

Gangs in Chinatown

The New Young Warrior Class

The phenomenon of the adolescent gang was much in the mind of the public during the 50's and 60's (before the entire adolescent population appeared to become one alienated gang). But at that time Chinese youth were among those who on the whole escaped public attention. That has changed dramatically, and the movies have now granted the ultimate seal of notoriety to these young warriors of modern cities. Robinson and Joe explore this novel manifestation of a social tendency apparently peculiar to the young adult human male under certain conditions of human society. Their findings are interesting for showing gang theory working out in unfamiliar circumstances, where the major factors include the impact of a wave of young urban immigrants from Hong Kong into expatriate Chinese communities of rural antecedents, not to mention the linguistic frustration that bars the entry of these young immigrants into the English-speaking urban society of their ambitions.

Mark Twain once wrote: "The Chinese are quiet, peaceable, tractable, free from drunkenness, and they are as industrious as the day is long. A disorderly Chinaman is rare and a lazy one does not exist." As an immigrant group to North America, the Chinese have enjoyed a reputation as a hard-working and law-abiding people (Sung, 1967; De Vos and Abbott, 1966). Over the past ten years this image of the Chinese has begun to change. Chinatowns in the major urban centres of North America have ceased to be islands of law and order and have instead become places in which the crimes of robbery, assault, prostitution, extortion, gambling, drug trafficking, and murder are occurring with increasing frequency.

The crimes are largely the work of gangs of immigrant Chinese youth who view themselves as the new young warrior class of Chinatown. The trouble began to develop a decade ago when both Canada and the United States adopted less restrictive immigration laws, under which substantial numbers of poorly educated and disaffected youth from Hong Kong began to enter Canada and the

United States. A number of these youths formed gangs and have created a wave of crime and fear. San Francisco, which has the largest Chinese community in North America, has had forty-four gang-related murders since 1969 (Williams, 1977: p. 39). A spokesman for the New York Chinese community recently warned that New York Chinatown, a major tourist and market centre, could become a "Yellow Harlem of shuttered stores and mean streets," if the activities of Chinese youth gangs are not stopped (Arnett, 1977: p. 4). In other large North American cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and Toronto the problem of Chinese youth gangs is less severe, but is still a major urban social problem.

Chinese youth in North America

In the United States and Canada early Chinese immigrants formed secret societies to regulate the political, economic, social, and recreational activities of their communities. The societies also regulated the communities' criminal activities, which consisted essentially of gambling, prostitution, and opium smoking (Lyman, 1971: pp. 110-114). From time to time, the secret societies fell out with each other. This gave rise to the so-called "Tong Wars" which ripped through many Chinatowns at the turn of this century (Dillon, 1963). During the Tong wars Chinese youth in their late teens and early twenties joined adults in criminal behaviour and did not form separate youth gangs. The Chinese referred to these youth as "hatchet boys." They worked as enforcers. Since Chinatown was a closed community, few outsiders were aware of the criminal activities of the young Chinese.

In the period from 1920 to 1950 there are few reports of juvenile crime in the Chinatowns of North America. The Tong wars subsided and immigration from China and Hong Kong was reduced to a trickle. For example, only 44 Chinese entered Canada in the period between 1923 and 1947 (Lai, 1971: p. 121). In addition, Chinese communities in North America had very low birth rates as there was a serious imbalance of males over females (Lyman, 1971: p. 101). Minimal immigration and a low birth rate meant that there were few youths available to disturb the Chinese communities. The small number of youths who lived in the Chinatowns of Canada and the United States were well-socialized young people preparing themselves for life in the country of their birth.

From 1950 onward the number of Chinese entering United States and Canada started to increase. With the liberalization of immigration regulations in 1965 in the United States, and in 1967 in Canada, the flow of Chinese immigration from Hong Kong increased dramatically. Following this new wave in immigration came reports of the activities of Chinese gangs. The idea held by many social commentators in North America that Chinese youths were rarely involved in delinquent acts began to be challenged by reports of gang activities

from places as far apart as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Vancouver. For example, a report from Los Angeles in 1975 described Chinese youth gangs as "wolf packs" who held up people on the street, broke into homes and shops, extorted money from businessmen for protection, and terrorized entire neighbourhoods and schools.

