.

My brother was murdered and my uncle was murdered and he got stabbed 16 times as well

(Willy, 26, male, area 2)

Sammy had been impacted from the other perspective, as his brother was charged with attempted murder.

Like my brother did his first lifer in 1992 when he was fifteen...*he explained...eh stabbing a guy and he robbed...him and his pals robbed a guy basically and cause he was young man he stabbed the guy in the heart know what I mean? With a kitchen knife, know what I mean, but he is that daft way, he was full of the drugs and the jellies and all that, know what I mean? Then he was in town and everything there, he was in [nightclub] and two niggers, well fucking, aye they actually tried to get wide with him and he went fair dos and walked outside and waited on them and they came out and he [shows motion of stabbing]*

Stabbed them?

Aye and eh got done for two attempted murders and one serious assault and because he is out on life licence he got fifteen...a recommendation of fifteen year.

(Sammy, 24, male, area 2)

These events have an emotional impact on the young people but for some it also directed them into engaging in a similar type of behaviour which included the normalisation of violence.

Aye just cause you were brought up, I was brought up watching my big cousins fight, know what I mean, I was brought up watching my cousins in [research area] and that and join in the gang so, know what I mean, so I end up making there pals, know what I mean, got couple of pals and then I ended up joining.

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

Aldridge, Ralphs and Medina et al (2007) discovered in their work on youth gangs:

In Research City, references to violence and exposure to violent events as victims, perpetrators and witnesses, was part of everyday conversation and of growing up for many of the young people we spoke to. An important conclusion is that unrecognised trauma provoked by this violence does not receive sufficient policy attention locally or nationally (p. 18).

Aldridge et al (2007) and Decker and Van Winkle (1996) found in their differing studies that violence was often normalised amongst urban youth. This resonates with how the young participants explained their life experiences within this study. However the statements below demonstrated that violent behaviour was not only normalised by the young people, but by other members in the community as well.

Views on Young People Fighting

How does your mum or dad or any of your family feel about you getting involved in fighting?

Can't really do nothing

Do they have a go at you or that?

Sometimes, it's not really for fighting it's for drinking and that they start moaning, fighting is just a thing that you do... know as well that's a thing you do...

So fighting is a thing you do but drinking they get annoyed about?

[Interviewee nod]

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Jason, when asked what his family thought of the fighting he was involved in, said:

They are kinda used to it now know what I mean? They are the same they have been brought up in it know what I mean?

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

This resonates with the views of Marie, Rita and Mo who expect conflict for their children and thus try to ensure they can protect themselves. Moreover fighting, in particular, is not just expected but seems to be often normalised as 'the way things are' within both research sites.

Mothers' Views

The research study examined the views expressed by a number of mothers and many of the young people spoke about the fear their mothers, in particular, had for their safety.

...what do your family and all think about if you do get into fights?

What do they think about that?

Sammy- Eh they know the score

They know the score?

Willy- My mum is a bit scared

Sammy- Aye so is my ma

Willy- She lost her brother and her son and obviously I have been stabbed and she is not really wanting to happen to me but...but I'm like that

(Willy, 26 and Sammy, 24, males, area 2)

Despite the expectation and normalisation of violence in the study areas, fear from parents was still prevalent. John stated:

Just that you shouldn't be doing it and wanted us to stop doing it. My mum was out chasing us every Friday and Saturday nights every weekend she was running about after us...*He continued...*I don't know if she knew how bad it was, she knew we were fighting but she didn't know how bad we were fighting, I didn't let her find out

(John, 18, male, area 1)

John is protecting his mother by not allowing her to discover the extent of the fighting that he and his brother were involved in. Lewis said of his mother:

It does their nut, does their fucking heids, their nuts in, my Ma cannae handle it anymore, my Ma got me the jail three weeks ago, because I took valium...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Many young people were aware that their mothers did not want them to be involved in confrontational behaviour. Throughout the research two mothers and a sister of young people who identified with gang behaviour were interviewed. One mother was also a community worker in area one and, although she was originally interviewed as a worker, she provided useful insights into her feelings about her son being involved in gang fighting.

Where I live there was loads of different gangs all surrounding me but there were only certain gangs that he was fighting with, it took me a long time to find out he was doing that, down fighting with the [gang name] but he didn't fight with [gang name] but he went to college with a few boys from there and to get to college he had to walk it around the edge of that, so he kinda struggled to get to college...*she continued*...I had a daughter who was in Iraq and I worried more for him going to his local high school, than I did for her being in Iraq.

(Jan, youth worker, female, area 1)

Jan's son had kept the extent of his fighting a secret from her but when she discovered the reality her fear was evident. This fear also resonated with the female community member from Area one:

Huh that's right, I know [son] came in with a bust heid and [other son] has had one as well. But it could have been a lot worse cause some of them have used knives and all, em, there has been a couple been stabbed round here so we have been quite lucky. But even if at night is [son] is going to the chip shop and that I still go out the back and watch them going up and watch them come back, and he is 18, but it is for my piece of mind you know, so I know naebody is saying anything to them, not that I could do much right enough but at least I try and stop it.

(Female community resident, area 1)

Josie's brother identified with the local gang and she explained the worry caused:

I worry constantly, my mum worries constantly; my mum has had a bit of a shitty time with him to be honest. My mum dosnae keep well, she has got rheumatoid arthritis, sciatica so she is no very mobile so she is in the house quite a lot...*she continued*...it is just a constant worry for her all the time and she dosnae know if he is going to get lifted, if he is going to do something to somebody else and it is constantly...she dosnae sleep, literally every

weekend from a Friday to a Monday she does not sleep, doesn't get any sleep.

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Zatz and Portillos (2000) found through their research in Phoenix that generally women, even if they themselves had been involved in gang behaviour, tended to be fearful of losing their children to gang violence. Puntenney (1997) found that young mothers may have accepted gang violence in young adolescents but not when their children got older. This small sample suggested that though the female relatives may have been aware of the threat of violence, and their relatives' engagement in fighting, they did not necessarily approve of their behaviour. Horowitz (1987) also found, that many parents disapproved of the fighting and would not say that being a gang member was good for their son.

Despite being fearful of gang involvement, some interviewees seemed to understand why family members got involved in violent behaviour, alluding that this behaviour was normalised within the community. During the interview with the female community member from area one, a neighbour called by to tell her that a young man, from the High Flats, had committed suicide; they also discussed other events in the community, and I recounted:

I couldn't help but feeling that here was two women who had had a rough enough life and just wanted something better for their children. She didn't seem surprised or shocked at the stories of violence, crime and suicide, but just saddened by it. I don't think they blamed the young people for getting into fights or for stealing etc their attitude seemed to be more resigned to the fact that the boys had little other opportunities to do anything else.

(Personal observation and reflection, 31-08-09, area 1)

Fathers' Views

Given the limitation of the collected data it would be difficult to ascertain if the above views were representative of all mothers, or to establish if there are

conclusive differences between the reactions of mothers and fathers. Darren, a father of young children in area two, suggested a gendered reaction.

My son, aye probably because he is a boy [wife name] is more worried about him because there is that masculine dimension but I mean I just can't see it happening, I'm not saying it is because we are great parents and other people aren't; I hate that when people say that...

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

Sammy and Willy told me that their fathers actively encouraged violent, fighting behaviour.

Willy- Because, because people don't like losing face, whereas years ago you would go for a fight, you'd of been told by your dad, get fucking back and stick him

Sammy- Aye fucking fight him or you're gonna get your arse kicked off me...

(Willy, 26 and Sammy, 24, males, area 2)

Mel also linked this attitude to the dad as opposed to mother, stating,

...if you've got your Dad in the house telling you it is cool to go out and bash that guy across there then...they are going to do it, because unless they get caught by the police or something, in their eyes they are going to get away with it because they are getting supported by their family.

(Mel, full time youth worker, female, area 2)

Chris made a gender divide but also suggested a broader cultural attitude to violence.

There is a whole culture...I think my Da my Da, one of the things my Da told me as a kid was, "the way to survive son is to know when violence is going to kick off and get in first"...*he explained*...that is part of the psyche and

some parents do say, “If you get beat I’m gonna batter you” because you...and again it is about building reputation, which they call respect, which is fear, right.

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

Sharon again linked this expectation of particular behaviours to the fathers in the area.

... [W]here you are brought up in that environment where that is how you are expected to be or that is how you see your dad being, I think it is a generational thing, I think it is copied

(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

Zatz and Portillos (2000) found that male adults, who were part of gangs themselves, found it easier to understand their children’s involvement in gang activities. Horowitz (1987) found that most parents in her research would class violence, and sometimes deadly violence, as an acceptable, justifiable response to defending their family honour. Although this study cannot make such conclusive claims, there are indications that fathers tend to understand the need to fight in order to defend oneself, although not necessarily advocating extreme violence. Whilst Mothers on the other hand, may similarly understand the need to protect oneself, they are more vocal about the fear they have for their children’s safety.

Normalisation of Fighting Behaviours

Many of the respondents felt that community members, whether they understood or not, were certainly aware of violent behaviour and often expected it. Luke explained:

I think some people grow out of it and believe that it’s not be all and end all but sadly there are still these that grow up and potentially it could be their kids next and that’s the way it is and they don’t see out of that wee box

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

Young gang members continuously noted their families' normalisation of certain behaviours.

They are used to it, same as everybody else, they are just brought into it know what I mean, like all my family, all my family have done it for years, know what I mean, like my cousins, all my cousins were just brought up in it, know what I mean.

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

This again suggests that part of the agreement between the youth gang and their local community, is that the young people are often responding to the norms of their broader society or are certainly citing their perception of such norms to justify their actions. Although the active encouragement of violence was not apparent in all families, it still seemed to be an expected, if unspoken, norm.

Not really my dad would just tell me not to get involved and need to watch myself, but he knows it happens, it happens everywhere and anywhere but I don't really get involved if anything happens then I just walk away...

(Pauline, 16, female, area 2)

It is questionable if Pauline may have received different advice than Sammy and Willy due to her gender; more research would be needed to ascertain if familial advice differs depending on the gender of the child. Nevertheless, there was a feeling from the young people that their family might react differently depending on who the fight occurred with, as Donna explained above, many community members in area two tolerated or understood fighting when it occurred with the Roma community.

...see if there was a fight or whatever what would your family think about that?

If there was a fight with who?

Like if you were out and the young team were fighting with someone?

What like refugees?

Or aye...

I don't think my ma and Da, my Ma and Da don't like the refugees either.

My Ma doesnae feel safe walking down that street either with them.

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that although all the young people interviewed did not experience close, or good, familial relations there was nevertheless a community based expectation and normalisation of the fact that family members would protect one another. Many of the young people accept this premise and apply it to the need to protect, not only their family, but also their broader community residents who are within the in-group, thus who they have reciprocal relations with. The need to protect is underpinned by anticipation that fighting and violent behaviour will occur within the communities. All community residents were aware that the young people, particularly those who identified with the local gang, would be confronted with, or involved in, physical aggression.

While those involved in the youth gang are more likely to experience violence and aggression, all young people were aware of a potential threat of violence. This threat was often compounded by real life experiences of either personally being involved in fighting or witnessing aggression and violence. The feeling that potential violence could occur was felt by community members as well as the youth gang members. The community residents acted in differing ways to try and minimise this danger. The small sample of female family members spoke of fear for their sons or brother, although still anticipated that they would become involved in violence. Their response was either to try to keep them indoors, as the case of the female community resident in area one, or to ensure they were

equipped to defend themselves if the threat emerged, as Marie, Rita and Mo did by sending their children to learn martial arts. The male community residents were also aware of the risk of violence and some actively encouraged their sons to fight back as a protective mechanism.

Arguably, the community members and youth gang members, through their constant expectation of violent behaviour, were normalising it. If violence and aggressive behaviour is expected in the community then it may be understandable that male residents, seemingly more than females, promote the idea of protection or defence as a normative reaction. This ongoing cultural expectation that young people will act in a certain way, or will face negative consequences, must psychologically, culturally and socially exact repercussions. It also highlights that there is a community sense of powerlessness to change the cultural and structural context which means that aggression and conflict are seen as both inevitable and inter-generational. The normalisation of aggression and violence as a means of personal and familial protection results in many community members unwittingly promoting these actions.

Unsurprisingly then, the youth gang use violence as a means of creating a unified identity against those who have been 'othered'. The gang are also a source of violence. They engage in conflict with others from neighbouring areas or with those who are excluded within their local community. Nevertheless, community members and their families are prepared to acknowledge their involvement, with some even encouraging it. For the young people themselves, as seen in the previous two chapters, there is a feeling that by engaging in conflict they are not only protecting their personal identity, but that of the gang, their families and thus their broader communities, from the threat from outsiders.

The young people are brought up with awareness that there is a constant threat and danger and thus they must have the ability to protect themselves and those close to them. The means of protection adopted is often through the use of physical aggression towards others, which has become normalised. This in turn, results in increased levels of danger and perceived threat. There is a vicious circle created. While community residents may fear their children's engagement in

violent behaviour, they also recognise the constant threat of violence and the need for young people to be able to protect themselves and others.

The existence of the youth gang can thus actively increase the danger levels within the community, whilst at the same time engaging in the protection of their family and broader community from external threats. The gang are both the instigators of violence and protectors. Community residents have an expectation of possible danger and seek to ensure that their young people are capable of defending themselves, thus perpetuating and normalising urban violence as a method of protection, whilst unwittingly promoting these behaviours as a means of identity creation. It is this cycle that contributes to the conditions that help to ensure the continued existence of youth gangs, sending out often ambiguous signals as to its purpose and remit.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Defining the Community

Introduction

Throughout the previous evidence chapters there has been a persistent indication that the community members have ‘othered’ the same groups of people as the youth gang have. This chapter explores this evidence further and determines whether this process represents the crux of the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities. The chapter questions whether part of this agreement is actualised through the relationship with those deemed to be outside the community.

The ‘othering’ of people outside the community can be effectively divided into two broad themes, that of territoriality and of racism. Consideration of territoriality will begin by examining the creation of geographical boundaries as constructed by the young people and broader community members. Following this, there will be an analysis of where the area boundaries originate from. This questions whether symbolic and/or physical boundaries were created by youth gang members or if such boundaries were a historical, inter-generational phenomenon. Subsequently there is an exploration of how these boundaries are maintained, including looking at the issue of ‘fighting over boundaries’. The views of all participants are discussed to explain how certain boundaries are actualised through aggressive forms of social interaction. This territorial related violent behaviour often occurs between groups of young people and serves to define and concretise their own sense of community and belonging. The section concludes with the suggestion that one foundational agreement between the youth gang and their local community, in both research areas, is that they have a unified ‘other’ which is based on territorial lines of demarcation.

The next section analyses additional divisions present in area two, based on race. It begins by exploring geographical distinctions related to residential

concentrations of different ethnic groups. This is followed by an exploration of cultural essentialism as discussed previously within the theoretical chapter. There is then, as with territoriality, an analysis of physical fighting based on this racial differentiation and whether this impacts on the agreement between the youth gang and their local community. This section concludes with the assertion that an aspect of the agreement is based on the similarities generated within an in-group by actively excluding and creating an out-group.

Territoriality

Within both research sites the young participants identified with a defined geographical space. The geographical boundaries were often used as a means to identify where the community started and ended, as well as to differentiate between those who were deemed to be within, and those excluded from the community. Initially, it is important to consider how distinctions in geographical space were made and understood.

Geographical Boundaries

The geographical boundaries used by young people to demarcate ‘their’ area from other areas were often impossible for someone external to the community to identify. Pauline explained:

Well see this are [names four streets] all that bit up there, that is kinda like different, it is the same area aye, but it is like everybody up there is kinda dead close together n all and then there is down here and that is kinda different.

(Pauline, 16, female, area 2)

Similarly in area one John stated:

...it's just classed as [neighbouring area], well it isnae really [neighbouring area] but it is classed as [neighbouring area] you're from the area because that's where they hang about.

