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## Sommario/riassunto

Gangs, often associated with brutality and senseless destructive violence, have not always been viewed as inherently antagonistic. The first studies of gangs depicted them as alternative sources of order in urban slums where the state's authority was lacking, and they have subsequently been shown to be important elements in some youth life cycles. Despite their proliferation there is little consensus regarding what constitutes a gang. Used to denote phenomena ranging from organized crime syndicates to groups of youths who gather spontaneously on street corners, even the term "gang" is

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