They may demand plane tickets. They may walk into theatres without paying or order meals in restaurants and not pay. One group walked into a fish market and took seven lobsters, then went next door to a restaurant and cooked and ate them. If the owners had objected, they might have wrecked the place. (*U.S. News and World Report, 1975: p. 16.*)

Four gangs — three questions

The study and its purposes

This study investigated the characteristics and processes of four Chinese youth gangs operating in the Chinatown region of Vancouver over a three year period (1975-1978). Specifically, the study attempted to answer three main questions:

1. What group characteristics do these Chinese youth gangs possess?

Attention was focused on selected personal characteristics (age, sex, family background); structural characteristics (size, internal organization); dynamic characteristics (cohesiveness, group uniformity), and behavioral characteristics (nature of activities).

2. What are the group processes operating in these Chinese youth gangs?

Attention was focused on the processes of recruitment, interstimulation, goal setting, role assignment, and status management.

3. To what extent can the functions and characteristics of these Chinese youth gangs be explained in terms of current sociological theories of gang delinquency?

This study was limited to an investigation of Chinese youth gangs in Vancouver's Chinatown area. Police reports indicated the existence of Chinese youth gangs in some other areas of Vancouver, but those gangs were not studied. In addition, no study was done of several Chinese young adult gangs that were operating in the city at the time of this study.

Research procedures

The first task in this study was to establish contact with the gangs that were operating in Chinatown. One of the researchers, a Canadian-born Chinese who

speaks Cantonese fluently, was able to obtain the names of some gang members from friends in the Chinatown community. The researcher then made contact with the gang members, gained their confidence, and got their agreement to be interviewed.

Data were then collected from the following sources: (1) structured in-depth interviews with thirteen gang members; (2) structured interviews with individuals in schools and the community who had contact with the gangs, namely school administrators, school counsellors, teachers of classes for immigrant children (New Canadian classes), youth workers, police officials, a school-board member of Chinese ancestry, and a secret informant who had access to several of the gangs; (3) school, police, and social welfare records; (4) less formal discussions with victims of gang activity, including students and merchants; (5) informal observations of gang activities through visits to gang haunts.

The in-depth interviews were conducted over the span of eight months in late 1975 and early 1976. Since that time, contact has been maintained with many of the interviewees to provide up-to-date information. The less formal discussions and informal observations that were begun in 1975 have continued to the present.

The in-depth interviews that were conducted in the 1975-76 period revealed that there were four Chinese youth gangs operating in Vancouver's Chinatown at that time. They were (1) the Phantom Riders, (2) the Golden Skippers, (3) the Blue Angels and (4) the Golden Wheels. These gangs were then studied over a three year period (1975-78).

Group characteristics of the four youth gangs

Personnel

The members of all four Chinese youth gangs were males between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. There were no female members. All were recently arrived immigrants from Hong Kong: there were no Canadian-born Chinese in the gangs nor were there any gang members who had come to Canada during their pre-teen years. All of the gang members reported past or present school problems, particularly with learning English. About half were drop-outs. Those who were still in school attended irregularly.

When an immigrant child first comes to a Vancouver school, he or she spends a full year in a class for New Canadians where basic instruction in English is given. At the end of this year, the child is assigned to a regular classroom on the basis of his or her age. He or she continues to receive some special instruction in English, but in general is expected to fit into the regular classroom and its pattern of studies. Vancouver has a large, diverse immigrant

student population. Forty percent of the students in the Vancouver school system come from homes where English is spoken as a second language.

The school personnel interviewed were in general agreement that Chinese immigrant students experience greater difficulty in learning English than any other ethnic group; it should be noted, however, that not all Chinese students experienced the same degree of difficulty. Chinese teenage newcomers who had been educated in English schools in Hong Kong did well in the New Canadian classes and were ready for regular classroom work before the year was over. Immigrant children who had come when they were pre-schoolers or who came when they were in the elementary grades also experienced little difficulty. The group that experienced the most difficulty with English and with adjusting to life in Canadian schools was that of the Chinese immigrant teenagers who had come from Hong Kong with no instruction in English and very often no school experience at all. It is from this group exclusively that the youth gangs were drawn.

The interviews with the gang members revealed that most of them were having problems with their parents. They said that their parents objected to their style of dress, to their preference for Western food, to their driving of cars, and to their use of leisure time. The parents were particularly displeased with their poor performance in school. The reports of social workers (Mark, 1973; Tisshaw, 1976) have identified these parental expectations for school performance as a major source of conflict between parents and their children.

