

Turf wars

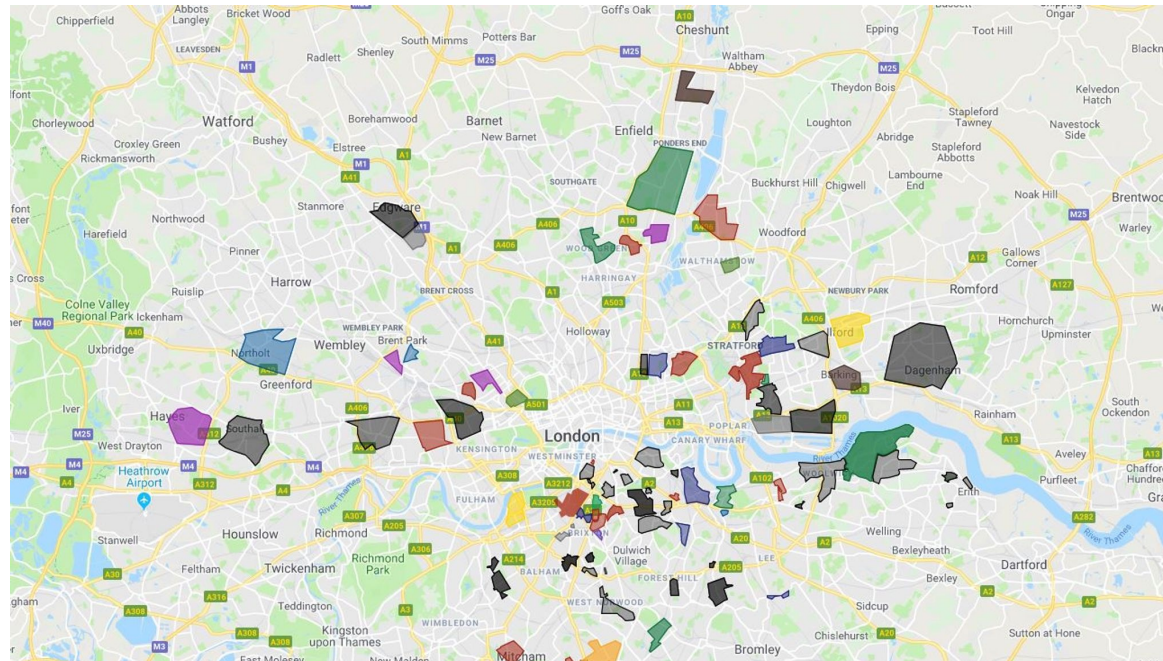


Overview

- Homicide is 3rd leading cause of death 15-19 (CDC, 2021)
- Gangs contribute a significant amount of drug and violent crimes (National Youth Gang Survey Analysis, National Drug Intelligence Center 2008)
- Gangs have been expanding outwards from urban centers to suburban and rural areas (National Gang Center, 2008).

Overview

- Increase in gang violence nationwide
- Gangs don't show any trend of decreasing, rather as they expand the threat of increase in numbers becomes apparent



Overview

- Previous anti-gang initiatives have yielded mixed results
- Prevention techniques likewise show mixed results (restrictively target youth proactively, adults receive sentencing enhancements)
- Growing interest in gang-on-gang violence in combo with network science

Objectives

- Synthesize information on how networks of rivalries are constructed
- Understand internal workings of gangs socially

Why Gangs?

- Protective alliances
- Consequence of deprived regions
- In a low resource environment, it provides access to key resources
 - Socially
 - Developmentally
 - Physically

Social environment

- Gangs contain unofficial hierarchies centered around status/reputation
- As gangs are protective alliances, status and reputation are determined by violence (Int & Ext)
- Turnover is frequent and rapid (6mo-1y)

Turf

- Turf is territory claimed by gangs, their "kingdom"
- Turf centered around gang homes and proximate locations
- Touching turfs create violence between gangs
- Turf itself has limited or no known strategic value (as of yet)
- More a means of establishing & maintaining gang hierarchy

