

Status and Hierarchy Formation

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Casualties of Social Combat: School Networks of Peer Victimization and Their Consequences

ROBERT FARIS AND DIANE FELMLEE

Overview

Examines how status can increase the likelihood of victimization and how status might magnify the subsequent social psychological distress caused by victimization

Three propositions:

- 1) Aggressors get greater social benefits from harassing high-status targets
- 2) Social cost to the victim > Social benefit to the aggressor
- 3) The social positions of many high-status actors are fragile

Main belief: Status increases both the risk of victimization and, crucially, the severity of its consequences

“Instrumental targeting”- A process of choosing targets who will offer the greatest social rewards in the eyes of the intended audience (calculations)

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Delayed physical development, poor self-image, and social isolation increase the risk of victimization over-time

Hypothesis 2: Network centrality increases subsequent victimization until the highest levels of centrality are reached, when victimization rates decline

Hypothesis 3: Gender bridges are less likely to experience victimization over time

Hypothesis 4: Girls are more likely than boys to be victims of aggression, particularly non-physical aggression, overtime

Hypothesis 5: Victimization increases subsequent psychological distress and social marginalization. Network centrality magnifies the adverse psychological and social consequences of victimization

Data and Methods

19 Schools in North Carolina completed surveys in five waves ($n = 4,210$)

Dependent Variable: Victimization

Independent Variables: Betweenness Centrality, isolates, pubertal development, appearance satisfaction, multiple cross-gender friendship, gender segregation, gender bridge

Controls: Prior aggression, averages for friend's aggression and victimization, ever been on a date, GPA, school sports, school size, demographics, socioeconomic, race, single-parent home, and low-educational attainment

Random Effects: depression, anxiety, anger, school attachment, and centrality

Key Findings

Girls experienced higher rates of victimization

Centrality was significant and curvilinear on victimization

Social isolates were victimized higher than poor self-image and delayed physical development

Having friends victimized increased victimization

Victimization increased anxiety and depression

Victimization decreased school attachment and network centrality

Having an aggressive friend decreased victimization

Key Takeaways

Victims are often close status rivals

Changes the perception of bullying

Contagion

Follows Gould's theory: People in the middle trying to reach the top are the most likely to be vulnerable and aggressive.

Policy implication: Accessibility to mental health resources

Future Research: Do these same results apply to private schools, charter schools, or an all male or all female school?

Discussion Questions

- 1) One variable Faris and Felmlee did not account for was social media. Since its publication, apps like Snapchat, Tik Tok, and Instagram have grown and have reached younger audiences. How would the addition of social media change victimization in this study?
- 2) For the policy implications from this article the author suggests new avenues for school bullying prevention programs. However, it was not mentioned as to whether the victimization occurred at school. What is the importance of identifying the space where victimization occurs?

In the Eye of the Beholder: Meaning and Structure of Informal Status in Women's and Men's Prisons

DEREK KREAGER, JACOB YOUNG, DANA HAYNIE, DAVID
SCHAEFER, MARTIN BOUCHARD, AND KIMBERLY DAVIDSON

Background

Previous research has established that men and women experience different levels and kinds of pain due to imprisonment.

Gendered socialization processes, role expectations, and gendered social structure account for these observed differences in pain, and prison adaptation.

Surviving in prison requires mechanisms and processes that give rise to status hierarchies in prison.

Exploring the informal social organizations in women's and men's prisons, while acknowledging the marginalization of women in the broader social structure, is important.

Purpose of Study

The goal of the authors in this study is to understand status hierarchies in women's and men's prison.

By understanding, the authors aim to:

- understand the varying subjective perceptions of prison status - *meaning of status*.
- tease out the structural properties of prison unit status hierarchies
- explore sources of status, and the differences and similarities across four prison units.

Methods

sequential data collection and analysis using an *abductive mixed-method approach (AMA)*.

AMA allows researchers to, identify themes in data, deductively analyze new hypothesis and make theoretical contributions while dwelling on previous research and theories.

