

Institution: University of the West of Scotland
Unit of Assessment: 25
Title of case study: Gang Culture and Youth Offending in the West of Scotland
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)
<p>The research reported here has provided 'real world' insights into the nature of young people's urban life, their involvement in gang violence and sectarianism and the extent to and ways in which criminal justice sanctions and social interventions reduce social strain and build pro-social capital in their lives. The research has had a national and international influence on public debate about violent youth offending and on practice-based responses to the issue and has led to the further development of services by community-based agencies and police officers in Scotland who work with marginalised young people and young offenders.</p>
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
<p>The impacts reported in this case study emerge from original research spanning the period 2008-2012, led and conducted by Professors Chris Holligan (who was based at UWS throughout) and Professor Ross Deuchar (who was initially a co-author at another institution, but subsequently re-located to UWS in 2010). The research was qualitative in nature, and mostly involved young persons aged 16-18 in the west of Scotland, although some family members were later interviewed.</p> <p>The initial research (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5) aimed to understand and document the life worlds of young people in relation to the social geography of their urban lives, involvement in gang culture and sectarianism. It took a highly original and creative qualitative and ethnographic approach to exploring how participants accumulate forms of social capital and the implications for violent and sectarian actions. The findings suggested that territorial issues dominated; gang culture affiliations and delinquent activities were a means of excitement, identity and status; gang membership offered a 'compensating effect'; home lives, due to issues of poverty and deprivation, seemed not to provide bonding or bridging social capital; gang membership led to mental and material exclusion from conventional communities, entrapment in disadvantaged housing schemes and hostility from conventional institutions (schools and the police); conflict between rival housing schemes meant that Rangers and Celtic supporters – despite histories of sectarianism - often came together to form friendships; although the activity associated with gangs was not seen as sectarian in terms of religious bigotry, 'flashpoints' resulted in a proxy religious bigotry being used as a 'resource' for masculine aggression; there was evidence to suggest that young people were subject to a form of bonding social capital which put pressure on them to conform to certain cultural expectations and narrow views of masculinity; the urban landscapes the young people inhabited were dictated by spatial and politicised boundaries which confined their lives and identities; although the territoriality and football tribalism which emerged in the young people's lives had some positive impact in terms of the sense of bonding which emerged, it also led to diminished levels of trust, tolerance and agency.</p> <p>More recent research by Deuchar has identified new insights that suggest that, while a minority of young refugees may join gangs as a means of responding to discrimination and/or the threat of racial violence, many others find themselves stigmatised and wrongly accused of being gang members because of their street-oriented activity and large social groupings (3.4). In addition, Deuchar has produced new knowledge about the impact of criminal justice sanctions such as curfews and electronic monitoring - illustrating that these sanctions have some limited success in reducing anti-social capital in the lives of those who engage in violent offending but that, when used in isolation, they often fail to build pro-social capital and - in some cases - function as an additional social strain conducive to further violent offending (3.6).</p>

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- (3.1) Deuchar, R. and Holligan, C. (2008) *Social Capital Issues and Sectarianism: A Pilot Study into the Possible Existence and Nature of a Sectarian Habitus among Young People*. British Academy.
- (3.2) Holligan, C. and Deuchar, R. (2009) Territorialities in Scotland: perceptions of young people in Glasgow, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12 (6): 727-742.
- (3.3) Deuchar, R. and Holligan, C. (2010) Gangs, sectarianism and social capital: a qualitative study of young people in Scotland, *Sociology*, 44 (1): 13-30.
- (3.4) Deuchar, R. (2011) 'People look at us, the way we dress, and they think we're gangsters': bonds, bridges, gangs and refugees - a qualitative study of inter cultural social capital in Glasgow, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24(4): 672-689.
- (3.5) Holligan, C. and Deuchar, R. (2011) Contested urban spaces: exploring the analytics of young persons' experiences of living in Glasgow's deprived zones, *Pastoral Care in Education* 29 (2): 67-82.
- (3.6) Deuchar (2012) The impact of curfews and electronic monitoring on the social strains, support and capital experienced by youth gang members, *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 12 (2): 113-128.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research described above has impacted on the nature of public debate about youth gangs, violence, sectarianism and criminal justice responses to young offenders. The Scottish media has shown intense and consistent interest in the research and dissemination therein and has led to many invitations to give additional presentations/keynotes and to lead professional development programmes. Firstly, this was achieved through Deuchar and Holligan's own media contributions (see 5.3 - 5.7 for examples). Secondly, it was achieved through journalists' reporting of the insights from Deuchar's research, which on occasions created vociferous online public discussion about the issues (5.1, 5.2, 5.8). And thirdly, it was achieved through Deuchar's appearances on television current affairs programmes such as *Scotland Today*, *Newsnight*, *The Politics Show* and the *WKRC Local 12 News* in Cincinnati. Ohio throughout 2009-2012, with the latter contributing towards public debate in the State of Ohio and subsequent invitations to deliver keynote presentations to both academic and practitioner audiences in European locations such as Porto, Helsinki and Hillerød near Copenhagen.

