

Graffiti as Intelligence: an Analysis of Encoded Messages in Gang Graffiti Renderings

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Abstract : Many law enforcement officials believe that gangs communicate messages to both the community and to rival gangs through graffiti. Some social scientists have documented this as well, however no recent research has examined gang graffiti for its underlying meaning. Empirical research on gang graffiti and gang communication through graffiti is limited. This research can be described as an exploratory effort to better understand how, and perhaps why, gangs employ this medium for communication. Furthermore this research showcases how law enforcement agencies can utilize this hidden form of communication to better direct resources and impact gang violence.

Keywords : gangs, graffiti, juvenile justice, policing

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