Qualitative approach was used to explore *why nominated peers had power and influence* - meanings. Quantitative (network analysis - aggregation of status nominations into unit-level social networks for quantitative analysis) approach was used to examine interdependency and system-level properties, particularly whether:

- similar perceptions surrounded the same high-status nominees
- nominees share different or similar characteristics
- nominees and nominators are similar across measured attributes

Data Source: Pennsylvania state prison; total of 222 women & 133 male inmate (Kraeger et al. 2017)

First women prison unit: minimum- security prison; good behavior unit.

Second women prison unit: maximum-security prison; good behavior unit.

Third women prison unit: maximum prison; general population.

Men prison unit: medium security prison.

Qualitative Results (focus group & face to face interviews)

In both men and women prison units, status narratives revolved around (i) age, time-in and prison wisdom, (ii) Sociable and positive personality, (iii) Teacher and helper (iv) Relations with guards/staff. Fear, control of resources and street reputation/gang as status sources were infrequent sources of status.

“old head” narratives exist across men and women contexts.

Narratives that were different across contexts

Bully or negative personality: prevalent in all three women's units but not in men's
Caregiver and emotional behavior: prevalent among women's units but not in men's.
Spirituality and Religious Leadership: differences between women units.

Quantitative Results (ERGMs & AMEs)

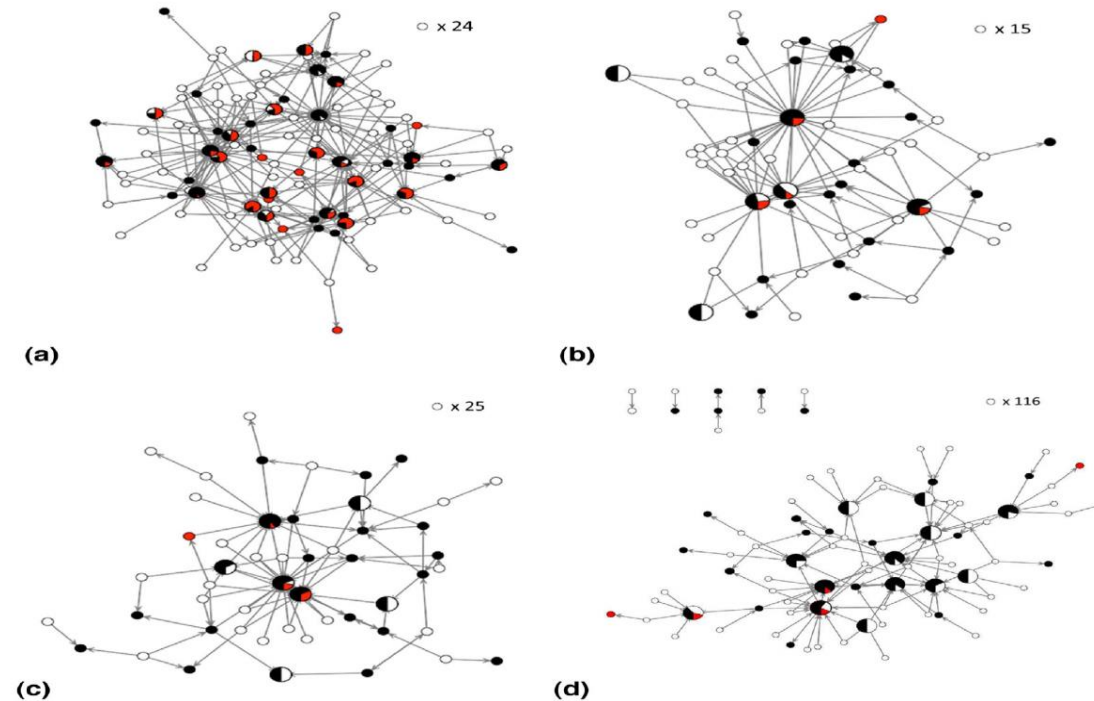


FIGURE 1 Balance of positive, neutral, and negative ties in the status networks of (a) Unit 1, (b) Unit 2, (c) Unit 3, and (d) Men's Unit [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]
Notes: Nodes sized by indegree, isolate frequencies listed in top-right of each graph, and pie charts reflect proportion of incoming nominations that are positive [black], neutral [white], and negative [red].