School personnel, youth workers, and gang members themselves all pointed to the difficulty immigrant Chinese teenagers face in developing contacts with people in their own age group. Their attendance as immigrants at classes for New Canadians leads them to be received by other students as members of an "outgroup." Being in a special class, together with language and cultural differences, makes it difficult for them to get to know Canadian-born Chinese, Caucasians, or any other ethnic group. A student writing in a Chinatown high school newspaper describes the situation of the immigrant Chinese as follows:

When they first arrive, they cannot speak English. They go to schools, where there are special English classes. Sometimes, some may be teased and bullied around about their appearances and grammar, so they may drop out of school, embarrassed and ashamed of their poor English. Some decide to join or form a gang of their own, of other Chinese boys like themselves, to show others they aren't snails and are not going to crawl into their shells...(*The Britlet*: p. 2).

Gang structure and dynamics

In terms of size, all four of the Chinese youth gangs had active core memberships of between ten and twenty persons. In addition to these core members, there was a larger fringe membership of friends or relatives whose participation was less frequent.

In terms of structural shape, the Chinese youth gangs were primarily horizontal. That is, there was little differentiation into sub-groups on the basis of age or of any other characteristic. Only in the case of the Golden Wheels was there any vertical structuring; this was on the basis of age, and this gang consisted of younger boys aged twelve to fifteen.

Membership stability in the gangs was relatively low. Although all four gangs had been in existence for three years or more, turnover was substantial (about one quarter of the gang per year). Similarly, the cohesiveness of the gangs was generally low, although there were differences. Well-articulated goals, norms, and beliefs did not exist. When asked about the purposes of their group, gang members offered reasons such as "for fun," "to help one another," "for fighting." The Golden Skippers and the Phantom Riders were the most cohesive of the four gangs; among their purposes, the members stated "shoplifting," "gambling," "gang fighting," and "dealing in drugs."

Cohesiveness was not even enhanced by the consistent use of names for gangs. As Haskell and Yablonsky (1974: p. 509-510) point out, group names enhance "we-feeling" among gang members. In the case of these Chinese youth gangs, they were called different names by various members at different times. This was true even of the more cohesive groups like the Golden Skippers.

As to group uniformity, the gang members held very similar beliefs and attitudes. The members felt discriminated against by the Canadian-born Chinese, the older China-born, and the larger Canadian society. On the other hand, the gang members expressed strong desires about acquiring stylish clothes, fancy cars, and other material symbols of success in North America. They believed this could come about only if one learned English, obtained an education, and got a good job. In terms of this objective they felt blocked. Those gang members who were in school felt they were the objects of ridicule and failure, and those who worked felt stuck in their menial jobs. As a consequence, they felt that they had to stand together for mutual support. As one member of the Golden Wheels put it in describing his fellow members: "We speak the same language. They are the only friends I have and they have given me a lot of help."

Behavioral characteristics

The gangs were involved in a wide variety of anti-social activities in the schools and the Chinatown community. In schools, both school authorities and youth workers reported a high incidence of anti-social behaviour, imported from Hong Kong, which is called "ah fai." Essentially, "ah fai" behaviour has been derived from Hollywood movies such as "The Blackboard Jungle," to which Oriental influences such as Bruce Lee movies and the martial arts have been added. "Ah fai" behaviour in schools is characterized by swearing at teachers, threatening teachers, roughing-up students (particularly Canadian-born Chinese), and engaging in fighting with other gangs.

Extortion is an important feature of the gangs' activity in schools. In one incident, a Canadian-born Chinese student in grade ten was approached by a gang member. The following is the victim's account of the incident:

Gang member: "Do you have fifty dollars?"

Student: "What for?"

Gang member: "You probably need that much for protection."

Student: "What do I need protection for?"

Gang member: "You never know what will happen to you. If you give me fifty dollars, I know someone who will protect you."

Student: "I don't need protection and I don't have fifty dollars."

Gang member: "Maybe forty dollars will do. I will talk to your protector and he will protect you."

Student: "I don't need it."

Several days later, the student was beaten up at school by a group of gang members armed with nunchaku (clubs used for flailing rice). It was several weeks before the student recovered, and when he returned to school he was once again asked for protection money, and this time he paid it. In a similar incident, a student was forced to go the bank and withdraw \$200.00 from his account and hand it over to a group of four gang members. In neither of these two extortion incidents were the victims willing to give evidence because of the fear of reprisal.

Within the Chinatown community, the four youth gangs have committed a wide variety of crimes. Shoplifting, pick-pocketing, disruption of community activities, possession of illegal weapons, beating of Canadian-born Chinese, gambling, trafficking in soft drugs, and gang fighting all have been reported. Over 50% of the members of all four youth gangs had juvenile delinquency records in 1975. In the Golden Wheels gang, over 90% of the members had records.

