

Gangs: Creating a sense of belonging

The following website will provide the information you need to complete this worksheet:

https://people.missouristate.edu/michaelcarlie/what_I_learned_about/gangs/culture.htm

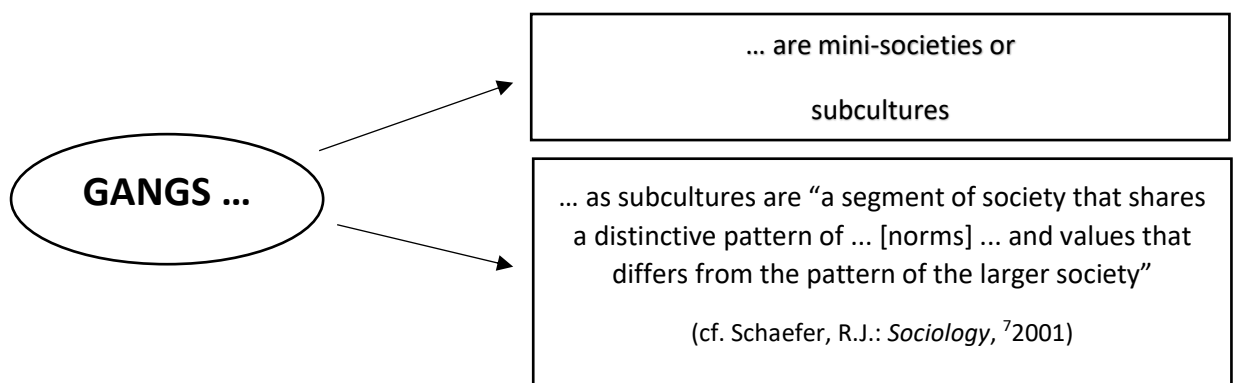
1. Background factors

Take a closer look at the sections "Gangs and the subculture of the lower class" and "Violence as a characteristic of gang culture". Fill in the boxes.

Typical backgrounds

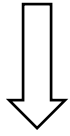
characteristic lower-class attitudes (cf. W.B. Miller)

2. Features of gang culture



Now take another look at the website. Search for the features of gang culture mentioned in the next section of this worksheet and find examples from the website or your own knowledge.

gang culture



.... language:

... beliefs, values, norms:

.... symbols and artefacts:

3. Discussion

How can we use these insights to explain the attraction that gangs hold for young people, especially from low-chance / low-status environments?

Now let's apply these insights to 'Gran Torino'.

Underline the relevant parts of the dialogue and work out the arguments that the gang members use to convince Tao to join the gang! You may also “read between the lines”.

DVD 00:15:53 – 00:16:34

SUE

What do you want?

SPIDER

What? We can't just come and talk to my little cousin?

SUE

He doesn't want to talk to you.

SPIDER

I am here, right?!

SMOKIE

Hey, Spider, who is that? What's up?

SUE

Spider? Is that what he just called you, Fong?

SPIDER (*shows off his tattoo*)

Spider!

[...]

SMOKIE

Hey, will you roll with us man, come on?

SPIDER

Dude.

SMOKIE

Come on ride with us. Chill with us.

SPIDER

You need somebody to protect you, man. That's what your big cousins are for.

SMOKIE

Look, dawg. I've been there, I've done it and I've seen it. Back in a day everybody wanted to beat me, dawg. But now, look, nobody wants to fuck with me. Come on man, let's go.

SPIDER

We are cousins, right? Come on.

We are cousins, right? We are a family.

SMOKIE

Look, I am a brother to Spider, as he is a brother to me.

SPIDER

Come on.

(*pulls off Tao's gardening glove*)

Take this shit off.

SMOKIE

That's a woman's work, man.

Come, get your hands dirty, man.



Further discussion:

1. *Why does Sue pronounce Spider's real name (Fong) with such emphasis?*
2. *Sue tells Walt that "Hmong girls over here fit in better. The girls go to college, the boys go to jail." Refer to section 1 of your worksheet (background factors) and examine whether or to what extent these factors can also be applied to the Hmong gang.*

Extra: The black gang and Trey (Sue's boyfriend)

DVD 00:30:00 – 00:31:00

Compare the black gang and Trey, considering the following aspects:

1. *style of clothing*
2. *language*
3. *behaviour*

Try to explain why the blacks reject Trey's attempts at fraternizing with them:

The leader of the black gang calls Trey 'boy'. Use the following quotation to explain why he chooses this particular epithet and what he wants to express with it.

"But others must understand the history of African Americans, and what it has always meant to black men for someone to call them a 'boy.' One, it's the ultimate sign of disrespect, and is often more offensive than calling them the N-word. For years black men were summarily dismissed and treated with disregard. It was as if their stature was diminished when someone white called them a boy."
(Roland S. Martin, CNN, <http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2008/04/15/understanding-why-you-dont-call-a-black-man-a-boy/>)