Quantitative Results

Residents are more likely to receive positive/neutral than negative nominations per age, time-in; racial homophily among hispanic and black women; religious affiliation was associated to all three types of status nominations whereas non-affiliation was associated with positive/neutral but not negative.

“Get along with” network was closely linked to positive/neutral nominations and not negative; being well linked is associated with greater power and influence without similar association with negative network.

Differences between women and men

women were more likely than men to see those whom they get along with as powerful and influential.

Similarities between women and men

positive status was closely linked to “old head” attributes in women’s and men’s prison units. positive and neutral nominations operate similarly across contexts.

Beyond the Article

We can apply their theoretical contribution to further extend code of the streets perspectives.

narratives surrounding “old heads” will likely be a source of status on the streets as well. Comments such as “I’ve been doing these streets for long” “I’ve seen it all.”

Discussion Questions

- 1) Do you think we would see the same nominations for most influential peers in a unit if this survey was given to the prison guards? What are the benefits of providing surveys to both prison guards and inmates to determine hierarchical status within the prison?
- 2) Status nominations appeared to be large among a handful of people. The authors argue that it shows a general consensus among residents on who is powerful and influential. Given that *lifers* received more nominations despite their small number (20%, 10%, <3%), would these findings be replicable in units with more *lifers*? Why or why not?
- 3) In terms of policy, if “old head” narratives create and maintain status hierarchy, and bring some level of social order, what are some implications we can think of regarding inmates transfers between prison facilities.

Murder by Structure: Dominance Relations and the Social Structure of Gang Homicide

ANDREW PAPACHRISTOS

Status

“Quick wits and quick fists”

Willingness to commit violence transfers into deterrence and a higher status position

Changes in status or exponential (+ & -)

Status & retaliation follow warrior culture principles

Hierarchy

Dominance contests (Int & Ext)

Group honor centered around dishing and not receiving

Structure inherently removes the ability to de-escalate

Methods

Chicago (1994-2002) homicides
Coded for gang related or not
Combined with turf-approximations