(John, 18, male, area 1)

I often asked during my interviews how I, as an outsider, would be able to tell where one area started and another finished. Nearly all the young people told me I would not be able to tell as I was not from the area. Jack explained the use of infrastructure that would not be recognisable as a flash point to outsiders.

No well, over there on that bridge

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Jason also discussed the bridge:

Aye like over on that bridge, the bridge across the road, we cannae go over it, like if we go over it...well we can go over it, know what I mean, but when you get to a certain point, if we go on it to a certain point then we will see the people and then we gotta fight with them, know what I mean.

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

In both areas certain types of infrastructure were used as a means of differentiating between one area and the other; be this a bridge, a shop, a sports complex or a road. These lines of demarcation often differed from official area boundaries and would not have been known without localised knowledge.

In area two, it was not just the young people who adopted certain signifiers to differentiate between who was in their community and who was not. Within this community the division was based on a street where most of the Roma community lived. The street in itself had become a way of distinguishing between the two communities. Rita, Marie and Mo stated:

And is there visible boundaries? Like if I wasn't from this area would I know where it was?

Rita- If you came into this area and said to me do you know where they hang about and do you know where they are

Marie- Aye the streets

Rita- Aye if you were here a couple of nights you would know that they were kinda there and they were there

Mo- But I'll tell you don't hang about over there by yourself at night
[pointing at where most of the Roma community live]

So it's like common knowledge that it is separated?

All- Aye

(Rita, Marie and Mo, community residents, females, area 2)

Michael also demonstrated the different communities within the one geographical area.

They have...not...well...see the community here is kinda split up, there is the wider area of, your catchment area if you know what I mean, what you would consider [research area], but then there is like [research area] park, then there is the other park up at where [friend] stays and then there is down where I, where I used to stay and then there is the other bit up at the Recs and all that kinda stuff, so but I think realistically it all depends on where they are at that time, whether they are hanging about that area, or that area, or going to fight with people in that area or whatever.

(Michael, 29, community resident, male, area 2)

There was an assumption that if a person was not from the area then the boundaries would not be recognisable. The boundaries could also vary depending on where the youth gang was socialising or locations where confrontation with others occurred, a point that will be discussed in greater detail below.

In area one the police also knew that the sports centre was a site of conflict and was used as a symbol of boundary demarcation.

... [I]n the main you get them coming up through the [sports centre] cause that was kinda secluded and once they got up to the [research area], which was the edge of the [sports centre], once the [research area] ones knew they were there they would go down and “what you doing up here” and it would just start you know.

(Police officer, male, area 1)

Similarly in area two,

...you see that as well with the [neighbouring area] and the gangs in the East End as well there is a bridge down there that they all kind of meet

(Police officer, male, area 2)

The police identified the same infrastructure used as boundary markers and again suggested they were actualised through conflict. These areas became known throughout the community and became informal lines of demarcation that had little relation to the official area boundaries. Thus the areas where the young people fought constructed the geography, maintained the boundaries and created the local identity of the area.

Sharon recognised that the street where the Roma community have settled was used as a boundary for the predominantly white community, as noted previously by Rita, Marie and Mo.

There is a distinction between, there is a territorial issue with [street name] that is where mainly Roma young people hang out and sort of places like, this end of [research area] the park area of [research area], [research area] park, and this side is mainly the white kids, I think it is north [research area] that is predominantly working class white communities that are there and then [street name] is mainly migration, like new migration. So there is

distinction with territorialism to do with where people are living and where people have settled and stuff like that.

(Sharon, equalities worker, female, area 2)

Similarly Jan explained how different types of infrastructure can be used as boundary markings.

No like see like [large road] like on one side there is [area name] and on the other side there is [area name] so they will fight one another across that main road

(Jan, full time youth worker, female, area 1)

The locations where the gang fought symbolised lines of demarcation between areas; and the aspects of everyday infrastructure which marked these locations became known by all in the community as signifiers of areas of conflict and, consequently, as boundary lines.

Where do Boundaries Come From?

Jack noted a historical element to the boundary formation.

We've stayed here all our lives and we just sorta know, just stayed here all our lives and we know where the [neighbouring area] is so we know

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

Many of the young people explained that they knew where the boundaries were because that is where they fought or if they went past that point they would feel threatened.

Aye, well we don't really like...we cannae walk through [neighbouring area] or walk through [neighbouring area] but we can walk through [neighbouring area] and [neighbouring area] and all the other places know what I mean?

(Jason, 17, male, area 2)

The gang members thus maintain the boundaries. These boundaries may change if there was no one to protect them or maintain their existence. While this will be explored further in the section entitled- 'fighting over boundaries', it's worth noting that these boundaries have been maintained by young people over a considerable period of time and are reflected in the geographical distinctions made by the community.

Josie, when discussing her own childhood, mentioned the same bridge as a symbolic boundary, highlighting the inter-generational use of the same infrastructure.

Like we used to like see that bridge down there, is it there now, aye I think it is known that kinda silver bridge?

Yeah just down that road? Yeah

Aye we used to like spray paint that all the time and leave menties like the boys from [research area] would write things and the boys from [neighbouring area] would paint over the top of it we were in your area and things like this and there were like messages
(*Josie, community resident, female, area 2*)

In area two the police officer similarly noted the learned behaviour;

Eh I'm not sure just put it down to where they are kinda growing up it is local, other than that I think it is just locality, where you have grown up, maybe it has been passed down from brothers and sisters or friends or acquaintances, this is where the [research area] young team are based or the [neighbouring gang] or whatever they are called but locality I would have to put it down to
(*Police officer, male, area 2*)

Chris commented on this issue:

The boundaries are clear, about 17/18, it goes on longer for some people, there is a boundary of where you live and you don't go out of because there is a whole fear of territorialism that we have created, as adults we have created that stuff for years, and it's nonsense because most of the kids they fight with from the [neighbouring area] or from here, the parents have come from either here or there, you know what I mean.

He continued:

As a species we are pretty focussed on that anyway, you know we are sorta...we focus ourselves in small communities and we very rarely move out of that and young folk just kinda buy in to that we are quite territorial anyway...

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

Luke agreed that the same learned behaviour occurred in area one.

Aye, generation. Everyone knows, everybody knows, its not like there is markings or signs, everybody knows that from that road to the other side is that area, that side of that other road is that area and its just its like unwritten rules. Its like if you were a gang member and you walk in to that other areas territory you know you are there for conflict, you know you're there and they are going to want to attack you.

He continued,

...it's just the way it is, it's always been about this area and it's sad because it's only a road and it's only a bigger community as a whole which has created all these small communities em which in turn turns into all gang names. Em and its sad as well with the gang names, when we were in a school just last week and the amount of young people that don't even know their actual areas name, they only know their gang name, they don't know it. When we ask them "where do you stay?" they tell you the gang name... even

the girls who are never been involved in a gang or who don't look likely to ever be and they could be the politest young people ever, but they'll tell you the gang name right away before they tell you, and then you'll ask them "where is that though?" and they'll be like [pulls a blank expression].

(Luke, full time youth worker, male, area 1)

The admission that young people learn where the symbolic boundaries are from older generations, or through societal norms, clearly indicates that there is a community based agreement as to where one community starts and another ends. As will be explored in greater detail below, however, it is often the young people who fight over these boundaries to ensure that they are maintained and that their sense of belonging and assertion of identity is demonstrated.

Prior to that discussion there is the need for a short analysis on the phenomenon discussed by some in area one, in relation to a neighbouring community, where young people call the area by its gang name as opposed to its official name. Jan corroborated the statement from Luke, stating,

aye a lot of young people, we have got to correct them constantly when I am working in schools, they'll say "where do you come fae" and I'll be like [area name] and they'll be like that "I don't know where that is" and then they'll go "is that [gang name]?" or they'll say "I was up [gang name] last night" and you'll go "where were you?" and they'll go "[area name]" a lot of them don't even know...some of... what the area real name is.

So is kinda like a historical thing then?

Huh huh aye definitely it has been passed from generation to generation, [gang name], [gang name], [gang name], [gang name] and a lot of them don't know the proper name of the scheme.

(Jan, full time youth worker, female, area 1)

The notion that young people don't know the proper name for their area, clearly demonstrates, as suggested in the definitional findings, that community members'

recognise the existence of the gang. If the young people are discussing the area in terms of the gang name then there must be a social acceptance, of sorts, that the gang not only exists but contributes to the definition of the identity of the geographically defined space.

The youth workers interviewed in this area work over a large geographical space where there is a strong history of gang affiliation; as such there seems to be an agreement that over time the gang names have become a way of asserting the integrity of the area, a means of sustaining its identity. John explained:

Aye right I know what you mean now, but this is all split up into different areas so they cannae exactly call themselves [large area where interview was conducted] because it is all different areas where as [research area 1] is just the one area, just quite a wee place so its [research area gang name], [neighbouring area] is just a wee place so it is [neighbouring area gang name].

So it's cause it's a wee area...

[Area where interview conducted] is massive so there is like fifteen gangs or something so they all call themselves different names like [gangs name], [gang name] eh what other ones is there [gang name] hundreds of different ones.

(John, 18, male, area 1)

Thus in the larger area where the youth workers engage, gang names are used as a means to actively identify between the symbolically divided areas. In a sense the gang is used as an embodiment of the defined area. This was not the case within area two even though there were smaller communities identified within the larger geographical space they were not known by the gang name.

The geographical boundaries have been created by people over time and have been maintained or reinforced by the young people who identify with gang membership, as will be seen below. As McAlister et al (2010) note:

Expressed as ‘territory’ exclusion is deeply rooted in historical division and local meaning of space. The ‘choices’ and ‘rules’ made by children and young people regarding access and movement within their area are learned quickly, including ‘differences’ within their communities and estates. Such awareness represents identity formation at a very local level (p. 100).

These boundaries not only create an identity for those within the community but also exclude those who are not in the community. As was noted previously, Cohen (2007) asserts:

By definition, the boundary marks the beginning and the end of a community. But why is such marking necessary? The simple answer is that the boundary encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction (p. 12).

Fighting, as one type of social interaction, will explain how the young people and arguably the broader community maintain the boundaries as a means of encapsulating the identity of the community alongside excluding the identity of those outside of it.

Fighting over Boundaries Young People

When asked about territorial fighting some of the young people told me how they had tried to change the pre-proscribed boundaries. John explained:

Well I’ve tried going and I have been chased, I’ve tried to go in and play football I don’t know how many times and I have been chased because I’m from the [research area 1]. So I thought if I can’t go there cause they will chase me then why don’t I chase them and get them out of it.

And did that work, trying to push them out?

Well we did try but they keep coming back

(John, 18, male, area 1)

Similarly in area two Donna noted:

No like there is, like the [research area] can go about all of [research area] and [neighbouring area] can go about all of [neighbouring area] but if you go like past like Spar in [research area], do you know where Spar is?

See that's what I mean, like I would I know that, like I only now Spar as a shop, I would just walk straight past Spar, is that...

Like that is still [research area] part but a lot of it the [research area] had went downhill at one point and the [neighbouring area] had taken over this half and the [other neighbouring area] had taken over that half and they were just like there, but then they pulled it back out, like see [area name]?

Yeah...

That wasnae anything to do with [research area] that was [neighbouring area] but then [research area] took over that

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

This idea that the area had gone downhill because the youth gang were not actively maintaining their boundaries was reiterated by Willy and Sammy when they reminisced:

Sammy- Aye [research area] boot boys

Willy- We went everywhere, we walked the scheme and we were untouchable

Sammy- Nae cunt would do nothing to you

Willy- Naebody would come in to [research area] to do anything, it was your territory they would come in to, but then drugs took over, therefore everybody's guard just dropped

(Sammy, 24, Willy, 26, males, area 2)

The area was no longer protected due to drugs. The two men talk about this period in an abashed manner, indicating they lost control of their area by not protecting it and that others could then enter without being challenged. It is questionable if the period described by Donna as being 'downhill' is the same time that Willy and Sammy discussed when 'everybody's guard dropped'. Donna suggesting that area two regained control over part of the neighbouring area potentially demonstrates that 'the guard' is back in place. This shows that if the young people do not maintain the boundaries they feel that they have lost control of their area. People can walk through it without being challenged and they are no longer protecting their community or the residents and their family therein.

In both areas, the young people spoke about territorial based fighting that often had a long history. This fighting was with young people on the other side of the symbolically created boundaries, although all young interviewees were at pains to note that it was not as regular an occurrence as outsiders often assumed. Lewis explained how the fighting is often seasonal and how there has been tit for tat retaliations between research area two and the neighbouring area for years.

What about fighting in [research area] does that happen a lot?

More or less in the summer, [research area] [neighbouring area], [research area] [neighbouring area].

He continued,

The worst thing is [research area] and [neighbouring area] probably, its being going on for years. That is where I got slashed right outside my front door.

What was that for?

Cause ey...I just got out of jail one day and we were in the [name] bar and people from [neighbouring area] were in the [name] bar and eh it ended up a big fight happened and then one night I was walking through [research area] park with my girlfriends and I seen wee shapes of bodies and I thought it was all the young mob from [research area] then I got about fucking six feet away from them and I just realised shit its [neighbouring area] and they knew how the fight between the two pubs, and they were like you were there when my fucking brother got done and then slashed us with a razor and that was it, and it has always been tit for tat never stop.

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Similarly, in area one Joe noted:

Every cunt would just jump in and just fucking deck them, man. They would dae the same to us if we were in the [neighbouring area] so that's the way you need to think about it.

(Joe, 14, male, area 1)

This suggests that there is an expectation that the youth gang from each area will act in a certain manner if outsiders enter their area. There is a reputation that has been built on and has to be maintained by fighting. It was this identity and reputation that was lost according to Willy and Sammy when drugs entered area two. Once the young people no longer fight to maintain the boundaries the reputation of the area, as far as the young people are concerned, is diminished. Jack explained:

Aye they try and come over to this end so there is bother; they try and fight with us so we fight with them

(Jack, 17, male, area 2)

In both areas the young people felt that if external young people from outside came into their defined area then they should fight with them to maintain their area, or their gang's, identity and reputation. If there was no one to engage in the fights, to protect the boundaries, then symbolically constructed boundaries would no longer exist but instead there would only be area based geographical boundaries as depicted by outsiders.

This directly links to the notion that the young people feel that they are protecting their area. If they do not fight or challenge those who have been 'othered' the latter can take over the area. By not drawing on the normalised use of urban violence against those deemed to be outsiders the identity of the youth gang is diminished as is the identity and security of their community.

Community Members- Fighting over Boundaries

Within both areas the community members were aware that territorial fighting occurred. Rita, when asked about territorial fighting said,

Sometimes but a lot of the time people blame them as well there has been known to be fights but a lot of times people from [neighbouring area] and [neighbouring area] come in here do you know what I mean as well.

(Rita, community resident, female, area 2)

Rita understands that if people from outside the area come in the area then the youth gang will fight with them. Darren also acknowledges this interplay.

They will fight with [neighbouring area] and [neighbouring area] and sometimes you'll get [neighbouring area] coming up to sort of like em to have a swipe and stuff like that and I have no doubt they do the same kind of thing. So yeah I would say it is about territorialism.

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

Thus fighting is a clear assertion of the boundaries of community territoriality.

Police- Fighting over Boundaries

The police also identified that fighting over boundaries was historical and continued down through generations. Both police officers reflected upon this, stating:

Well it's historical between the [neighbouring area] and the [research area gang name], it has been happening for years, it is just all down to the area they come from, they are quite close to each other, but the [research area] boys couldn't go into the [neighbouring area] and vice versa, and if they did there was always altercations between them and it resulted in fighting with weapons and stuff, all sorts, people being injured, you know so...

