



A Gang

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KEY WORDS Gang. Patched. Loyalty. Staunch

ABSTRACT Gangs form like peer groups, and include especially young men of minority groups, who are usually dispossessed, and who find themselves barred from easy entry into the larger society. Membership in a gang is marked in New Zealand by a patch (or badge) on a black leather jacket. Membership provides those involved with friends, social networks, activities, values, a sense of identity, and a means of gaining a livelihood, even if different from that acceptable to the rest of society. Although those in the larger society often fear gangs and gang members, that larger society may set up stigma, discrimination, and other patterns of behaviour that help to create and to maintain gangs. The author examined a gang operating in Palmerston North and noted that it serves some valuable purposes for members.

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