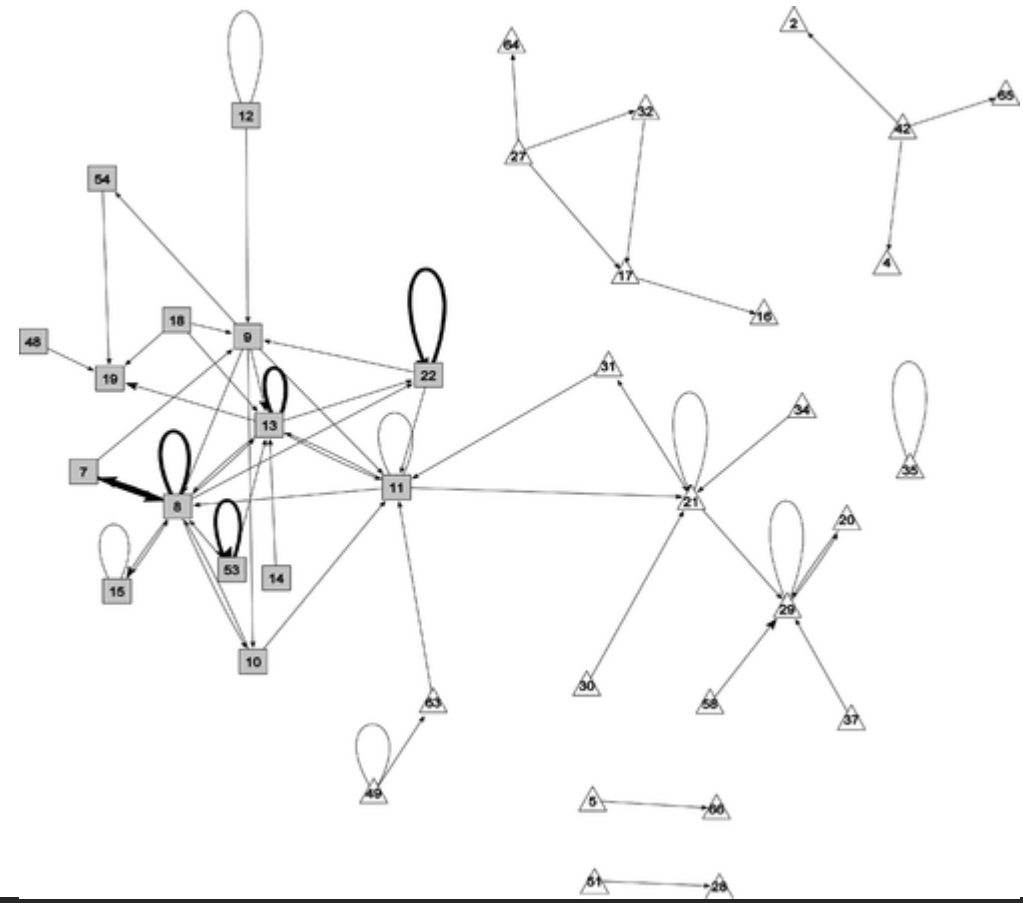
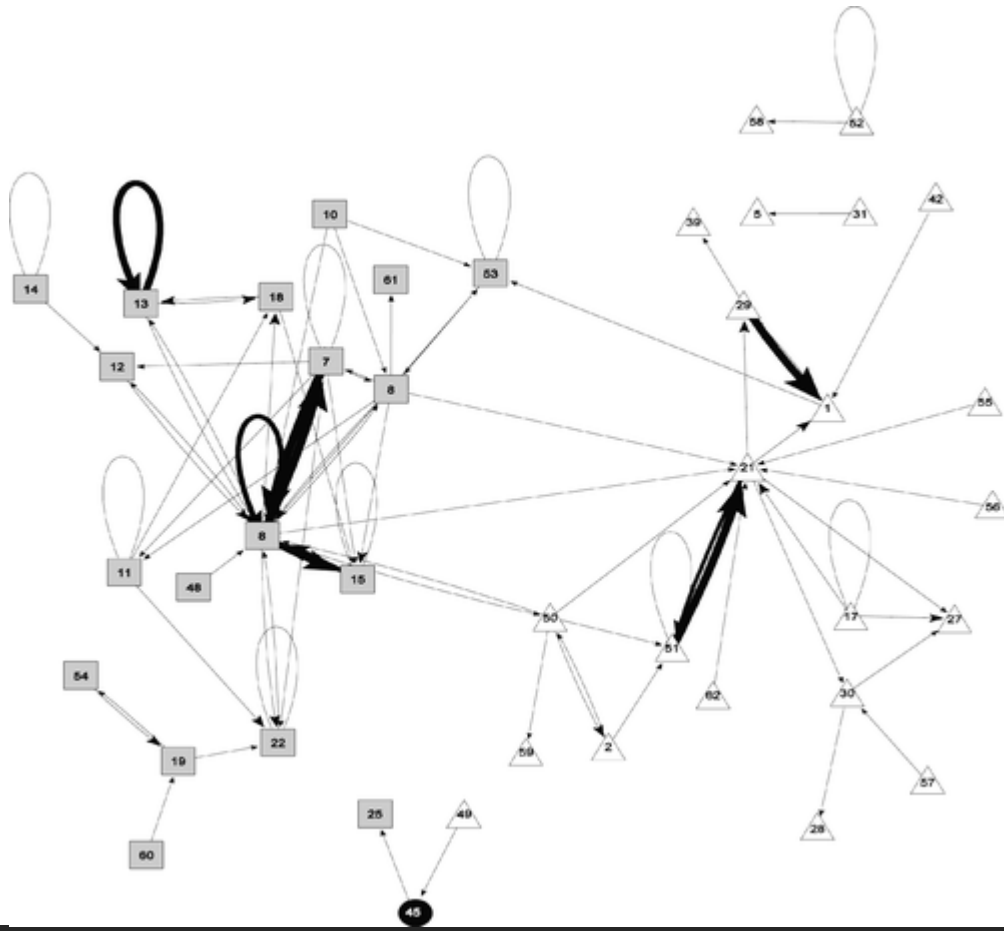
Questions

- 1) People low on the internal hierarchy are more likely to face violence from both outside and within. However, having weak and vulnerable members opens the group up to external threats. How do you think gang hierarchies maintain themselves? Do you think gangs want weak members that get taken out by other gangs to use as pawns? Are they artificially creating external attacks against themselves?
- 2) The article utilizes an economic model of gang homicide. Status is the currency and gangs trade homicides for status within the “economy” of gangs. Is there another model you think better explains this phenomenon?
- 3) Why do you think intraracial gang violence garners more status than interracial or is the effect caused by some underlying tertiary factor?
- 4) Being more proficient at being violent would naturally make you a special target for your enemies. Are the key players and high-hierarchy members “cycled” through more often due to their higher status also equaling a higher threat level?
- 5) Should police create outposts and checkpoints in transitionary space between gangs?