(Police officer, male, area 1)

The officer from area two similarly noted,

Yeah there seems to be historically [research area] you have got the [neighbouring area gang name] and the [neighbouring area] there seems to be an historical rivalry there as such...

(Police officer, male, area 1)

This historical legacy supports the view that if the youth gang did not carry on this fighting, or the boundaries were not occasionally defended, then there was the potential for both their gang and area reputation and security to be threatened by those outside the defined community.

Youth Workers- Fighting over Boundaries

Accustomed to the local youth perceptions the youth workers took a pragmatic view about the fighting involved in the maintenance of community boundaries. Mel, like other interviewees, normalised this behaviour.

I think it is just life. It is passed down through generation and generation and family and family, "oh we don't talk to that...", "we fight with that street and

that street” or “when I was a boy I used to fight with that street” or whatever and I think it is kinda put down. Also em they hang about in big groups and obviously they kinda stick to the areas they know best and then they don’t want to venture out and therefore they are labelled as a gang and I think it is a lot of community people and a lot of people in the community that kinda make them that, make it hyped up, bigger than what it actually is.

(Mel, full time youth worker, female, area 2)

Although the youth gang are the ones who actually fight with other young people, it is the broader community who recognise them and tacitly encourage their actions. While not part of an overt agreement, the impact the community have on the young people’s actions is paramount to the agreement. As Chris another youth worker in area two noted:

...it is usually older guys, slightly older than you who are doing stuff and you inherit that and we have a history of story-telling and exaggeration around this stuff. Cause parents tell kids stuff, all when they are drunk and have parties and conversations happen “aw remember when we done this at that age” and the weans pick up on that and “aw my dad was in it and my granda was in it” that sort of thing. There seems to be a real culture of that gang thing within the schemes...

He continued:

...some of the stuff they got into, the adults, if they are honest about it, reflects pretty badly on what the young folk do. I mean we have all inherited...particularly if you come from a working class scheme in Glasgow you inherit that kind of thing...

I guess, something I have come across a bit, almost an acceptance that, well I’ve come across more young males, but that that is what they do? Because they are from this scheme, that’s what they do, they fight...

It's expected of them, Aye. And then by inter law if that is all you expect we are and that is what we do...then they don't there is the whole scheme thing there...but as I keep trying to say most young folk aren't involved, if you look at the numbers compared to how actually, if you look at the media you would think all young folk are involved in it.

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

Territoriality Conclusion

The young people who identify with gang membership are not only aware of the symbolically defined boundaries, but reinforce and maintain them. The young interviewees discussed societal infrastructure whose meaning had been adjusted and transformed to differentiate where one community starts and the other ends. These boundaries are not new or solely created by young people. They are both known and recognised by members of the broader community, some of whom promote and encourage the differentiation related to boundary identification. Ultimately of interest to this research is the interaction that occurs at these geographical boundaries. As Jenkins (2008) notes, it is at these boundaries that identifications tend to be negotiated and registered. Although Jenkins (2008) was not specifically discussing physical boundaries, in this instance, the negotiation and identification creation within the two research areas was often physically manifested through engagement in fighting.

Young people in both areas discussed the attempt to challenge boundaries and fought with others based on this boundary demarcation. The maintenance of the symbolic boundaries was important for the young people in asserting their sense of identity, security and safety within their area. The allegiance to the gang, and the broader community, was played out through the protection of the area from outsiders, who could not enter without certain consequences. This, of course, is relational and applies to the young people who have either been involved, or continue to be involved, with gang behaviour as opposed to being applied to complete outsiders, such as myself. While community residents may have augmented the youth sense of differentiation between communities, they were

unlikely to participate in the fighting over boundaries, as this was regarded as more appropriate to the young people.

Crucially, residents within the broader community accept, acknowledge and at times seem to condone the protection of these boundaries. Residents explained that others had come into the area, as if this was an excuse for violent behaviour or retaliation. Kintrea, Bannister and Pickering's (2011) findings bear some resemblance to this study,

In the areas we have considered, an established tradition of territoriality is passed down, in part through immediate siblings and 'olders and younger', but it is also remarkable how deeply embedded territoriality is. Successive generations have been, and are, involved in similar behaviour, and adults often condone territoriality as an inevitable part of growing up (p. 68).

It is possible that it is the territoriality that the residents are condoning, but their knowledge of physical attacks, on both sides, results in them being more understanding of why the young people engage in violent confrontation with neighbouring youths. No community member actively encouraged the fighting but many could readily comprehend why it happened. Part of the findings also indicated the important legacy of historical learnt behaviour. Inter-generational experience and memory has seen the 'othering' of those outside of the community over the years which was often carried out by the residents as well as the young people.

Fundamentally, this again demonstrates the elements underpinning the agreement between the youth gang and their local community which is based on a unified other that is created and based on territorial lines of demarcation. The community members acknowledge territoriality as a norm, and some actively reinforce this; but it is the young people who defend and protect the historically proscribed boundaries. When this has not occurred, as discussed in area two, the young people felt that their reputation, their safety and sense of security was endangered as external gangs freely entered their area without being challenged. The fighting

over boundaries is more than a societal norm; it is an expectation on the part of those young people who identify with the local gang.

However within area two there is a more complex demarcation which is based on race as well as territory. Although not evident in area one, in area two the defining of the community and therefore its sense of similarity, was compounded along ethnic lines, the implications of which will be explored below.

Defining the Area Based on Race

Geographical Boundaries

Young People

In area two many of the young people clearly differentiated between 'their community', being the predominantly white community, compared to the community made up of minority ethnic residents. They often suggested that their area was being brought into disrepute because of the increase of ethnic minorities within the area. Donna's sentiments were echoed by many young people.

...is there anything you don't like about the area?

I don't like [street name]

Why is that?

[Whispers can she say immigrants on the tape]

Yeah you can say anything

Em because of the refugees and that, so I don't like them, because they have pure ruined [research area]

(Donna, 16, female, area 2)

The notion that members of ethnic minority groups have brought the reputation of the area down was also discussed by Pauline, who noted:

What you think about [research area].

Shite...

Why is that?

Well it was alright a couple of years ago but now that all the refugees have moved in it is just pure chaos everywhere...cause I stay in [street name] which is right next to [street name] so it is pure terrible

(Pauline, 16, male, area 2)

Both females name a specific street as a signifier of geographical separation between their community and the area where the majority of ethnic minority residents live. Pauline suggested that the area is 'shite' because the new people in the area undermine her feelings of security. Donna also noted that the area has been 'ruined' by the economic migrants. These sentiments relate to a deep fear that their area has been taken over by people with different values, sentiments and loyalties, i.e. by outsiders.

Community Members- Geographical Boundaries

This demarcation based on a street was not confined to the young people but was also noted by community members. Rita, Marie and Mo said:

Rita- I think so no I think so it's like the stick to their own sorta clans like the white people and then there will be the Slovaks along [street name]

Marie- Aye see I wouldn't walk down [street name] not in a million years

Mo- What about last Sunday or Wednesday when we were all walking down

Marie- [Street name] is terrible

(Rita, Marie and Mo, community residents, females, area 2)

This dividing street was spoken about by all participants and was used as a geographical boundary between the predominantly white community and the Roma community. However this division went beyond geographical separation as issues of culture, race and violence were often discussed as both the cause of, and justification for, the separation. On more than one occasion I was warned by young people and community members, not to walk down the street on my own as I would not be safe. Sammy told me:

Naw but see walking up there? I wouldnae walk down there yourself, being a lassie, I wouldn't walk down there yourself

(Sammy, 24, male, area 2)

Similarly Mo said,

...but I'll tell you don't hang about over there by yourself at night [pointing at where most of the Roma community live]

(Mo, community resident, female, area 2)

The young people and community residents were trying to 'protect' me from the 'othered' Roma community, who they had stereotyped due to essentialist views. The latter are seen as a group who pose an existential threat to the unified community and cannot be controlled or validated. The youth gang can vouch for my safety, but in relation to 'others', who they see as being different from them, they assume that they will act negatively towards me. This differentiation and creation of essentialist myths about the Roma demonstrates that separation in area two is not solely geographical, but that racial and cultural differences underpin the assertion of difference (Young, 2007). This process of cultural essentialism (Young, 1999b, 2007) compounds the core similarity of the predominantly white group while excluding and stigmatising the Roma community, "Cultural essentialism allows people to believe in their inherent superiority while being able

to demonize the other, as essentially wicked, stupid or criminal” (Young, 1999b, p. 109).

Cultural Essentialism

Young people

A number of the young people interviewed not only viewed the Roma community as bringing down their area, but made sweeping statements about their whole culture and the danger they posed to the physical and symbolic status of the community.

Shocking, shocking man, cause I wouldnae mind them being in [research area], it is the way they are treating the area, just run about as if it is their ain place n that, not that the fact that it is their own place but they leave rubbish lying about and all that and leave rubbish and start raping and mugging women and all that know what I mean. Prostitution and all that, so it is pure shocking man.

(Dylan, 18, male, area 2)

Dylan sees the area as ‘theirs’. The new immigrants should respect that they are newcomers and should not treat the area as their own. The repeated accounts of raping, mugging and prostitution was frequently discussed in relation to the ethnic minorities in an attempt, whether consciously or unconsciously, to create a ‘wicked, stupid or criminal’ (Young, 1999b) other. Pauline told me:

Aye they rob old people and that, rob old women and all that and then one day my Da was walking down the street and he was trying to stop the young, these refugees were robbing an old woman and my Da tried to stop it and somebody smashed a bottle over his head.

(Pauline, 16, female, area 2)

Lewis also said:

Aye, it's not being racist but it is just like that they have pure evacuate, they have pure took over our area and they are pure spoiling it, like that street is in some state and they act like a pure riot and nobody does anything about it. And then that woman who got murdered up in [name] park, that was a refugee and still naebody has done anything
(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

Lewis felt that the EU migrants had taken over their area, but he also felt annoyed that there had been no repercussions for their perceived negative actions. Many young interviewees provided examples of how the behaviour of the Roma was having a detrimental impact on the community residents and the area. I recorded a reflection after a discussion with one young man:

The young man, who is in his early twenties, started by telling me how his local area had been badly affected by the influx of Slovaks in the area. He asked if I had seen a recent programme about child prostitution and criticised how the Slovaks sold their children for money. The young man said he thought it was disgusting and that if we didn't believe him that it was happening he would take a camera and film it all to show all the nasty things they get up to.

The man went on to criticise them for living off benefits and said that most of them don't even work. He acknowledged the Polish worked but the Slovaks just begged, were involved in prostitution and lived off benefits.
(Personal observation and reflection, 08-09-09, area 2)

This stigmatisation and 'othering' was not just carried out by the young people but by many community residents as well.

Community Members- Cultural Essentialism

This demonstration of cultural essentialism was demonstrated by Ms. Mehta when she suggested there was a community wide feeling of negativity towards the Roma community.

Do you know people actually...and you're not allowed to be racist...they hate them! And by law they are not allowed to say these things and everything, and they are so scared. Do you know I have seen the Roma, see the bin that sits out on the street; they have actually went in the bin. First time in my life I have seen it, the mum and the boy stood there and they took the bananas out of the bin, now there is no need for that in this day and age, the government helps them. I seen them outside the cancer shops running away stealing the stuff and the people out of the shop running after them.
(Ms. Mehta, community resident, female, area 2)

Rita, Marie and Mo argued:

Marie- Even in daylight I wouldn't go round to [street name]

Mo- They have a child brothel round there as well

Rita- Aye the have one round there

Mo- Aye the weans

Rita- Remember we were in here and the guy came in with the dog?

Mo- Aye

Rita- Telling them to phone the polis, his dog had went in a close and there was a wee lassie about 12 with a white man out of the pub, somebody was in and her brother was standing at the door, so it just shows you that way.

(Rita, Marie and Mo, community residents, females, area 2)

Josie explained that the differentiation and the lack of understanding had often resulted in white community members being fearful in their own area:

...over the years you have had the instances like up in [name] park there obviously the woman got murdered, and you had heard of different people like assaults, just different things and I think there is just that wee bit about fear and because you don't know like as I say before, people used to all know everybody, my mum has lived here since she was a wee girl so she knew everybody, whereas now she'll go to the shops and doesnae know everybody.

(Josie, community resident, area 2)

The community members have, like the young people, essentialised the Roma community as a source of fear due to the 'wicked' (Young, 1999b) actions they have been involved in. The residents, like the young people, feel that the Roma offer a threat, both on a structural scale, where they take their welfare benefits, or on a personal level where they rape and murder people. The Roma are seen as undermining the ontological and physical security of the residents within area two. There was no analysis from the broader community as to why incidents of stealing may have happened, instead the focus was on the difference of the Roma from white, 'mainstream' societal values and norms.

Betty explained how older residents felt about the EU migrants entering the area;

...“you know” she says, “we should have listened to Enoch Powell” and I, oh right oh right, Enoch Powell said this would cause a lot of trouble, there would come a day that we would open the flood gates to far, what were his words? It would cause a river...a sea of blood, a sea of blood. And, as I say, this wee woman I met she was saying that is what is happening. It is, you've not got, you have not got the neighbours you had before where you could leave your door open and say “aw Maggie it is me can I come in” aye come in. Now it is, as she said herself, it is mostly immigrants in [research area] now.

(Betty, elderly community resident, female, area 2)

The Roma community have been blamed for the physical dereliction of the area and have been accused of bringing the area into disrepute by their presence and

reported behaviour. Ms. Mehta discussed how people rummaged in the bins for food and recounted the story as justification for how the reputation of the area is being undermined, with no examination of the structural reasons this may be occurring i.e. poverty. Not only are the incoming community seen as having different values, that bring the physical and symbolic reputation of the area down, but they are blamed for the lack of physical and ontological security within this predominantly white neighbourhood.

Youth Workers- Cultural Essentialism

The youth workers in the area also acknowledged the racial tensions, although often suggested it was not as bad as reported.

I think it is a general feeling, I mean I think there is underlying racism there and I basically again think it is fed by the media because people read in the paper everyday oh were being flooded, they are over running us and they see them in mass hanging about the street and there is a fear there. Don't get me wrong it doesn't mean they aren't doing anything, there is bags being stole, there is a bit of robbery, people are trying to get by and they are still living in poverty, you are gonna get that anywhere in the world when people are struggling. Classic example was the 80s and during Thatcherism, house breaking in this country was rife.

(Chris, head of youth project, male, area 2)

Chris, unlike a lot of other interviewees links crime to poverty. Instead of taking a moralistic stance on stealing and going through bins etc, he notes the structural inequalities faced by many of these people. However, for the young people and community members such instances are used as justification for boundary creation and feelings of cultural essentialism which exacerbate the differences between the predominantly white and Roma communities.

Whilst the youth workers were actively trying to break down boundaries and create a sense of solidarity through community based diversionary projects, many of the essentialist sentiments were still apparent.

This evening when I was taking the football I was really interested and quite upset by the openly racist comments from some of the young people. One of the young boys who I have found out may be involved in the younger young team refused to wear a bib after a group of Slovaks had been wearing them. He said they were dirty smelly cunts who never washed and he would not touch something after they had worn it. I challenged this behaviour, though he still refused to co-operate and instead took a new bib from the bag.
(Personal observation and reflection, 25-03-10, area 2)

The creation of boundaries, compounded by the often racist attitudes and racial essentialism at times led to fighting between the young people who identified with gang membership and the Roma community. This fighting clearly occurred when the young people felt it necessary to reassert the boundaries and the identity of their community.

Fighting Based on Racial Boundaries

Young people

The outbreak of fighting along the lines of racially constructed boundaries demonstrates the importance of symbolic boundaries alongside those based on geographic territoriality, although often the two can be reinforcing. In respect of this Lewis differentiated between some of the young people who he played football with and others he fought with,

...sometimes I'm in a cunt of a mood and I say, "who you talking to, you fucking nigger, get to, why you even here, you smelly fucking bastards." Just when I think about them sometimes it makes me pure raging, but know how we were round playing football tonight? Some of them come round and play football, the wee guy [name] I like them. It's just the older sweaty, greasy creepy ones...

