

Review

The turnover in adult gang-criminal groups and outlaw motorcycle clubs, 2009-2016

Background and objectives:

- The study aims to uncover the turnover in adult gang-criminal groups and outlaw motorcycle clubs in Denmark.
- The aim is to clarify the stability in the environments by comparing the number of new members with the number of disengaged members.

Research design:

- The report is based on information about 3,332 males, who were recorded in the Police Intelligence Database (PID) as outlaw bikers or gang members at any point from June 2009 to 1 January 2017. When a person is no longer considered to be active in a gang, the police remove the person from the database.
- An outlaw motorcycle club or adult gang-criminal group is defined as an organised group that carries out serious crime.
- Compared to American street gangs, members of Danish adult gang-criminal groups are generally older, more organised and involved in gang activities for a longer period.

Findings:

- Two thirds of the persons recorded as members in April 2016 were recorded as affiliated with outlaw motorcycle clubs such as Hells Angels and Bandidos. The remaining third were recorded as members of adult gang-criminal groups.
- The study finds that less than one tenth have been recorded as outlaw bikers or gang members during the entire period, i.e. nearly seven years. Stable members are mostly outlaw bikers.
- The average duration of membership among those who left an adult gang-criminal group or outlaw motorcycle club during the period under review is 3.3 years. There are, however, large differences between the groups in that respect; the average duration is, for instance, considerably shorter for members of support clubs or puppet clubs of outlaw motorcycle gangs.
- The average age of gang members when recorded in the Police Intelligence Database is 30.1 years among outlaw bikers and 23.2 years among gang members.
- Members who joined an outlaw motorcycle club at a relatively young age tend to leave the group faster than members who joined at a higher age. The opposite trend is observed for gang members.
- Less than one tenth of the outlaw bikers and gang members who, according to the police data, left their gang returned at a later point during the period under review.
- Outlaw bikers who temporarily left their group tend to rejoin the same organisation while gang members were more likely to join new organisations.
- Some gang members changed gang affiliation without leaving temporarily. Half of these changes occurred collectively (i.e. five or more persons changed group affiliation simultaneously), which often reflected the splits or mergers of groups.