The discussions with businessmen in Chinatown revealed that the gangs refused to pay for goods or services. One restaurateur reported that a gang, after eating, told him to "put the bill on our account." The account was, of course, never settled. In another restaurant, one of the gangs (unidentified) started a fight which resulted in some breakage of tableware. To the surprise of the manager, a gang spokesman asked for \$200.00 from the manager to ensure that a similar incident would not occur again. The money was given.

Of the four gangs, the Phantom Riders was the only one that had any contact with the young adult gangs. From time to time, the strongest of the young adult gangs (Chung Ching) recruited members of the Phantom Riders to assist them in their criminal activities. There was considerable rivalry between the gangs. Friction was greatest between the Phantom Riders and the Golden Skippers, both of whom had reputations as vicious fighters. "Turf" as such was not particularly important, but where the Phantom Riders were going the Skippers avoided, and vice-versa.

During the duration of this study (1975-1978) the Blue Angels underwent considerable change. When first formed in 1971, the gang was very active in shoplifting, gang fights, altercations with school authorities, and the rest, but at the time of being interviewed the gang had come under the influence of a youth worker who was involving them in a government-assisted community program for the elderly in Chinatown. Members of the gang were gradually becoming involved in organizing entertainment for the elderly, cleaning their homes, helping them do their shopping, and so on. Gang membership was dropping, and some members were taking on regular jobs.

Group processes in the gangs

Interstimulation. This term refers to the basic form of behaviour, what mainly goes on in the face-to-face meetings of the gang. For instance, some gangs engage in frequent body-punching and mutual mockery (Cartwright, 1975, p. 6). In these four cases, limited observational data suggest that a good amount of playing at the martial arts (such as Kung Fu) occurs. Martial arts are important to the gang members not just for fighting purposes; they also serve to develop and strengthen the “young warrior” image the gang members have of themselves.

Recruitment. Each of the four gangs emerged from some organized activity for immigrant youth — the Phantom Riders and the Golden Skippers from the school classes for New Canadians, the Blue Angels at the local YMCA, the Golden Wheels at a local church. A fresh supply of recruits for the gangs thus would come from new immigrants as they came to the organized activity. Admittance rules for the gangs were generally minimal. For example, a Phantom Rider describing entrance criteria cited “any New Canadian who can speak Chinese and who likes the same things we do.”

Goal setting. The analysis of the interview and other data would suggest that the primary goals the gangs pursued were (1) the acquisition of money and (2) manly image building. Money was needed for flashy clothes and cars. The constant display of toughness and aggressive behaviour was designed to show others that they were young warriors who could command respect and fear from all.

Role assignment. There was little role differentiation within the four gangs. For example, none of the gangs had a strong leader, and leadership tended to be specific to the activity at hand.

Status management. A number of writers (Thrasher, 1963, p. 230; Cartwright, 1975, p. 8) have indicated there is a constant struggle for status within a gang. Status management consists essentially of an individual's struggle for group recognition of his particular status. In this study, either insufficient data exist to document this phenomenon, or else it does not exist.

There was, however, considerable evidence to show that status differences did exist between the gangs. Each gang's status was based on (1) its degree of contact with young adult gangs and (2) its fighting ability. At the time of the first interviews in 1975, the Phantom Riders enjoyed the highest status. By late 1976, however, the Golden Skippers were beginning to rival them. The Golden Skippers were a newer gang than the Phantom Riders and in fact were formed initially by some people considered to be not good enough to become Riders; in time, however, they developed a reputation as strong, vicious fighters. The Blue Angels had been a high status gang, but after 1975 their status began to decline when they became more involved in legitimate activities. The Golden Wheels increased in status from 1975 to 1978 as its members grew older and established contacts with young adult gangs.

Currently (1979) none of the four gangs exists at it did at the time of the initial interviews in 1975-76. The Blue Angels have dispersed and the members have largely entered the work force. The Golden Skippers still exist, but are not active. In the case of both the Phantom Riders and the Golden Wheels, a large number of the youths have graduated to young adult gangs.

Gang theory and Chinese youth gangs

The development of Chinese youth gangs in North America in the last decade raises questions as to the nature of these gangs. Are they different from other gangs? Can the formation and operation of these gangs be explained in terms of current sociological gang theory?