(Lewis, 25, male, area 2)

This underlying racism demonstrates the active 'othering' and differentiation, creating a 'them' and 'us' mentality. Fighting with the Roma community was frequently discussed by participants.

Willy- Well we had one run in with them one night and the reason we had a run in was...what was happening was that some people I know their fathers are maybe coming in from the pub, out working all week, few pints and they were getting jumped, they were getting robbed, so there was a squad of us one night, maybe 10, 11 maybe 12 of us and what we done was, 6 down one street and 6 down another street and just ambushed and we just gave them a bit of their own medicine, just let them know

Sammy- We take no shite

Willy- They realise now that they either work with us or we are gonna fight with them, when that's how when they come in now, they don't know our names but they know we are cool. There is a certain level of respect now, you know, what I say is like in America where they have the Blood and the Crips it's no like that, it's like there is a bit of respect for each other, they don't cross us, we don't cross them

(Willy, 26 and Sammy, 24, males, area 2)

The youth gang fight with the Roma community as a reassertion, not only of the boundaries, but of the identity of the gang and their broader community. Willy and Lewis both suggested that there were times of cohesion, generally when playing football, although there is still generalised 'othering' and separation between the two communities. I reflected on one such incident whilst helping with a football session within the community:

Quite a number of the Roma boys came over to play football and all was going well until about ten minutes before the end a group of young white lads appeared. They were acting suspiciously and when I went to ask if they wanted to join in they told me that they fight with the Roma boys and so wouldn't play. I informed them there would be no fighting that evening and

that if they didn't want to participate they could leave the pitch. I then heard some of the guys speaking on the phone to their mates telling them to all come down for a fight and to get tooled up. I was really worried for the safety of the Roma boys particularly as there were some really young boys there. As there was only ten minutes to go myself and another youth worker took the decision to stop the session and walk the young Roma boys' home. *(Personal observation and reflection, 21-01-10, area 2)*

This incident made me aware of the tensions which at times would spill over into aggression and violence. I became aware that part of the problem was that the football sessions were run in a park, only two streets from where the majority of Roma lived, but nevertheless, was deemed as being a part of the predominantly white area. This geographical boundary division was not necessarily written in stone, as members from both sides at times crossed, or engaged with, people from the other community. However, when the young people wanted to assert their own identity, or challenge behaviour they viewed as not in line with their own values, they engaged in physical conflict with those seen as external to their community.

Community Members- Fighting Based on Racial Boundaries

The residents in area two clearly created the same divisions between their community and the Roma community. Some residents understood, and even sympathised with, why the youth gang fought with the Roma community. Nevertheless, when asked directly many of the residents suggested the levels of fighting was not as bad as had been reported.

I would say there probably is eh...certainly experiencing that with trying to get the Roma to come down to the park, which is definitely in this part of [area name] that has posed problems, but it hasn't been a uniform problem it's not been everybody like that but there will be some people who will be like no were not having this lot here kind of thing and I'm sure there will be ones in [street name] that are the same kind of thing but that is a percentage of the whole that is not everybody if you know what I mean. So yeah there

is ethnic tensions but I don't think there is anything like all the white people want to claim their territory or vice versa with them, there are skirmishes but not an organised kind of thing you know.

(Darren, 31, community resident, male, area 2)

Although Darren suggested the fighting is not related to territoriality, he simultaneously holds that the park is part of the predominantly white area and, as such, reasserts control over the space. Josie suggested that:

I've never heard of anything major but I have heard of some of the young ones going up to [street name] area or [street] area and fighting with some of the polish guys and Slovaks. I mean my wee brother is a prime example he was up a couple of weeks ago and he had a big cut on his mouth, and I'm not saying that...I think he is as much to blame as anybody, but I think it is just...they just view people as coming into their area as this is our area, we live here and they are kinda intruders, I think they see it like that but I wouldnae say there are major, not that I'm aware of, major areas, I don't think it is ongoing battles every night, nothing like that.

(Josie, community resident, female, area 2)

Josie seems to normalise the violence; again sympathising with the concerns expressed that the Roma are taking over the area. This was also vocalised by Rita:

Do you understand why the white young people fight with the Slovakian young people?

Aye because at first there was only a couple of them and it was alright but then hundreds of them came and they have just took over and it does feel like it

(Rita, community resident, female, area 2)

Many community members generally played down the fighting between the predominantly white youth gang and the Roma community, but understood why it

occurred. The tacit support, of the youth gang may be due to a sense of solidarity, a common identifier, the feeling of being one community. In contrast, the Roma are seen as a different community with different values, different lifestyle and as outsiders who have come into 'their' area and have impacted negatively upon the reputation and external view of the area.

Labelling From Others

Some young people felt that not being able to control the influx of migrants in to their area was having a negative impact on their external reputation with other communities. Rab angrily said:

I want them out. Everybody wants them out. Everybody's maw's cause they have just come over here and they have made the scheme ten times worse and its pure talking about black and try and slag us and all, call us black names n all that because of these manky rats coming in...pure shiteing where they are sleeping and bathing in the same room...

(Rab, 17, male, area 2)

Willy and Sammy also suggested:

Sammy- Aye you say you're from [research area] and they go is that where all the pakis are and you're like that no

And do you get hassle for that?

Sammy- They try to but they don't...

(Willy, 26 and Sammy, 24, males, area 2)

For these young people who identify with gang membership, they feel their identity is being questioned due to the influx of 'outsiders' with a consequence of possible negative perceptions because of it. Rab says other youth gangs call them racist names as his area is becoming known for having a large number of ethnic

minority residents. Other youth gangs are using this changing demography to question the continuing power and control this youth gang has in research area two, given that they appear powerless to prevent ethnic minorities from moving into their area.

Race Conclusion

Within area two the differentiation based on race was one way for the young people, and the broader community, to define who was in 'their' community and who was not. The issue of race was geographically divided because many of the Roma community lived on one street. This street became a clear demarcation for residents of where 'they' lived as opposed to where the white community lived.

Again, this differentiation is not a phenomenon solely created by the youth gang but the broader community also promoted, encouraged and actively created this separation. The segregation involved community residents as well as the youth gang members' 'othering' the Roma community and becoming essentialist in their attitudes. As noted previously Young (1999b) suggests this essentialism re-affirms the in-group identity, i.e. the predominantly white community. The norms of this in-group become the basis for judgement of others and often extreme examples of behaviour against these norms were provided by interviewees to support the positions adopted. As Young (1999b) noted:

It furnishes the targets, it provides the stereotypes, it allows the marshalling of aggression, it reaffirms the identity of the in-group – those with power and handy rhetoric – but we can go a little further than this, because social exclusion confirms and realizes essentialism (Young, 1999b, p. 117).

Excluding the Roma community results in a cyclical reaction; the more a group is excluded the easier it is to essentialise them. The participants' responses towards the Roma community fit with the three forms of essentialism discussed by Young (2007). Firstly, it reaffirms the personal values and qualities of the in-group; secondly the stereotyping of others as not having these values, and thirdly those

who have been essentialised and 'othered' will harden their image to prevent the feeling of exclusion. All of which have been seen throughout this research study.

This process has often also been experienced by the youth gang members. The young people who themselves are often essentialised by people outside the community, e.g. other youth gangs; but they in turn apply this to the Roma community as a means of re-asserting their strength and identity.

The essentialising of others, as carried out by the young people, and to a lesser, though significant, extent by the community members towards the Roma community, allows prejudices and community understandings to be more assertive and definite. The young people and community members used examples of child prostitution, of mugging elderly people and stealing from charity shops as examples of unacceptable behaviour carried out by the Roma community. There was little reflection upon who, why and whether such actions were happening. Rather there was a positing of the generalised 'other' who were held guilty of such behaviours, with this being used to reinforce their difference, whilst simultaneously unifying the predominantly white communities.

Overall Conclusion

The agreement between the youth gang and the local community is based partly on the creation of symbolic and physical boundaries with people or communities deemed to be outsiders. These boundaries are not created by the youth gang as a spur of the moment act of aggression or deviance. Instead, they are learned social norms that are often passed through generations. They provide a unity and cohesion with the in-group whilst excluding and often stigmatising the out-group. This does not mean the youth gang is controlled or manipulated by a determining group of community members, more often than not they pick up on societal norms, and at times, act on these to ensure both their own and the community's, security and sense of identity.

Segregation can be based on race or territory, or potentially on a range of other defining traits, but essentially it creates an in-group similarity and an out-group who is deemed as different and is seen as acting against the prevailing social norms, values and often sensibilities. This, of course, is twofold. The youth group maintain similarity and identity by coalescing together as a gang in order to retain the outsider's respect, fear or simply validation by acting in certain ways which reinforce their identity and their area boundaries. The second level is where the community members provide the initial knowledge of boundaries, and/or conversely of those who are deemed to be outsiders, with the result that the young people concretise the broader community's sense of cohesion.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Conclusions

This conclusion will draw out the evidence from my findings in order to answer the central research question – What is the agreement between youth gangs in two areas of Glasgow and their local communities? I will also refer to the subsidiary research questions posed – What is a youth gang? What is the agreement between youth gangs and the police? And what is the agreement between the youth gang and those outside the community?

The physical, social and economic context of the two research areas was presented at the beginning of the thesis through statistical evidence and subjective reflections. Both areas are severely deprived, experiencing multiple levels of deprivation; both have high levels of unemployment, crime, alcohol and drug misuse, poor health and low levels of educational attainment and income. In addition, area two has been subject to ongoing social and demographic change, and while area one has had greater stability, its surrounding area is increasingly becoming gentrified. This presents stark contrasts of poverty and relative affluence.

The evidence from this study supports the findings of Thrasher (1927); Fagan (1996) and Hagedorn and Macon (1988) that structural issues and high levels of disadvantage, such as those described, play a major role in creating the circumstances for gang formation and maintenance. Similarly, Patrick (1973), writing of Glasgow, noted that gangs were maintained by the combination of poverty and lack of economic or social opportunities. My research confirms this proposition.

It has also been made clear that gangs are not a new phenomenon within the research areas. Although no interviewee was able to date their beginning, and while the gang form may have adapted and changed over time, it was apparent

that the gang itself was a recognised and acknowledged entity within the community, linking the gang with its community context. The evidence gathered confirms that the experience of economic deprivation and lack of opportunities can contribute to feelings of ontological insecurity and the need for alternative means of identity formation, which can in part explain gang formation. While, this may be experienced at the community level it is particularly acute for young people in disadvantaged areas who do not have the same access to the, albeit limited, opportunities that adults within the community have. Consequently, in both research areas, for certain young people, the already pre-existing gang entity is seen as a valid means of developing an identity.

The Entity of the Gang

While gang formation is by no means confined to young people, this is the focus of my research, and the evidence gathered has enabled me to present the following definition of a youth gang:

A youth gang is a social process in which a named grouping of young people actively identify with a defined geographical space, is willing to affirm and defend this space through symbolic and physical means and is recognised by others.

The elements of the definition were corroborated by the participant interviews and have been considered in detail above. However, in order to provide insight into the core research question it is important to note that the young gang is not solely about individual identity creation due to feelings of ontological insecurity; rather, the youth gang is inextricably linked to the community in a number of interlinking and complex ways. It is these linkages that form the basis for the agreement(s) between the youth gang and the local community. Communities are not homogeneous however, and any agreement with the youth gang will differ between the 'in-group' within the community, which has closer relationships with the youth gang members, and those in the community that are more removed from the youth gang. The study also recognises that local communities exist within a

broader society, and the institutions that society puts in place, such as policing. It is thus important to present research considerations that take account of this complexity of relationships. For this reason the findings are analysed and presented to take account of three levels-

- 1) The relationship between the youth gang and the community in-group;
- 2) The relationship between the youth gang and the broader community;
- 3) The relationship between the youth gang and a major societal institution, the police.

Final conclusions on the nature of the agreement will be derived from the three levels of analysis.

The Relationship between the Youth Gang and the Community In-group

It is clear from the research findings that young people inherited the youth gang entity within their community rather than creating it. It was already a normalised entity making membership a tangible and accessible option for young people who lacked alternative opportunities for identity creation, or who felt the need for a form of greater collective security. The fact that the gang is a pre-existing entity, which is recognised by community members, demonstrates that young people, in actively associating with the gang, were also identifying with their community history and a broader community in-group. Figure three below, summarises aspects of the nature of this relationship.

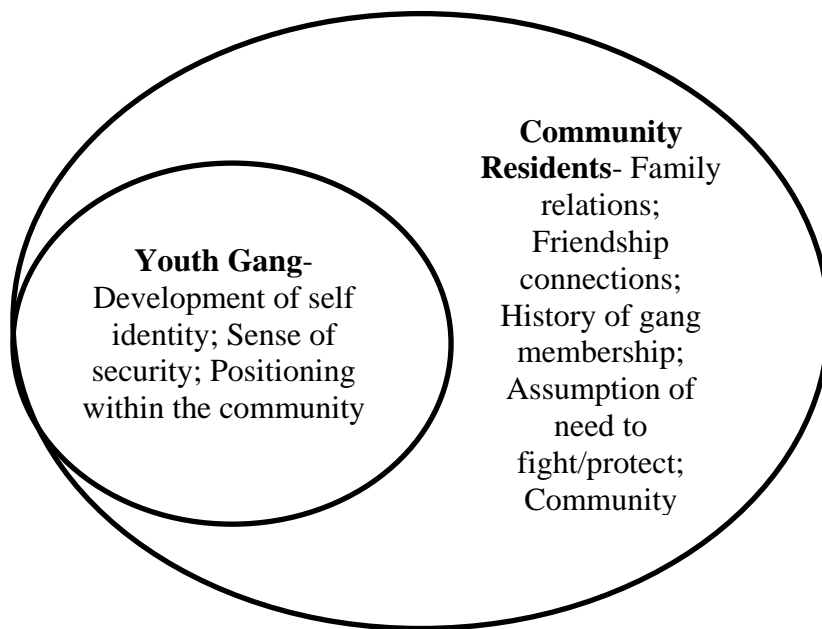


Figure 3- Community In-Group

The fact that community members accept the existence of gangs, and contribute to a community narrative drawn from the local history of gang membership, frames the situation whereby young people can see the gang as creating a space for them to position themselves within the local community. This history has included fighting and aggressive behaviours that are often synonymous with gang identification. While the community in-group do not necessarily actively encourage young people to engage in such behaviours, they do tacitly endorse some of the gang actions and behaviours.

One of the endorsed behaviours is the creation of an in-group against outsiders. Decker and Van Winkle (1996) found that the threat from outsiders, whether real or perceived, increases the sense of solidarity and thus the identity, of the gang. This thesis finds that it is not just the solidarity of the gang that is increased but the subsequent identity and solidarity of the created in-group, which includes both gang members and the community in-group.

The fact that both the young people and the community in-group experience feelings of ontological insecurity due to the 'othering' faced from the broader society due to their circumstances of deprivation means that community identity becomes important. Community identity is defined by both physical and symbolic boundaries, which are negotiated by the broader community but are protected and defended by the members of the current youth gang. The findings presented included one reported incident where a community was known by the

name of the youth gang, rather than the official area name. That the young people did not know the official name of their area suggests that other community members have also used the gang name as an identifier of their area. The gang names are ingrained within the social discourse thus demonstrating the inextricable link between the youth gang and the local community. The use of the gang name over the official area name also highlights the explicit recognition of the gang's existence within the community.