B=S T=H D=A C=W

1998

2002



Rules of the Game: Exponential Random Graph Models of a Gang Homicide Network

KEVIN LEWIS AND ANDREW PAPACHRISTOS

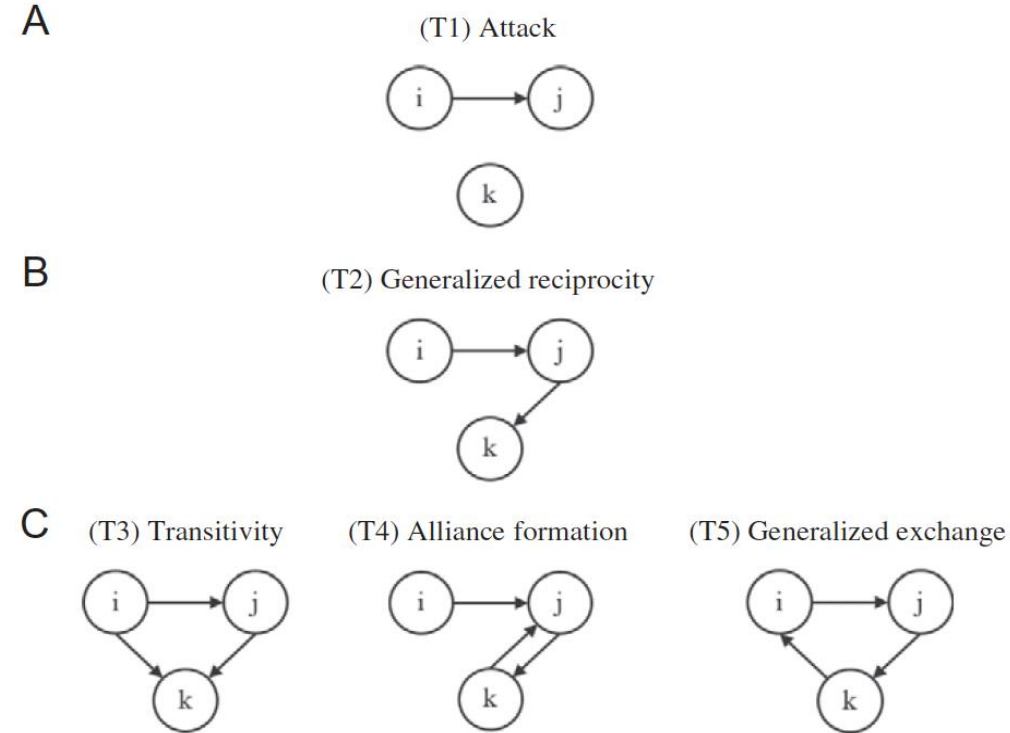
Background

Hierarchical structure

Horizontal alliance

Egalitarian structure

Figure 1. Some basic lines of action in gang violence networks



configurations—each representing a potential “rule of the game”—and their implications for social status in the broader gang system.

Purpose of Study

The authors aim to examine which of the three rules influence patterns of gang violence in Chicago. They want to understand which gang kill members of which other gangs; the rules of interaction that are necessary and sufficient to explain observed structure of homicide.