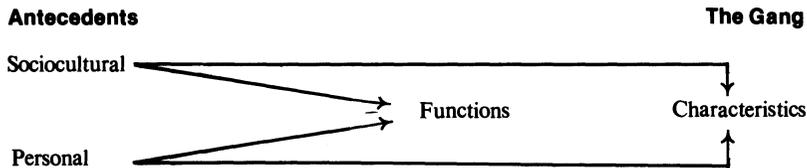
Some writers (Rice, 1977; Sung, 1967) hold that the recent immigrants, who have come from the pseudo-Western urban life of Hong Kong, face problems of adjustment in North America unlike those experienced by earlier Chinese immigrants. These late immigrants do not come from a stable rural environment with strong kinship ties. On the other hand, they do not have the language or education to enable them to fit into North American society with ease. Consequently they do not belong completely to either Chinese or North American culture. Some writers feel that the large-scale immigration from Hong Kong that has occurred in the past decade has produced predictable social results. Rice (1977) quotes an unnamed anthropologist:

“What makes you think that Chinese youth, with poor housing, social, educational, and economic discrimination, and conflict with a new culture, might escape what the Irish and Italian children went through, or what black and Puerto Rican children go through?” (p. 69)

The findings of this study of Chinese youth gangs will be analyzed in terms of current gang theory. The schema for analysis is that of Reuterman (1975: pp. 23-25) and is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

THE SEQUENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTECEDENTS, PERSONAL ANTECEDENTS, GANG FUNCTIONS, AND GANG CHARACTERISTICS



The schema has four sections:

- (1) Socio-cultural antecedents — those factors stemming mainly from the surrounding social milieu which encourage the formation of gangs
- (2) Personal antecedents — those factors relating to the personal characteristics of individual gang members
- (3) Gang functions — various services that the gang provides for its members
- (4) Gang characteristics — various aspects of the gang's membership, organization, norms, values, behaviours, and so on.

Socio-cultural antecedents

The high incidence of juvenile delinquency among immigrants has long been a subject of investigation in North America and abroad (Empey, 1978; Short, 1975; Gibbens and Ahrenfeldt, 1966). Most studies have stressed broken homes, bad economic conditions, conflict of cultural norms, and conflict between parents and children as important factors contributing to the development of delinquency among immigrant children. Two decades ago Eisenstadt (1959) suggested that, although these factors do account in varying degrees for different manifestations of delinquency, they seemed rather inadequate. Instead, he suggested that juvenile delinquency among immigrant children could be better understood if certain specific characteristics of the processes of adaptation and absorption of new immigrants were taken into account. These characteristics were (1) the diminution of the immigrant family's ability to satisfy the needs and aspirations of its members, particularly its adolescents; (2) the limitation of the social sphere and functions of the family, leading to the emergence of specific youth groups; (3) the extent to which the immigrant group establishes a positive identification with the new society and the extent to which this identification is not blocked by the "absorbing" environment.

The data in this study suggest that these three main points in Eisenstadt's theoretical position are particularly useful in explaining the origin and development of the Chinese youth gangs in this study. Firstly, there is evidence that the families of this past decade's wave of Chinese immigrants are not satisfying the needs of its members, particularly its adolescents. Fathers and mothers of gang members were found to be working long hours, often at two or three jobs each.

Youngsters were left on their own and there was little supervision and guidance (Tisshaw, 1976, p. 3). The traditionally close Chinese family unit did not exist.

Secondly, there was evidence to suggest a limitation in the traditional sphere and functions of the Chinese family. Reports of social workers showed that the traditional Chinese extended kinship group did not exist among the families of the gang members. Parental authority was challenged, resulting in conflict between parents and youngsters (Tisshaw, 1976, p. 3). Eisenstadt suggests that the limitation of the sphere of the family and its traditional values gives rise to the formation of peer groups by older children and adolescents. These groups then serve to fill the social vacuum between the family and community.

Why do some peer groups become delinquent and others not? The most plausible answer to this question comes out of a careful examination of Eisenstadt's third point, that is, the immigrant's degree of positive identification with the host society and the extent to which this identification is blocked or not blocked by the "absorbing" society. One of the features of North American life that has served to attract poorer immigrants from Hong Kong in the past decade is the free public education existing in Canada and the United States. There is no universal free education to the college level in Hong Kong, so potential immigrants see North America as a land of educational opportunity. To the Chinese, education is the key to success in life in terms of social status and high income. Parents will make almost any sacrifice to ensure that their children receive the highest level of education possible. Consequently, one finds in Canada (*Saturday Night*, 1977, pp. 11-14) as in the U.S.A. (Sung, 1967, p. 128) persons of Chinese extraction occupying a disproportionately high percentage of the positions in the professions.