As the definition of the youth gang states, the gang is located within a defined geographical space, and a preparedness to defend this space against outsiders means that the gang must have a community to identify with and in turn, one to be differentiated from. This differentiation in both research areas is based on the recognition of symbolic and physical boundaries whereby people or communities are deemed to be outsiders. This is the foundational basis of the agreement with the community – parts of the geographical community and the youth gang are constituted as an in-group, posed against an 'othered' outsider. The youth gang maintains community identity by grouping together to ensure the outsider's respect, fear or recognition, thus reinforcing their identity and the boundaries of the area. The people deemed to be outsiders are not solely identified by the youth gang; rather they are drawing on the feelings and understanding of the broader community in-group.

The differentiation of outsiders creates a unity and cohesion with the in-group whilst excluding and often stigmatising the out-group. This is rooted in learned social norms that are often passed through generations. The literature highlighted that this response towards outsiders is often understood and at times tolerated by sections of the community (Horowitz, 1987, Foster, 1995).

Although in area one the differentiation was primarily based on territorial allegiances, in area two differentiations were based on both territoriality and race. The creation of the out-group was evident when speaking to the youth gang members but was often promoted, encouraged and actively created by the broader community, in-group. This racial segregation was based on cultural essentialism and ensured that the expressed values of the in-group were normalised.

One way that the youth gang responded towards outsiders was through fighting. This was generally directed towards other groups of young people from neighbouring areas, but is linked to the normalisation of these behaviours within the community. Both Decker and Van Winkle (1996) and Aldridge et al (2007) note the normalisation of violence among urban youth. This thesis found that while there was a normalisation of fighting to protect and maintain an identity there was no evidence that random acts of violence on the part of the youth gang were normalised. Community members were aware that the youth gang, in particular, would be confronted with, or involved in, physical aggression. There was an expectation of violent behaviour from the young people and adults. While some residents feared for their children's safety if they became involved in aggressive behaviour, they recognised the constant real or perceived, threat of violence and spoke of the need for young people to be able to protect themselves and those close to them. The community residents at times perpetuated and normalised urban violence as a method of protection. They are thus unwittingly promoting these behaviours as a means for identity creation, expected response and consequently the continued existence of the youth gang.

Fighting with others was generally placed in a framework of protection, particularly by the young people themselves. Engaging in conflict was promoted as a means to protect personal identity. It was often socially expected that a young man, in particular, would defend himself if challenged. This defence was both to protect his physical person against attack, but also his reputation, honour and thus his identity from being attacked. Equally it was normally expected that the young person would defend and protect family members and vice versa. There was a requirement to ensure that the identity and security, of those whom the gang had a reciprocal relationship with, was not undermined. Thus the evidence suggests that the protection framework is important for the broader community in-group. The young people felt that by engaging in conflict with outsiders they were not only protecting their personal identity, but that of the gang, their families and the broader community identity. In this context members of the community in-group did understand, and at times promoted, fighting with outsiders. As outlined in chapter ten, there is an implicit permission given to the

youth gang members to act in a way they feel protects their community due to the joint ‘othering’ of outsiders based on the similarity of views and sentiments within the in-group. Essentially there is support for the underlying rationale to the actions taken.

Finally, the nature of the family and friendship relationships that many of the community in-group have with the youth gang members was important. Some residents even deliberately established and maintained relations with the youth gang to ensure connections to the community in-group. Those who do not maintain a reciprocal relationship with the youth gang or the broader community in-group will often be treated with mistrust. This thus directly links to the agreement between the youth gang and their local community. The youth gang are a part of the community in-group and as such are an informal structure, a recognised entity within the community. However it is the members of the community in-group who influence the young people as to who they should, and/or should not, engage negatively with. The youth gang have parameters as to who should not be treated negatively, e.g. the elderly, children and people they or their connections have social bonds with; known groups are protected. Thus the youth gang symbolically, and at times physically, represents the norms, views, feelings and discourses of sections of their broader community. The community members do not necessarily advocate the aggressive or derogatory behaviour at times performed by the youth gang, but there is a tacit, underlying agreement that encourages young gang members to feel that they are acting within an accepted community ethos and history.

Relationship between the Youth Gang and the Broader Community

Ben-Yehuda (2009) noted that society is multi-faceted, thus the created in-group does not involve the whole community. The in-group is seen within the geographical location of the research areas, but as is particularly clear in area two, does not include everyone within that locality. Rather it is those who have a form of reciprocal relations with the youth gang members or have been accounted and accredited for by members of the in-group. There was an acceptance that one way

for young people to be a part of the broader in-group was to join the youth gang. This provided them with an identity and demonstrated their allegiance to the area.

While community residents differed in opinion about the self-perceived protective role of the youth gang, there was a broad recognition of the existence of the gang and an acknowledgement of gang activity in the narrative of the community history. Figure four summarises the relationship between the youth gang and the broader community.

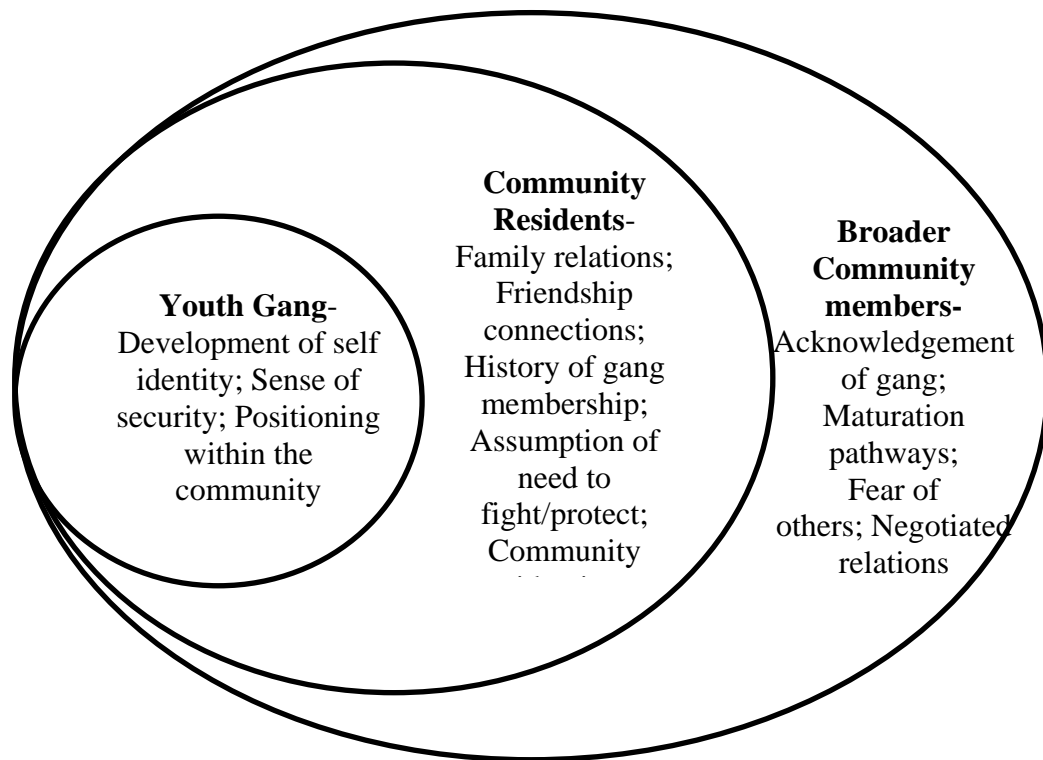


Figure 4- Broader Community Members

Interviews with members of the broader community suggested that they were less accepting of the current gang role and behaviour. There was more of a sense of judgement and consideration of the actual impact of the behaviour of the youth gang. Notwithstanding this however, there was still an element of understanding, and at times, promotion, of gang actions based on the joint differentiation of others. Many residents in area two essentialised the Roma community because they were seen as threatening the ontological security of the traditional, established, white residents. The youth gang members, knowing that their community treated these people as outsiders, felt it necessary to engage in conflict with them to 'protect' the community. Although the gang are not on the whole explicitly asked to adopt this position, the actions taken have been normalised in other guises and they rarely face criticism for their willingness to both symbolically and physically defend their territory.

Given this situation the youth gang unsurprisingly correlate the identity of the gang and the community. Many people noted in area two that when the youth gang were not actively fighting over the symbolically created boundaries, the area went downhill. There was also mention of the youth gang coming under verbal attack from neighbouring youth gangs because area two had an influx of migrants. The underlying sentiment was that if the youth gang could not keep these people from the area then they could not defend their territory against other outsiders. Importantly though, this sentiment was also apparent from the comments of community members. The influx of outsiders was seen as threatening in terms of their ontological security as well as being an attack on their values and culture. The acceptance of the role of the gang in certain circumstances, alongside its rejection in others, enhanced the level of ambivalence in the agreement between the youth gang members and their broader community.

One specific role with regard to the members of the broader community was offering pathways based on maturation to the youth gang members. The evidence shows that young people identified with the gang at different stages in their life and the membership of the gang was neither fixed nor static. The identification with the gang was often dependent on the alternative opportunities available to young people. If there were other, more tangible or beneficial ways of gaining an

identity within the community, then gang identification may not be required. As discovered this often correlates with the age of the young person, though not exclusively. More opportunities are generally available to people as they get older and thus the identification with the gang, and its behaviours, is no longer as important. The contribution of broader community members in making available such opportunities and in recognising the maturing young person as a young adult, as well as expectations of appropriate behaviour, is important.

The findings have also highlighted that the relationship between members of the broader community and the youth gang is often mediated through the influence and connections of the community in-group. Consequently the agreed norms for gang behaviour are critical in framing the context of how the youth gang will relate to the broader community. If these norms are breached, from either side, repercussions may follow. The evidence presented on both the youth gangs and community relations with the police highlight this finding.

Relationship between the Youth Gang and the Police

There is much ambivalence in the relationship between the police, as a power holding institution in society, the local community and the youth. The police are fundamentally seen as outsiders. The community residents and youth gang members both begin from a premise of mistrust towards them. There is also a joint societal norm in both the communities studied that 'grassing' is generally not tolerated. Community residents perpetuate a fear of negative repercussions for 'grassing', thus augmenting the reluctance to report incidents to the police.

However, at times the police are required by both the youth gang members and the in-group and broader community members - creating an ambivalent and somewhat ambiguous relationship. Their power and access to external resources, unattainable by the community in-group, is needed if an incident is deemed serious or beyond the 'remit' and control of the gang and the community. Generally though, the 'community line' is that the police are outsiders and should not be involved, publicly, with community matters. Where such involvement

does occur it is often based on maintaining the anonymity of the community informant.

Figure five below captures the relationship with the police:

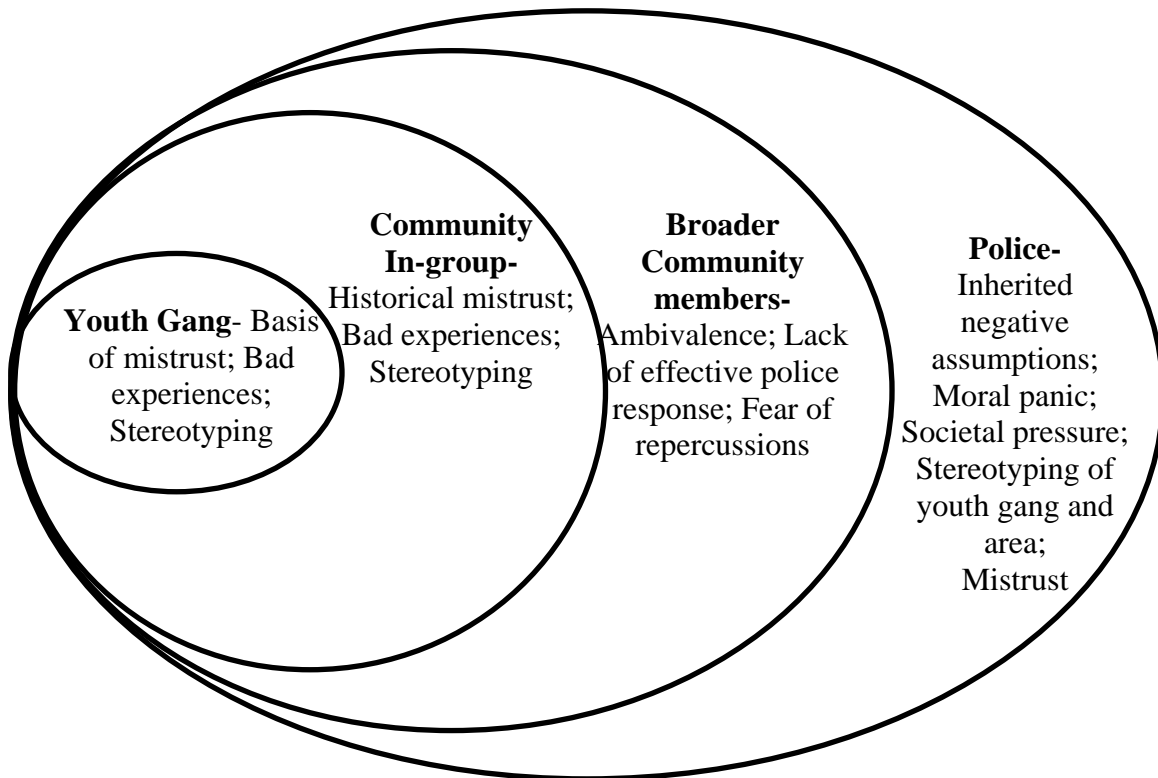


Figure 5- Relationship with Police

While the evidence did suggest the positive nature of community policing, this was limited due to the lack of continuity and consistency of provision reported by interviewees. Mutual mistrust, particularly on the part of the youth gang members and the community in-group and the police, was the dominant position.

Although the youth gang members and the community are prepared to call on the services of the police in certain clearly defined circumstances, it remains true that within areas of multiple deprivations there is a commonly held perception of a lack of access to effective protective structures. Thus as the literature explained,

alternative protective structures often emerge on a self-help basis. This is exemplified throughout the thesis. Many community members anticipate that their children will face violent encounters and thus promote the need for personal protective mechanisms. If the young people do not demonstrate this capability then they risk being stripped of personal agency. However, apart from individual strategies and capabilities for protection, there remains the collective option of gang membership. While not all young people chose this route it remains a normalised way to both enhance personal security and to gain an identity within the community. On a negative basis, the findings also show that gang members are 'othered' by youth gangs from other areas and are stereotyped by the police, thus becoming regular victims of police power. This creates a cyclical relationship of negativity which augments the feelings of 'othering' and being 'othered'.

From the point of view of the police there is an inherited history of negative relationships with both gangs and deprived communities, which at best are ambiguous, and at worst are adversarial. There is also the wider societal pressure that is asserted during times of moral panic and political blame which augments the negative stereotyping of youth gangs and demands strong police action to be taken against the young people deemed to be involved with them. The over use of police powers then serves to increase the cycle of mutual stereotyping and alienation. This, in turn, puts more pressure on the broader community to be seen as distancing themselves from the police except in situations of crisis.

The Agreement between Youth Gangs and their Local Community

The core issue with this research poses the question as to the agreement between youth gangs and their local community. Figure six demonstrates the conditions and context which allows the agreement between the youth gang, the community in-group, the broader community and societal institutions e.g. the police, to exist.