As a result of this publicity and wider engagement, Deuchar drew upon the research insights to underpin the development of new knowledge exchange and CPD programmes for practitioners in Scotland, and this led to subsequent impact on practice. For example, youth workers within the *Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA)* in Glasgow attended a CPD session run by Deuchar in 2009 and commented in course evaluations that the session had helped them to understand the 'thought process of young people in gangs'. In addition, senior and operational police officers who attended Deuchar's knowledge exchange seminars that he ran within police leadership training with guest inputs from reformed young offenders commented that the sessions illustrated the 'benefits of using applied academic research in police training' in making a 'very robust training product that has a noticeable impact on front-line policing'.

Between 2009-13, several community-based organisations and policing teams who are heavily involved in delivery of professional services for young people were able to become beneficiaries of Deuchar and Holligan's research. These organisations drew upon the research to gain new funding for programmes, and/or developed their existing practice as a result of the research. For example, in one testimonial, the former Assistant Regional Director with *Aberlour Child Care Trust* notes that, in establishing a new streetwork programme for young people in deprived communities in Glasgow, Deuchar's research offered a 'sound conceptual framework' which was used to look at how the new service was designed and described and how the organisation might measure its outcomes. He also notes that being able to draw upon the research was 'significant' in being able to secure funding of over £0.5 million from the Big Lottery in order to implement the new streetwork

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programme. In another testimonial, a serving officer from the Community Policing Team in Drumchapel, Glasgow, highlights that he was able to draw upon the research to 'construct a series of youth workshops to help understand gang related difficulties in the Drumchapel area of Glasgow, inviting local residents, youth group leaders and senior police managers to form part of the discussion group'. From an international perspective, the Project Manager at Grundtvigs Hojskole, Hillerød, near Copenhagen, comments in his testimonial that the content of the keynote lecture and workshop Deuchar gave at the International Gangs Seminar held there in September 2013 was 'inspiring' and that participating practitioners felt that the practical exercises provided them with a 'range of strategies that Danish practitioners can use with street socialised groups'.

As a result of Deuchar and Holligan's close partnership with the Scottish Government Community Safety Unit, Scottish policy debate was also stimulated and informed by their research. For example, the 2010 Scottish Government publication *Troublesome Youth Groups, Gangs and Knife Carrying in Scotland* made direct reference to Deuchar's work in its quest to identify the nature of gang culture in Scotland (5.9), while the 2011 Scottish Government *Thematic Report on Knife Crime* referred to Deuchar's work on curfews in identifying best practice in tackling knife crime in Scotland (5.10). In one further testimonial, the former head of the Community Safety Unit says, 'Professor Deuchar's work has been at the forefront of our thinking in developing violence reduction and wider community safety policy ... his thinking is clear and well-suited for uptake into policy, and it has had a direct impact on how policy and practice has evolved.'

In 2010, Deuchar was runner-up for the ESRC Michael Young Prize, in recognition of the significant impact his research has on audiences beyond academia.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

(5.1) Allan, V. (2011) Curfews make crime worse, warns academic, *Daily Record*, 14 January.
<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/curfews-make-crime-worse-warns-1092134>

(5.2) Christie, L. (2009) Street gang attacks stops kids from walking home through Scots estates, *Daily Record*, 4 August.

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/street-gang-attacks-stops-kids-1032878>

(5.3) Deuchar, R. (2011) Early intervention is essential to save lost boys, *The Herald: Society*, 25 January.

(5.4) Deuchar, R. (2008). It's a jungle out there for the teenage territorials. *The Herald: Society*, 10 June.

(5.5) Deuchar, R. (2009). United front can help youngsters escape violence. *The Herald*, 27 February.

(5.6) Holligan, C. (2008) In 'tribal' Scotland we must learn to know our neighbours, *The Scotsman*, 5 February.

(5.7) Holligan, C. (2012) Children are the innocent victims of criminal justice, *TESS*, 3 August.

(5.8) Rose, G. (2012) Young offenders prefer prison to freedom, *Scotland on Sunday*, 29 July.

<http://www.scotsman.com/scotland-on-sunday/scotland/young-offenders-prefer-prison-to-freedom-1-2438680>

(5.9) Scottish Government (2010) *Troublesome Youth Groups, Gangs and Knife Carrying in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

(5.10) Scottish Government (2011) *Thematic Report on Knife Crime*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Beneficiaries of Research

Available Testimonials:

1. Former Assistant Regional Director: Childcare Aberlour Trust
3. Police Constable: Community Policing Team, Drumchapel, Police Scotland
4. Project Manager: Grundtvigs Hojskole, Hillerød, near Copenhagen, Denmark
5. Former Head of the Community Safety Unit: Scottish Government

Testimonials are also available on request from the following:

1. Deputy Head of Leadership and Professional Development: Scottish Police College
2. Youth Worker: Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA), Glasgow
3. Services Manager: Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (FARE), Glasgow