Turf

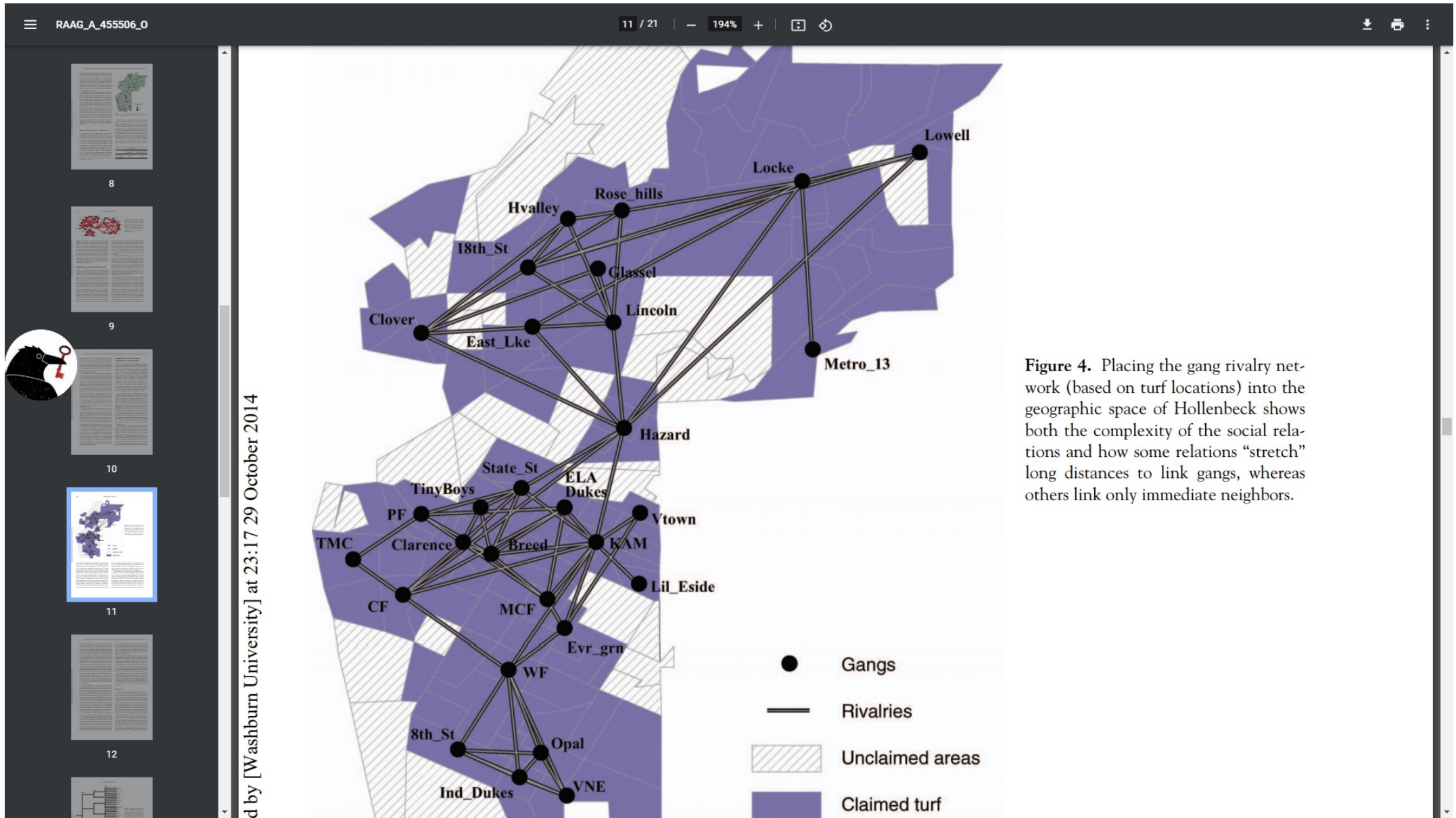
Author: Does the spot really matter that much?

Truck: Man, ain't you listening? It ain't about no fucking corner. I mean, yeah, it's about corner, but, fuck the corner—it's about not looking like a punk. If you a punk, a corner ain't going to help, see. Plenty of bitches got corners they can't keep. What good is a corner to them? You can only keep a corner if you down and everyone knows you and your mob are down too. If people know you're solid, and that you and your boys throw down, then you be all right. You're straight. You got your corner and your rep. That's just the way it is. (Papachristos, 2009).



Rivalries

- Formed due to historical battles between gangs
- Tit for tat
- Created to maintain gang reputation
- Spatial proximity + prior history significantly increases the chance of a rivalry being maintained



Radil, Flint, and Tita, 2010

Key findings

- Gang violence (and homicide) is sporadic, public and dominated by firearms
- Escalation when faced with hostile gang members
- Once blood is spilt – point of no return is reached
- Tit for tat (leaving attacks unpunished signals weakness)
- Geography is a mitigating factor (turf)

Research problems

- Large number of gangs – Estimated 20,000+ W/ 1+ M. members
- Official sources only account for known members
- Membership may be very temporary or constantly shifting (6 MO-1 Yr)
- Overreliance on self-report
- Overreliance on Hollenbeck, Chicago and Boston data
- Limited access to gang members

Open questions

- Lack of ego-centric experimentation (properties of networks)
- Utilization of space (open and restricted)
- What's more effective – viewing ties as events or as temperaments
- Are multi-year rivalries stay consistent if viewed biennially?