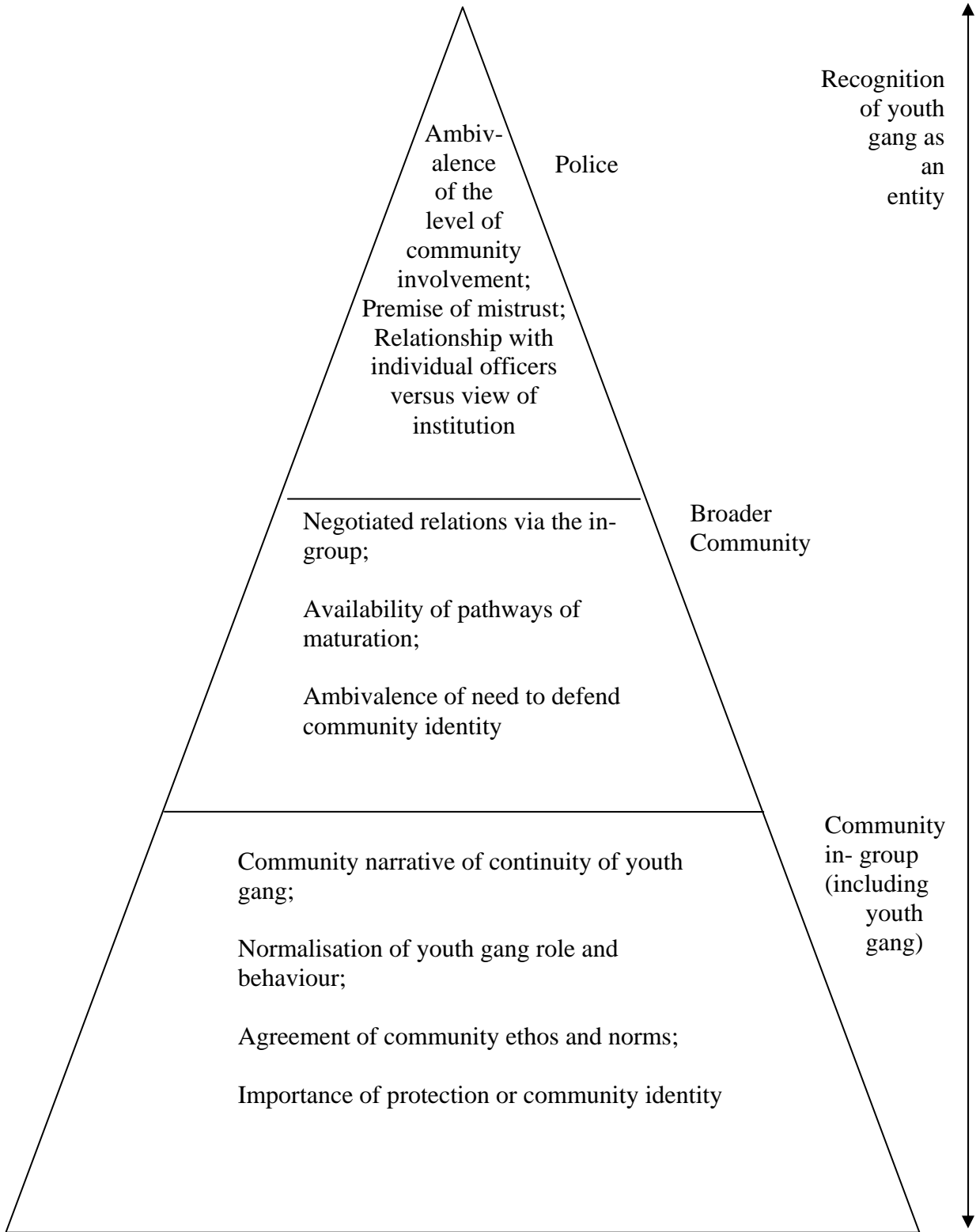


Figure 6- The Nature of the Multi-level Agreements

The one element that relates to all levels of the diagram is the common recognition of the youth gang as a local entity; and while all the other elements noted at each of the three levels have already been referred to above, the main focus of this research remains on the analysis provided within levels one and two - the community in-group and broader community, which encompasses the context for the agreement between the youth gang and their local community. However the level of ambivalence in the nature of the agreement increases as one moves from the bottom to the top of the representational pyramid, i.e. there is less ambivalence between the youth gang and the community in-group than between the youth gang and the broader community; whilst the level of ambivalence with regard to relationships with the police (as institutional representatives of the state) is the most pronounced. Clearly the findings establish that the agreement between the youth gang and their local community is one of tacit endorsement. The acceptance and normalisation of particular behaviours and the creation of community unity against those deemed to be outsiders is acted upon by the young people as a means to establish an identity within the community which itself has a history of gang activity. For the young people being a part of the gang is to be a part of the community. The aggressive reaction to 'othered' outsiders is also inherited as a means of protecting community identity. This reaction is not just in the psyche of the young people, but is also tacitly endorsed by the community residents, and particularly by the community in-group. The generalised joint 'othering' from the residents, who are considered to be in the in-group, emphasises to the youth gang the need to react negatively with outsiders. The findings also show that the broader community can also 'other' outsiders when they feel they are threatening their community territory, values and security, as is the case with regard to the Roma residents in area two. However, it is the youth gang who proactively translate such tacit permissions into the practical protection of the physical and symbolic identity of their community.

The need for protection and 'othering' occurs because of the real or perceived lack of protection provided by external agents. Examples include - governmental institutions that have not provided opportunities for employment; the criminal

justice system that is seen as unfairly and systematically targeting the community; and the ethnic migrants who are viewed as taking over the area and undermining the local identity. Thus, due to a generalised feeling of ontological insecurity born from a lack of distributive justice and justice of recognition, the community adopts alternative means of protection through normalisation of the youth gang role and activities.

Although aspects of the agreement are implicit rather than explicit the fact that the community in-group has the power to influence the members of the youth gang concerning the parameters of their behaviour is an important dimension in the research findings. Clearly this is based on a reciprocal relationship whereby the in-group also displays certain protective reactions with regard to the youth gang members, e.g. not 'grassing' to the police and justifying even violent actions in certain circumstances. This accepted reciprocity in relations serves to confirm the established and acknowledged status of the gang entity itself. On the other hand, when applied to the broader community members, the tacit and implicit nature of the agreement in existence can serve to increase ambivalence. The youth gang also have a degree of power by inflicting negative repercussions on those community members, within the broader community, that are seen to be in breach of the agreement e.g. by providing information to external agencies such as the police, unless in accepted circumstances that have already been referred to.

The theoretical insight of 'othering' is important as this provides a conceptual linkage between the youth gang and their local community. Deprived communities, such as those in the two study areas, as well as the youth gang members themselves, have neither benefited from justice of resource/ economic distribution nor from the justice of recognition by broader society and societal institutions. Consequently, in contrast to more affluent areas, community members in areas of deprivation feel ontologically insecure due to the 'othering' experienced from broader society as a result of their status of disadvantage and marginalisation. The agreement between the local community and the youth gang is premised in this shared circumstances of being 'othered', with local reaction being to both consolidate a sense of community identity, based on shared perceptions, geography and values, as well as to 'other' those that are deemed as

different. The major policy issue that this dynamic gives rise to was noted by Chris, one of the youth worker interviewees, who spoke in terms of the structural implications of class and ethnicity. Despite this, the primary community focus involved in 'othering' was on the horizontal allocation of perceived power and opportunities within disadvantaged communities, be these geographic communities or communities of interest, which targeted both the Roma residents and neighbouring areas as being more immediately identifiable and accessible.

The youth gang members clearly see their own role and legitimacy within a local community context given the historical roots of the latter and the continuing relevance of the need to protect the community identity, related as it is to the identity of the gang and individual gang members. This creates a mutually reinforcing multi-faceted sense of identity which is tacitly endorsed by the broader community. While individual gang members often mature out of this role, the evidence shows that their place in the gang will be inherited by the next generation. If this inter-generational cycle is to be broken there needs to be a sustained and committed societal intervention to create alternative pathways for identity formation; the assurance of individual security; and a challenging of current social processes so that mainstream stereotypes and 'othering' of deprived communities are not acceptable. Failing this the implicit, but powerful, agreement between youth gangs and their local communities in Glasgow is likely to continue.

Essentially then the nature of the agreement between the youth gang and their community is to protect the community identity and territory, within accepted physical and symbolic boundaries, and to carry out this task within parameters tacitly negotiated with the community in-group, who also provide a form of negotiated relationships with the broader community residents. The form of the agreement is tacit endorsement delivered most immediately by the community in-group, but on occasion reinforced by the community as a whole when the perceived community identity is seen as being threatened.

The importance of community collective identity is accentuated in circumstances where the community experience feelings of ontological insecurity due to the lack

of economic distributive justice and justice of recognition. The ambivalence of protection afforded to the community from external social institutions, such as the police, deepens this level of insecurity and existential tension. Neither the police nor other external institutions can be trusted to protect the community's space, history, culture or security. Consequently the continuing entity of the gang provides an alternative, if somewhat ambivalent and limited, protective role. The element of ambivalence relates to the fact that although community members acknowledge the existence of the youth gang and its role they may still have misgivings about its effectiveness, and at times, appropriateness. The youth gang, in the eyes of particularly the broader community, are not mature and are not necessarily controlled in their actions. Instead, the young people involved can often be violent and aggressive to each other, as well as to people internally within the community. This is particularly evident when the consumption of alcohol or drugs has occurred. When these actions take place outside the accepted protective framework, and particularly when directed against members of the community in-group, they are difficult to rationalise or understand. This explains why community members can simultaneously both tacitly endorse behaviours of youth gang members which, at other times, they criticise. It is the context within which these actions take place that is important.

However even where there are examples of negative behaviour demonstrated by the youth gang members, the community in-group will balance the need to censure the actions taken with their recognition of the role that the gang has in both protecting the community territory and, generally, the members of the in-group themselves. While the members of the broader community may be more ready to be critical, there is a shared local knowledge of the history of inter-generational gang activity, including the preparedness to fight, in order to protect the identity and existence of the community from attack. It is this that results in the community tolerating negative behaviour from the youth gang and tacitly endorsing their actions and thus maintaining the agreement that underpins their existence.

As Cohen (2007) noted: "The triumph of community is to so contain this variety that its inherent discordance does not subvert the apparent coherence which is

expressed by its boundaries” (A. P. Cohen, 2007, p. 20). Thus while the young people may engage in negative behaviours internally, the community must ensure that externally they are seen to have a unified group based on symbolically cohesive boundaries. This again consolidates why the community in-group may tolerate behaviours that people external to the community would see as intolerable. In a simplistic sense this may be viewed as a trade off. The youth gang adopt a role of protection and enforcement of created boundaries, thus ensuring the safety of the community in-group. These actions are tacitly endorsed by the community as without them there is a danger that their sense of unity is further challenged and attacked from those external to the community.

The cohesion created within the in-group explains in part why the gang is a generational entity, that has a rooted history within the community, and why many of the participants in this study believe that the gang entity will continue to exist. The gang itself is a protected entity within the community because of the recognised role that they have adopted and consistently performed.

To conclude, both communities within this study experience multiple levels of deprivation and are afforded limited opportunities by, and from, broader societal structures. In these circumstances there is an accentuated impetus to maintain the identity, security and safety of the community in-group, and by extension of the broader community, by the consolidation of available community resources, both physically and symbolically. Having an agreement with the youth gang offers a historically embedded means to physically protect the community boundaries and maintain identity. The community residents, as represented at core by the community in-group, acknowledge this capability and recognise the role that the youth gang fulfil, hence the tacit endorsement of their actions. For the youth gang members themselves there are both benefits and negatives in the role that is both ascribed to them and that they adopt, as they are limited to a struggle to maintain an identity within the micro levels of power that broader society has relegated them to. The opportunity to move beyond the frame of deprivation and the micro neighbourhood context remains curtailed and difficult for both the young people themselves and the communities that they seek to protect.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahern, K. J. (1999). Ten Tips for Reflexive Bracketing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(3), 407-411.
- Aldridge, J., Ralphs, R., & Medina, J. (2007). *Youth Gangs in an English City: Social Exclusion, Drugs and Violence*. Swindon: ESRC.
- Almond, B. (1995). Introduction: Ethical Theory and Ethical Practice. In B. Almond (Ed.), *Introducing Applied Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, S., Kinsey, R., Loader, I., & Smith, C. (1994). *Cautionary Tales: Young People, crime and policing in Edinburgh*. Aldershot: Avenbury, Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and Participant Observation. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 248-261).
- Ayer, A. J. (1959). *Logical Positivism*. Glencoe: Free Press.
- Ball, R. A., & Curry, G. D. (1995). The Logic of Definition in Criminology: Purposes and Methods for Defining "Gangs". *Criminology*, 33(2), 225-245.
- Barry, M. (2006). *Youth Offending in Transition: The Search for Social Recognition*. London: Routledge.
- Basit, T. N. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*, 42(2), 143-154.
- Batchelor, S. (2009). *Girls, Gangs and Violence: Assessing the Evidence*. Paper presented at the Day conference on Gangs, University of Liverpool.
- Batchelor, S. A., Burman, M. J., & Brown, J. A. (2001). Discussing Violence: Lets hear it from the girls. *Probation Journal*, 48(2), 125-134.
- Beauvoir, S. D. (1953). *The Second Sex*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsides, Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press.
- Becker, H. S. (1964). *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Bell, D. (1987). Acts of Union: Youth Sub-Culture and Ethnic Identity amongst Protestants in Northern Ireland *The British Journal of Sociology*, 38(2), 158-183.
- Ben-Yehuda, N. (2009). Moral Panic-36 years on. *British Journal of Criminology*, 49, 1-3.
- Bennett, A. (2000). *Popular Music and Youth Culture: music identity and place*. London: MacMillan.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of knowledge*. London: The Penguin Press.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism, Perspective and Method*. London: University of California Press Ltd.
- Bourdieu, P. (1997). The Forms of Capital. In L. H. a. W. A. Halsey. A (Ed.), *Education- Culture, Economy and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University press.

- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. California: Sage Publications
- Bovill, M., & Livingstone, S. (2001). Bedroom Culture and the Privatization of Bedroom Use. In M. Bovill & S. Livingstone (Eds.), *Children and Their Changing Media Environment: A European Comparative Study*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brent, J. (2004). The desire for community: Illusion, confusion and paradox. *Community Development Journal*, 39(3), 213-223.
- Brewer, J. D. (2000). *Ethnography*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Brubaker, R. (2002). Ethnicity without groups. *European Journal of Sociology*, 43(2), 163-189.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods: Third Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., & Burgess, R. G. (1994). Developments in qualitative data analysis: an introduction. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bursik, R. J., & Grasmick, H. G. (1993). *Neighborhoods and Crime: The Dimensions of Effective Community Control*. California: Lexington Books.
- Cameron, D. (2011, August 15). *PM's Speech on the Fightback After the Riots*. Retrieved from <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-on-the-fightback-after-the-riots/>.
- Carr, P. J., Napolitano, L., & Keating, J. (2007). We Never Call the Cops and Here Is Why: A Qualitative Examination of Legal Cynicism in Three Philadelphia Neighbourhoods. *Criminology*, 45(2), 445-480.
- Carrell, S. (2011, August 21). Glasgow Gangs Fade Away as Anti-Violence Campaign Takes Hold. *The Guardian*, Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011>.
- Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory, A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage publications.
- Charmaz, K., & Mitchell, R. G. (2001). Grounded Theory in Ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.
- CIRV (2009). CIRV 1st year report Retrieved 3rd June, 2010
- Clough, P., & Nutbrown, C. (2002). *A Student's Guide to Methodology*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Cohen, A. (1955). *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*. New York: Macmillan.
- Cohen, A. P. (2007). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, P. (1980). Structural conflict and working-class community. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Publishers Ltd.
- Cohen, S. (1971). *Images of Deviance*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Cohen, S. (1973). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. St. Albans: Paladin.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3-21.

