

0282 ANALYSING YOUTH GANGS IN GLASGOW

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Youth gangs remain a considerable police and public health challenge. Knife crime is a significant cause of premature mortality and morbidity in Glasgow. Examples of gang fighting in Glasgow can be traced back to the 1700s, but the phenomena escalated in the 1840s following mass migration, rapid population expansion and the emergence of territorialism.

By examining the intra and inter gang networks and the importance of territorialism, there is an opportunity to improve our understanding of the impact youth gangs have on the life choices and chances of gang members and the wider communities in which they operate.

The analysis is drawn from police intelligence and crime data as well as primary research conducted with gang members and youth organisations. Application of the principles of criminal intelligence analysis when combined with anthropological study creates a picture of those involved in, or affected by, the activities of youth gangs.

Territorialism and gang membership is deeply ingrained in the east end of Glasgow and the feelings of belonging and camaraderie engendered have replaced traditional family bonds. The particular impact of territorialism is far reaching on both gang members and wider communities, making it difficult for agencies to provide services. Shifting patterns of gang alliances and rivalries complicate the picture further and contribute to our understanding of violence among these groups as being largely recreational in nature. The presentation will highlight how these challenges must be overcome if we are to improve the success of prevention strategies