The gang members in this study faced serious problems with their parents about educational expectations. Their parents expected them to succeed in school. The difficulties the youths encountered in learning English, however, made attainment of success unlikely. The youths saw around them all the evidence (well-paying jobs, high priced cars, and so on) of what success in school could provide. They saw this evidence particularly among the Canadian-born Chinese. Success was being denied, however, because of their inadequacy in English. As Cloward and Ohlin (1960) point out, delinquent groups develop when a society establishes certain success-goals for youth and at the same time provides youth with few legitimate opportunities to successfully attain the goals. In the absence of such opportunities, delinquency or crime becomes an alternative way of attaining them. Thus frustrated youths form gangs to achieve their goals through illegitimate means. One leader in the Vancouver Chinese community put it this way:

Traditionally, Chinese parents want their children to achieve at the highest level, and this usually means university. They put pressure on the child and he can't cope because of the language difficulty. He (the student) feels insecure and gets into activities that create problems in the community (*Vancouver Sun*, 1973, p. 34).

Personal Antecedents

Only limited data on the personal characteristics of gang members were collected in this study. What data exist suggest that these Chinese youths suffer considerable anxiety about their ability to become successful adults in Canadian society. This probably explains why much of the gang members' behaviour was devoted to developing the "young warrior" image.

Gang functions

The data from this study offer support to the proposition that a gang provides various educational and psychological supports for the young male. The gang provides reassurance, security, and needed validation of a frame of reference that varies from that of the larger society (Miller, 1975). In the case of the male adolescent who is a recent immigrant, the gang can take on an ever greater degree of importance as a reference group.

A very important question arises : When does a delinquent gang no longer serve a function for immigrant youth? Eisenstadt (1959, pp. 205-206) suggests that this occurs when the gang members solve their problems of finding an effective means of communication and integration with the adult community, enabling them to learn acceptable social roles. In this study, members of the Blue Angels, through the efforts of the youth worker, were able to make this transition from gang membership to responsible young adulthood.

Gang characteristics

The data from this study tend to support the concept of the gang as a near group (Yablonsky, 1962; Haskell & Yablonsky, 1974). The Chinese youth gangs had shifting memberships, distributed leadership, diffuse expectations and roles for members, limited group cohesion, and a variable life span. Like the gangs studied by Miller (1975, 1977), the Chinese youth gangs were not overly concerned with "turf," but more concerned with money. As such, they could be typified as essentially criminally oriented (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). In his study of gangs, Spergel (1964) found that criminally-oriented gangs had two principal sub-orientations: (1) the theft orientation — where limited illegitimate opportunities existed to attain culturally-induced success goals; and (2) the racketeering orientation — where ample illegitimate opportunities existed to attain these success goals. In this study, both the racketeering sub-orientation and the theft sub-orientation were present. Extortion was an important activity of the Phantom Riders. This gang has close contact with a young adult gang and thus had ample opportunity to learn and use the illegitimate means needed to achieve success. The other three gangs (Golden Skippers, Blue Angels, Golden Wheels) did not have contacts with young adult gangs, and so theft became their simple way of attempting to achieve their success goals.

Summary

Chinese youth gangs are a relatively new social problem in urban centres of North America. This study examined group characteristics and group processes of four such gangs operating in Vancouver's Chinatown from 1975 to 1978. An analysis of the gangs in terms of socio-cultural antecedents, personal antecedents, gang functions, and gang characteristics revealed certain similarities between these Chinese youth gangs and youth gangs studied by other researchers.

The problem of Chinese youth gang formation is likely to continue as long as Canadian and American immigration authorities continue to admit poorly educated youth who have little chance to succeed in their host countries. These youth will continue to experience conflict with their families, within their schools and with older established inhabitants.

The question of "what to do" about Chinese youth gangs was outside the scope of this paper. The authors would like to offer, however, one perceptive comment by Eisenstadt (1959) on what might be done to inhibit the formation of gangs among immigrant youth. He says that immigrant youth must be able

to find and acquire new, permanent and recognized social roles and to participate in close personal relations with the old inhabitants. The existence of personal channels through which the immigrants can be introduced to new social settings is the prerequisite of absorption. In many cases, the existence of such channels mitigates the results of unfavorable family settings . . . and the negative identification between the families and the community (p. 208).

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