- Crawford, A. (2009). Criminalizing Sociability through Anti-social Behaviour Legislation: Dispersal Powers, Young People and the Police. *Youth Justice*, 9(1), 5-26.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Curry, D., & Spergel, I. A. (1988). Gang Homicide, Delinquency, and Community. *Criminology*, 26(3), 381-405.
- Davies, A. (2000). Sectarian Violence and Police Violence in Glasgow during the 1930s. In R. Bessel & C. Emsley (Eds.), *Patterns of Provocation: Police and Public Disorder*. New York: Berhahn Books.
- Davies, A. (2007a). Glasgow's 'Reign of terror': Street Gangs, Racketeering and intimidation in the 1920s and 1930s. *Contemporary British History*, 21(4), 405-427.
- Davies, A. (2007b). The Scottish Chicago? From 'Hooligans' to 'Gangsters' in Inter-War Glasgow. *Cultural and Social History*, 4(4), 511-527.
- Decker, S. H., & Winkle, B. V. (1996). *Life in the Gang: Family, Friends, and Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Delanty, G. (2003). *Community* London: Routledge.
- Denscombe (2002). *Ground Rules for Good Research, A 10 Point Guide for Social Researchers*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide, for small-scale social research projects* (Third Edition ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Deuchar, R. (2008). 'We need to cross to the other side and there are gangs there...!' A study of social capital, gangs and marginalised youth in Glasgow. Paper presented at the ECER.
- Deuchar, R. (2009a). *Gang culture and the re-engagement of young people through a new diversionary initiative*: University of Strathclyde.
- Deuchar, R. (2009b). *Gangs, Marginalised Youth and Social Capital* London: Trentham Books Limited.
- Diener, E., & Crandall, R. (1978). *Ethics in Social and Behavioural Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Downes, D. M. (1966). *The Delinquent Solution: A Study in Subcultural Theory*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Erikson, K. T. (1964). Notes on the Sociology of Deviance. In H. S. Becker (Ed.), *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Fagan, J. (1989). The Social Organization of Drug Use and Drug Dealing Among Urban Gangs. *Criminology*, 27, 633-670.
- Fagan, J. (1996). Gangs, Drugs, and Neighborhood Change. In C. R. Huff (Ed.), *Gangs in America: Second Edition*. California: SAGE Publications.
- Ferrell, J. (2004). Boredom, Crime and Criminology. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8(3), 287-302.
- Ferrell, J., Hayward, K., & Young, J. (2008). *Cultural Criminology, An Invitation*. London: SAGE Publications Inc.
- FitzGerald, M. (2008). 'Gangs' - a UK perspective. Unpublished Lecture. University of Kent.
- Foster, J. (1995). Informal Social Control and Community Crime Prevention. *British Journal of Criminology*, 35(4), 563-583.

- France, A. (2004). Young People. In S. Fraser, V. Lewis, S. Ding, M. Kellett & C. Robinson (Eds.), *Doing Research with Children and Young People*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Fylan, F. (2005). Semi-structured Interviewing In J. Miles & P. Gilbert (Eds.), *A Handbook of Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Gallagher, M. (2009). Ethics. In E. K. M. Tisdall, J. M. Davies & M. Gallagher (Eds.), *Researching with Children and Young People: Research Design, Methods and Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Garland, D. (2008). On the concept of moral panic. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 4, 9-30.
- Gemert, F. V., & Fleisher, M. S. (2005). In the Grip of the Group. In S. H. Decker & F. M. Weerman (Eds.), *European Street Gangs and Troublesome Youth Groups*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Glaser, B. (1992). *Emergence vs Forcing: Basics of Grounded theory Analysis*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Glaser, B. G. (2002). Constructivist Grounded Theory? *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(3), Art. 12.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday life*. London: Allen Lane The penguin Press.
- Gold, R. L. (1958). Roles in Sociological Field Observations. *Social Forces*, 36(3), 217-223.
- Goldson, B. (2011). Youth in Crisis? In B. Goldson (Ed.), *Youth in Crisis? 'Gangs', territoriality and violence*. London: Routledge.
- Grove, N. J., & Zwi, A. B. (2006). Our health and theirs: Forced migration, 'othering', and public health. *Social Science & Medicine* 62 1931-1942.
- Hagedorn, J. M. (1991). Gangs, Neighbourhoods, and Public Policy. *Social Problems*, 38(4), 529-541.
- Hagedorn, J. M., & Macon, P. (1988). *People and Folks. Gangs, Crime and the Underclass in a Rustbelt City*. Chicago: Lake View Press.
- Hallsworth, S., & Young, T. (2008). Gang talk and gang talkers: A critique. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 4(2), 175-195.
- Hayward, K., & Young, J. (2004). Cultural Criminology: Some Notes on the Script. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8(3), 259-285.
- Heir, S. P. (2008). Thinking beyond moral panic: Risk, responsibility, and the politics of moralization. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12(2), 173-190.
- Hinds, L. (2007). Building Police-Youth Relationships: The Importance of Procedural Justice. *The National Association for youth justice*, 7(3), 195-209.
- Hobbs, D. (2001). Ethnography and the Study of Deviance. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hodkinson, P. (2005). 'Insider Research' in the Study of Youth Cultures. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8(2), 131-149.

- Horowitz, R. (1987). Community Tolerance of Gang Violence. *Society for the Study of Social Problems*, 34(5), 437-450.
- Hurst, Y. G., Frank, J., & Browning, S. L. (2000). The attitudes of juveniles toward the police: A comparison of black and white youth. *An international Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 23(1), 37-53.
- Husserl, E. (1989). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*. Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Ilan, J. (2007a). *Still playing the game: an ethnography of young people, street crime and juvenile justice in the inner-city Dublin community*. Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin.
- Ilan, J. (2007b). *Young people and street crime in an inner city Dublin community, An ethnographic approach*. Paper presented at the Young People and Crime: Research, Policy and Practice, Dublin Institute of Technology.
- Jankowski, M. S. (1991). *Islands in the Street, Gangs and American Urban Society*. Oxford: University of California Press.
- Jankowski, M. S. (2003). Gangs and Social Change. *Theoretical Criminology*, 7(2), 191-216.
- Jenkins, R. (1983). *Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids, Working-Class Youth Life-Styles in Belfast*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul plc.
- Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social Identity: Third Edition*. London: Routledge.
- Jeon, Y.-H. (2004). The application of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Science*, 18(3), 249-256.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Kane, S. C. (2004). The Unconventional Methods of Cultural Criminology. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8(3), 303-321.
- Kelbie, P. (2006). The Streets of Scotland: Britain's knife capital. *The Independent*,
- Kinnvall, C. (2004). Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security. *Political Psychology*, 25(5), 741-767.
- Kintrea, K., Bannister, J., & Pickering, J. (2011). 'It's Just an area - everybody represents it' : Exploring young people's territorial behaviour in British cities. In B. Goldson (Ed.), *Youth in Crisis? 'Gangs', territoriality and violence*.
- Kintrea, K., Bannister, J., Pickering, J., Reid, M., & Suzuki, N. (Oct 2008). *Young People and Territoriality in British Cities*: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Laing, R. D. (1961). *Self and Others*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Laing, R. D. ([1960] 1990). *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*. London: Penguin Books.
- Lien, I.L. (2005). Criminal Gangs and Their Connections: Metaphors, Definitions, and Structures. In S. H. Decker & F. M. Weerman (Eds.), *European Street Gangs and Troublesome Youth Groups*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Locke, J. (1988). *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1995). *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis, Third Edition*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

- MacAskill, K. (2008). Scottish Government: Gang Violence Retrieved 1st June, 2010
- MacDonald, R. (1997). Youth, Social Exclusion and the Millenium. In R. MacDonald (Ed.), *Youth, the 'Underclass' and Social Exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- MacMillan, K., & Koenig, T. (2004). The Wow Factor: Preconceptions and Expectations for Data Analysis Software in Qualitative Research. *Social Science Computer Review*, 22, 179-186.
- Mantzoukas, S. (2005). The Inclusion of bias in reflective and reflexive research: A necessary prerequisite for securing validity. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 10(3), 279-295.
- Matza, D. (1969). *Becoming Deviant*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- May, T. (1997). *Social Research, Issues, Methods and Process: Second Edition*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- May, T. (2001). *Social Research, Issues, Methods and Process* (Third Edition ed.). Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Mays, J. B. (1956). *Growing Up In The City: A Study of Juvenile Delinquency in an Urban Neighbourhood*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- McAlister, S., Scraton, P., & Haydon, D. (2010). Place, territory and young people's identity in the 'new' Northern Ireland. In B. Goldson (Ed.), *Youth in Crisis? 'Gangs', territory and violence*. London: Routledge.
- McAra, L., & McVie, S. (2005). The Usual Suspects?: Street-life, young people and the police. *Criminal Justice*, 5(5), 5-36.
- McCann, J. (2008). £187M to bring slum homes in city up to scratch. Retrieved 12th January 2009 from <http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/pound-187m-to-bring-slum-homes-in-city-up-to-scratch-1.961096>:
- McCulloch, K., Stewart, A., & Lovegreen, N. (2006). 'We just hang out together': Youth Cultures and Social Class. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(5), 539-556.
- McKay, S. L., & Wong, S.-L. C. (1996). Multiple Discourses, Multiple Identities: Investment and Agency in Second-Language Learning among Chinese Adolescent Immigrant Students *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 577-609.
- McRobbie, A., & Thornton, S. (1995). Rethinking 'Moral Panic' for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds. In A. McRobbie (Ed.), *Feminism and Youth Culture*. Basingstoke: MacMillan Press.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Merton, R. K. (1938). Social Structure and Anomie. *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), 672-682.
- Merton, R. K. (1957). *Social Theory & Social Structure*. New York: The Free Press.
- Merton, R. K. (1967). *On Theoretical Sociology: Five Essays, Old and New*. New York: The Free Press.
- Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social Structure and Social Science* (Enlarged Edition ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications*. California: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Muncie, J. (2000). Youth Victimisation. *Criminal Justice Matters*, 41(1), 20-21
- Murray, C. (1990). *The Emerging British Underclass* London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

- Nightingale, C. (1993). *On the Edge*. New York: Basic Books.
- Parker, H. J. (1974). *View From The Boys: A Sociology of Down-Town Adolescents*. London: David & Charles.
- Patrick, J. (1973). *A Glasgow Gang Observed*. London: Methuen.
- Pearson, G. (1983). *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears*. London: The MacMillan Press LTD.
- Peirce, B. N. (1995). Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning. *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Quarterly*, 49(1), 9-31.
- Pitts, J. (2007). *Reluctant Gangsters: Youth Gangs in Waltham Forest Bedfordshire*: University of Bedfordshire.
- Pitts, J. (2008). *Reluctant Gangsters: The Changing Shape of Youth Crime*. Devon: Willan Publishing.
- Pitts, J. (2010). Mercenary Territory: Are youth gangs really a problem? . In B. Goldson (Ed.), *Youth in Crisis? 'Gangs', territoriality and violence*. London: Routledge.
- Pitts, J., & Matthews, R. (2001). Introduction: Beyond Criminology. In J. Pitts & R. Matthews (Eds.), *Crime, Disorder and Community Safety: A New Agenda?* London: Routledge.
- Presdee, M. (2004). Cultural Criminology:: The Long and Winding Road. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8(3), 275-285.
- Puntenney, D. L. (1997). The Impact of Gang Violence on the Decisions of Everyday Life: Disjunctions Between Policy Assumptions and Community Conditions. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 19(2), 143-161.
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, R., & Feldstein, L. (2003). *Better together- Restoring the American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rock, P. (2001). Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Scheper-Hughes, N. (2000). Ire in Ireland. *Ethnography*, 1(1), 117-140.
- Scheper-Hughes, N. (2001). *Saints, Scholars and Schizophrenics: Mental illness in Rural Ireland*. London: University of California, Ltd.
- Sercombe, H. (2004). *Millen Street Policy Manual: a model policy manual for a Youth Work Service*. Kalgoorlie: Centrecare Goldfields Esperance.
- Sercombe, H. (2010). *Youth Work Ethics*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Sharp, D., & Atherton, S. (2007). To Serve and Protect? The Experiences of Policing in the Community of Young People from Black and Other Ethnic minority Groups. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 47(5), 746-763.
- Sheldon, H. D. (1898). The institutional Activities of American Children. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 9(4), 425-448.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded theory Procedures and Techniques* California: SAGE Publications.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview. In N. K. a. L. Denzin, Y. S (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Suttles, G. D. (1968). *The Social Order of the Slum: Ethnicity and Territory in the Inner City*. Chicago: The university of Chicago Press.

- Tashakorri, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). The New Era of Mixed Methods (editorial). *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 3-7.
- Taylor, C., & White, S. (2000). *Practising Reflexivity in Health and Welfare: Making Knowledge*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Thinking on your feet: outreach and detached youth work with vulnerable young people* (1998). Glasgow: The Prince's Trust- Scotland.
- Thrasher, F. M. (1927). *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tönnies, F. (1955). *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft und gesellschaft)*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Valentine, G., Skelton, T., & Chambers, D. (1998). Cool Places: an introduction to Youth and Youth Cultures. In T. Skelton & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Cool Places, geographies of youth cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Waiton, S. (2001). *Scared of the Kids? Curfews, Crime and the Regulation of Young People*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.
- Waiton, S. (2008). *The Politics of Anti-Social Behaviour: Amoral panics*. New York: Routledge.
- Wallace, D., & Coburn, A. (2002). 'Space - The Final Frontier': An Exploration of Territoriality and Young People. *Scottish Youth Issues Journal, Winter(5)*, 74-89.
- Watson, C. (2006). Unreliable narrators? 'Inconsistency' (and some inconstancy) in interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 6(3), 367-384.
- White, R. (1999). Youth Gangs. In R. White (Ed.), *Australian Youth Subcultures: On the Margins and in the Mainstream*. Tasmania: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.
- White, R. (2007). *Youth Gangs, Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour*. Perth: Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth.
- Whyte, W. F. (1943). *Street Corner Society, The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Yates, J. (2006). 'You Just Don't Grass': Youth, Crime and 'Grassing' in a Working Class Community. *The National Association for Youth Justice*, 6(3), 195-210.
- Young, J. (1971). The Role of the Police as Amplifiers of Deviancy, Negotiators of Reality and Translators of Fantasy: Some consequences of our present system of drug control as seen in Notting Hill. In S. Cohen (Ed.), *Images of Deviance*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Young, J. (1999a). Cannibalism and bulimia: Patterns of social control in late modernity. *Theoretical Criminology*, 3(4), 387- 407.
- Young, J. (1999b). *The Exclusive Society: Social Exclusion, Crime and Difference in Late Modernity*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Young, J. (2003). Merton with Energy, Katz with Structure: The Sociology of Vindictiveness and the Criminology of Transgression. *Theoretical Criminology, SAGE Publications*, 7(3), 389-414.
- Young, J. (2007). *The Vertigo of Late Modernity*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Zatz, M. S., & Portillos, E. L. (2000). Voices from the Barrio: Chicano/a Gangs, Families, and Communities. *Criminology*, 38(2), 369-401.

APPENDIX ONE- Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
A	
Ain	Own
Aint	Am not
Anymair	Anymore
Arenae	Are not
ASBOs	Anti-social Behaviour Orders
Aye	Yes
B	
Big Heided	Big headed, meaning thinking highly of yourself
C	
Cannae	Can not
Cause	Because
Chassies	A game of chasing each other
Close	A communal stairwell of traditional tenement block of flats often found within urban Glasgow.
D	
Da	Father
Dae	Do
Daein	Doing
Dander	Walk slowly
Doesnae	Does not
Drap Squad	Police
Dunno	Don't know
E	
F	
Fae	From
G	
Gonnae	Going to
Gotta	Got to
Grass	The same as snitches, reporting of criminal incidents to the police

Granda	Grandfather
H	
Haeme	Home
I	
Isnae	Is not
J	
K	
Kinda	Kind of
L	
Lifer	Doing a life sentence in prison
M	
Manky	Dirty
Mair	More
Menties	Mentions of your name or the gangs name through graffiti
N	
Nae	No
Naebody	Nobody
Naewhere	Nowhere
Naw	No
NEDs	Thought to stand for Non-Educated Delinquent. It is a derogatory term for working class young people who have a particular type of dress, listen to specific music and come from deprived urban areas.
No	In certain contexts this refers to 'not'
O	
P	
Pals	Friends
Polis	Police
Pull us	Referring to the police stopping and questioning people
Pure	Very
Q	
R	
S	

Scheme	Housing estate
Scheme hopping	Going between housing estates
Screw the nut	Settle down or be more responsible
Screws	Can mean police wardens or in the instance within this text is referring to the police
Shite bag	Being scared of something
Shouldnae	Should not
Slashed	Cutting someone in a slicing movement with a knife
Snitches	Similar to 'grass' the reporting of criminal incidents to the police
Sign on	To claim welfare benefits
Sorta	Sort of
T	
Tae	To
Team	A word used at times to refer to the gang
U	
V	
W	
Wa'nae	Was not
Wernae	Were not
Wi'	With
Windae	Window
Wouldnae	Would not
X	
Y	
Ya	You
Yas	You
Z	

APPENDIX TWO- Coding list

The tree codes that were used during analysis are listed below. The theme in bold is the parent node with the subsidiary sections shown below.

Gang Definitions Area One

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Gang Definitions Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's

Church Worker

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Broader Community Relations in Area One

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Broader White Community Relations in Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's

Church Worker

Community Members

My Reflections

Young People

Youth Workers views on Family Relations

Family Relations Area One

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Family Relations Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's

Church Worker

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Geographical Boundaries Area One

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Geographical Boundaries Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's

Church Worker

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Territorial Fighting Area One

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Territorial Fighting Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's

Church Worker

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Relationship with the Police Area One

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Relationship with the Police Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's

Church Worker

Community Members

My Reflections

Police Views

Young Peoples Views

Youth Workers Views

Views on Ethnic Minorities Area Two

Agency Working with Gang's
Church Worker
Community Members
My Reflections
Police Views
Young Peoples Views
Youth Workers Views

Young People Protecting their Area One

Community Members
Young Peoples Views
Youth Workers Views

Young People Protecting their Area Two

Community Members
Police Views
Young Peoples Views
Youth Workers Views

The free codes that were used did not have any other themes connected to them and stood independently as themes worth exploring, these included:

Drugs and Alcohol Area One

Drugs and Alcohol Area Two

APPENDIX THREE- Information sheet for young people



Information Sheet for Young People

Who am I and what am I doing?

My name is Sinead Gormally and I am a PHD student from The University of Strathclyde. I am researching how young people, who see themselves as being a member of a gang, get on with the rest of their community and how their community gets on with them. The title of my study is- What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

How can you help?

I am intending to work alongside your local youth workers on a weekly basis so I can find out a bit about your area, your views on where you live and your opinions on your gang. If any of you would like to talk to me further, providing you're fourteen or over, I would love the opportunity to have a chat with you about you views and opinions. However, your participation in this piece of research is completely voluntary and as such you can end the discussion at any time or refuse to continue with the piece of research without giving a reason and without any consequences.

Similarly if there is any question that you do not want to answer just inform me and we will move on to a different topic. I am interested in your views and opinions but they belong to you, so if you don't want to divulge them then do not hesitate to tell me.

My promise-

If you do agree to give me any information, written or tape recorded, then I will document no personal information about you- that includes never taking your name or address and keeping any information safely locked away in the university until the report is concluded. If data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission. (Though if you do speak in front of your mates I'm afraid I can't promise that information will be kept secret!)

A word of warning-

If you do give me information please avoid telling me any details about any criminal activity that might be planned, as I may have to tell the relevant authorities.

Any Problems?

If you think there are any problems with my work or you want to speak to someone about the research you can contact my supervisor, Ross Deuchar at- Department of childhood and Primary Studies, University of Strathclyde, Crawford Building, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP or by email on ross.j.deuchar@strath.ac.uk

Or

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee, University of Strathclyde, McCance Building, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, Telephone: 0141 548 2752, Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

If you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask! Thanks

APPENDIX FOUR- Consent form for young people



Consent Form for Young People

What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

As the information sheet explained, I am interested in what your views and opinions are on gangs in your local area and how you associate with being a gang member. It is also important to remind you not to give me any specific details of a planned or previous incident, as I may have to report this to the relevant authorities.

Your participation in this piece of research is completely voluntary and as such you can end the discussion at any time or refuse to continue with the piece of research without giving a reason and without any consequences. If you do take this action you can also request that your data is withdrawn from the research altogether which will be done immediately.

Any data that is collected will be kept securely and safely locked away in the university and will be kept for the duration of this research. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me- Sinead Gormally, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, Sir Henry Wood Building, room 308, Tel- 0141 9503772, E-mail- sinead.gormally@strath.ac.uk

In order to have a discussion with you about your views and opinions I would like to get your agreement to this in writing below if possible.

I _____ agree to take part in this piece of research. I have read the information sheet and understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can opt out of it at any time. I am clear on the purpose of this research, have had all questions answered and am aware of any risks.

Signed _____

Date _____

I agree/ do not agree to allow the use of a tape recorder during this interview.

Signed _____

APPENDIX FIVE- Information sheet for parental assent



Information Sheet for Parental Assent

Who am I and what am I doing?

My name is Sinead Gormally and I am a PHD student from The University of Strathclyde. I am researching how young people, who see themselves as being a member of a gang, get on with the rest of their community and how their community gets on with them. The title of my study is- What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

How can you help?

I am intending to work alongside your local youth workers on a weekly basis so I can find out a bit about your area, your child's views on where they live and their opinions on any gang activity.

However, your child's participation in this piece of research is completely voluntary and as such they can end the discussion at any time or refuse to continue with the piece of research without giving a reason and without any consequences.

Similarly if there is any question that they do not want to answer they just need to inform me and we will move on to a different topic. I am interested in their views and opinions but they belong to them, so if they don't want to divulge anything they should not hesitate to tell me.

My promise-

If you do agree for your child to give me any information, written or tape recorded, then I will document no personal information about them- that includes never taking their name or address and keeping any information safely locked away in the university until the report is concluded. If data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission. (Though if they do speak in front of their mates I'm afraid I can't promise that information will be kept secret!)

A word of warning-

If your child does give me information I encourage them to avoid telling me any details about any criminal activity that might be planned, as I may have to tell the relevant authorities.

Any Problems?

If you think there are any problems with my work or you want to speak to someone about the research you can contact my supervisor, Ross Deuchar at- Department of childhood and Primary Studies, University of Strathclyde, Crawford Building, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP or by email on ross.j.deuchar@strath.ac.uk

Or

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee, University of Strathclyde, McCance Building, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, Telephone: 0141 548 2752, Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

If you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask! Thanks



Parental Assent

Can you confirm that: you fully understand the information leaflet we issued you with, that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this information and that you agree to your child participating in this project?

Can you confirm that you understand that your child will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview on this topic and that the interview will be audio-taped.

Anything your child says during the interview may be heard by another young person if (s)he feels more comfortable speaking with their friend. Your child can withdraw from the study at any time. Participation or non-participation in the study will not affect your child's membership of the youth organisation.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX SIX- Information sheet for community members



Information Sheet for Community Members

Who am I and what am I doing?

My name is Sinead Gormally and I am a PHD student from The University of Strathclyde. I am researching how young people, who see themselves as being a member of a gang, get on with the rest of their community and how their community gets on with them. The title of my study is- What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

How can you help?

I am really interested in the views of the local community members in your area and would love the opportunity to have a chat with you. I am particularly interested in finding out what you think about the youth gangs in your area, how they treat your community, how you view your community and how you get on with the young people.

Similarly if there is any question that you do not want to answer just inform me and we will move on to a different topic. I am interested in your views and opinions but they belong to you, so if you don't want to divulge them then do not hesitate to tell me.

My promise-

If you do agree to have a chat with me then I will keep everything you say confidential and anonymous. I will record no personal information about you- that includes never recording your name or address and I will ensure any information recorded, be it written or tape recorded, will be securely kept within the university until the report is concluded. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission. However, if you do speak in front of others then I can't guarantee strict confidentiality on that information.

A word of warning-

If you do give me information please avoid telling me any details about serious criminal activity that might be planned, as I may have to tell the relevant authorities.

Any Problems?

If you think there are any problems with my work or you want to speak to someone about the research you can contact my supervisor, Ross Deuchar at- Department of childhood and Primary Studies, University of Strathclyde, Crawford Building, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP or by email on ross.j.deuchar@strath.ac.uk.

Or

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee, University of Strathclyde, McCance Building, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, Telephone: 0141 548 2752, Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

If you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask! Thanks very much

APPENDIX SEVEN- Consent form for community members



Consent Form for Community Members

What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

As the information sheet has explained I am interested in having a discussion with you about your views and opinion on the young people, who see themselves as gang members, within your area. It is however important to remind you, not to give me any specific details of any planned incident as I may have to report this to the authorities.

Your participation in this piece of research is completely voluntary and as such you can end the discussion at any time or refuse to continue with the piece of research without giving a reason and without any consequences. If you do take this action you can also request that your data is withdrawn from the research altogether which will be done immediately.

Any data that is collected will be kept securely and safely locked away in the university and will be kept for the duration of this research. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me- Sinead Gormally, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, Sir Henry Wood Building, room 308, Tel- 0141 9503772, E-mail- sinead.gormally@strath.ac.uk

In order to have a discussion with you about your views and opinions I would like to get your agreement to this in writing below if possible.

I _____ agree to take part in this piece of research. I have read the information sheet and understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can opt out of it at any time. I am clear on the purpose of this research, have had all questions answered and am aware of any risks.

Signed _____

Date _____

I agree/ do not agree to allow the use of a tape recorder during this interview.

Signed _____

APPENDIX EIGHT- Information sheet for community workers



Information Sheet for Community Workers

Who am I and what am I doing?

My name is Sinead Gormally and I am a PHD student from The University of Strathclyde. I am researching how young people, who see themselves as being a member of a gang, get on with the rest of their community and how their community gets on with them. The title of my study is- What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

How can you help?

I am really interested in the views of the local community workers who work in this area and would love the opportunity to have a chat with you. I am particularly interested in finding out what you think about the youth gangs in this area, how they treat the community, your relationship with the young people and the projects you're working on.

Similarly if there is any question that you do not want to answer just inform me and we will move on to a different topic. I am interested in your views and opinions but they belong to you, so if you don't want to divulge them then do not hesitate to tell me.

My promise-

If you do agree to have a chat with me then I will keep everything you say confidential and anonymous. I will record no personal information about you- that includes never recording your name or address and I will ensure any information recorded, be it written or tape recorded, will be securely kept within the university until the report is concluded. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission. However, if you do speak in front of others then I can't guarantee strict confidentiality on that information.

A word of warning-

If you do give me information please avoid telling me any details about serious criminal activity that might be planned, as I may have to tell the relevant authorities.

Any Problems?

If you think there are any problems with my work or you want to speak to someone about the research you can contact my supervisor, Ross Deuchar at- Department of childhood and Primary Studies, University of Strathclyde, Crawford Building, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP or by email on ross.j.deuchar@strath.ac.uk.

Or

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee, University of Strathclyde, McCance Building, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, Telephone: 0141 548 2752, Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

If you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask! Thanks very much

APPENDIX NINE- Consent form for community workers



Consent Form for Community Workers

What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

As the information sheet has explained I am interested in having a discussion with you about your views and opinion on the young people, who see themselves as gang members, within your area. It is however important to remind you, not to give me any specific details of any planned incident as I may have to report this to the authorities.

Your participation in this piece of research is completely voluntary and as such you can end the discussion at any time or refuse to continue with the piece of research without giving a reason and without any consequences. If you do take this action you can also request that your data is withdrawn from the research altogether which will be done immediately.

Any data that is collected will be kept securely and safely locked away in the university and will be kept for the duration of this research. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me- Sinead Gormally, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, Sir Henry Wood Building, room 308, Tel- 0141 9503772, E-mail- sinead.gormally@strath.ac.uk

In order to have a discussion with you about your views and opinions I would like to get your agreement to this in writing below if possible.

I _____ agree to take part in this piece of research. I have read the information sheet and understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can opt out of it at any time. I am clear on the purpose of this research, have had all questions answered and am aware of any risks.

Signed _____

Date _____

I agree/ do not agree to allow the use of a tape recorder during this interview.

Signed _____

APPENDIX TEN- Information sheets for police officers



Information Sheet for Police Officers

Who am I and what am I doing?

My name is Sinead Gormally and I am a PHD student from The University of Strathclyde. I am researching how young people, who see themselves as being a member of a gang, get on with the rest of their community and how their community gets on with them. The title of my study is- What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

How can you help?

I am really interested in the views of the local community workers who work in this area and would love the opportunity to have a chat with you. I am particularly interested in finding out what you think about the youth gangs in this area, how they treat the community, your relationship with the young people and the projects you're working on.

Similarly if there is any question that you do not want to answer just inform me and we will move on to a different topic. I am interested in your views and opinions but they belong to you, so if you don't want to divulge them then do not hesitate to tell me.

My promise-

If you do agree to have a chat with me then I will keep everything you say confidential and anonymous. I will record no personal information about you- that includes never recording your name or address and I will ensure any information recorded, be it written or tape recorded, will be securely kept within the university until the report is concluded. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission. However, if you do speak in front of others then I can't guarantee strict confidentiality on that information.

A word of warning-

If you do give me information please avoid telling me any details about serious criminal activity that might be planned, as I may have to tell the relevant authorities.

Any Problems?

If you think there are any problems with my work or you want to speak to someone about the research you can contact my supervisor, Ross Deuchar at- Department of childhood and Primary Studies, University of Strathclyde, Crawford Building, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow, G13 1PP or by email on ross.j.deuchar@strath.ac.uk.

Or

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee, University of Strathclyde, McCance Building, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, Telephone: 0141 548 2752, Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

If you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask! Thanks very much

APPENDIX ELEVEN- Consent form for police officers



Consent Form for Police Officers

What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities? : An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow.

As the information sheet has explained I am interested in having a discussion with you about your views and opinion on the young people, who see themselves as gang members, within your area. It is however important to remind you, not to give me any specific details of any planned incident as I may have to report this to the authorities.

Your participation in this piece of research is completely voluntary and as such you can end the discussion at any time or refuse to continue with the piece of research without giving a reason and without any consequences. If you do take this action you can also request that your data is withdrawn from the research altogether which will be done immediately.

Any data that is collected will be kept securely and safely locked away in the university and will be kept for the duration of this research. If the data is to be kept any longer I will contact you to ask for prior permission.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me- Sinead Gormally, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, Sir Henry Wood Building, room 308, Tel- 0141 9503772, E-mail- sinead.gormally@strath.ac.uk

In order to have a discussion with you about your views and opinions I would like to get your agreement to this in writing below if possible.

I _____ agree to take part in this piece of research. I have read the information sheet and understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can opt out of it at any time. I am clear on the purpose of this research, have had all questions answered and am aware of any risks.

Signed _____

Date _____

I agree/ do not agree to allow the use of a tape recorder during this interview.

Signed _____

APPENDIX TWELVE- Email confirmation of ethical approval

From: Jo Edwards
Sent: 13 March 2009 09:04
To: Ross Deuchar
Cc: Anne Muir; Zoe Wilson
Subject: Protocol approval: UEC0809/42

Dear Dr Deuchar

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

**UEC0809/42 What is the agreement between youth gangs and their local communities?
An in-depth study of two communities in Glasgow?**

I can confirm that the University Ethics Committee has approved this protocol. Appropriate insurance cover has also been confirmed.

I would remind you that the Committee must be informed of any changes that are made to the protocol, so that they have the opportunity to consider them. The Committee would also expect you to report back on the progress and outcome of your project, with an account of anything which may prompt ethical questions for any similar future project and with anything else that you feel the Committee should know.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you success with this project.

Best wishes
Jo

Dr Jo Edwards
Policy Officer
University of Strathclyde
McCance Building
16 Richmond Street
Glasgow
G1 1XU
Tel: 44 (0) 141 548 5909
Email: jo.edwards@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk

The University of Strathclyde is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, number SC015263.