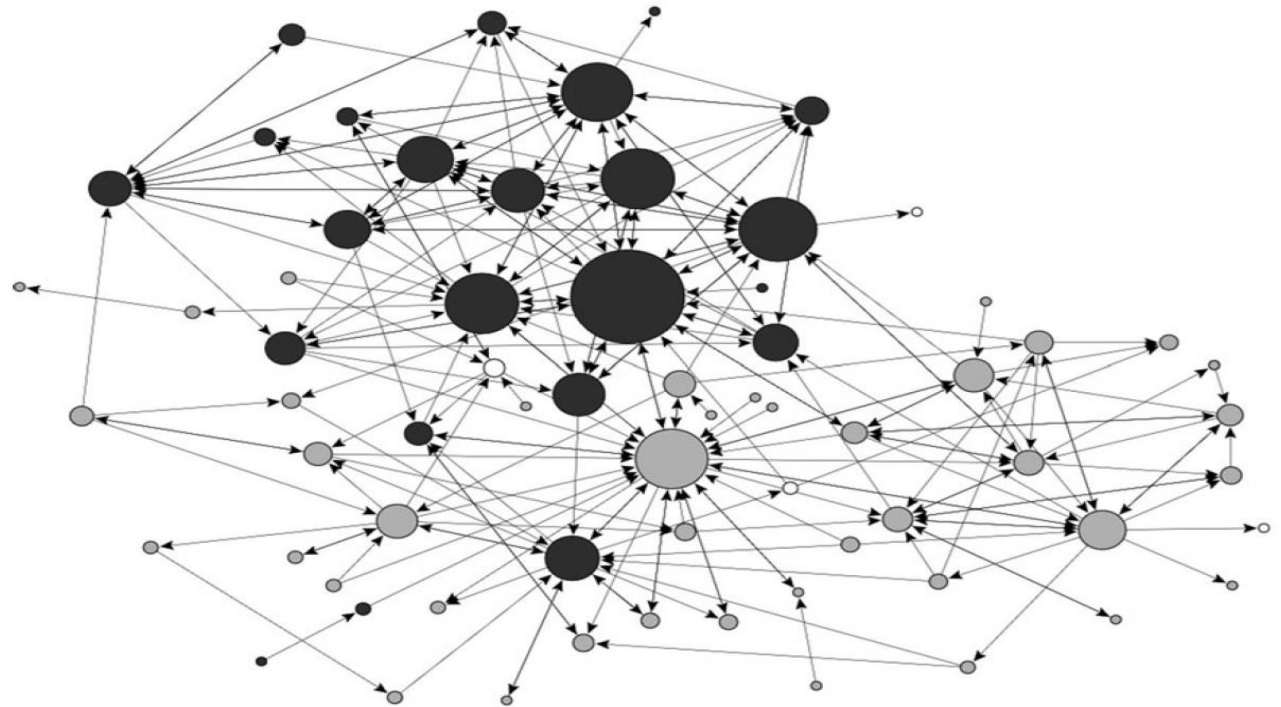
Methods (ERGM's)

Data Sources

Police recorded homicides
(636 homicides among 68
gangs between 01/96 and
10/2000).

Descriptives

Figure 2. The social structure of gang homicide in Chicago, 1996–2000



Note: Darkly shaded nodes represent black gangs; lightly shaded nodes represent Latino gangs; unshaded nodes represent white gangs. Node size is proportionate to gang size.

Modeling

Due to their interest in modeling *configurations* (micro-structures), they use ERGMs (allows to study interdependence).

Four main effects:

Path closure (transitivity) - tendency to victimize the victims of our victims

Cyclic closure (generalized exchange) - tendency to be victimized by the victims of our victims.

Activity & popularity closure (alliance formation) - tendency of gangs who victimize or are victimized by the same gangs to victimize each other.

Other effects: density, reciprocity, sinks, sources, isolates, popularity & activity spread.

Results

Addressing the time sensitive question in one- and two-year periods (changes between 1996 and 2000 that may affect their estimates): very few rules are consistent over time; fewer gangs receive ties and do not send any; more gang sends ties but do not receive any; racial segregation depends on time and racial composition of gangs.

Certain rules are contingent on the racial composition of the gangs; the strength of racial homophily varies between Black and Latino gangs; strength of direct reciprocity rule varies depending on which two gangs are involved.

Gang networks display status differences - 52% of all ties are reciprocated. Hierarchy is *contested* over time: 1999-2000 → generalized exchanges, no strict hierarchy. Gangs resist subordination and struggle for superiority.

Rule of the game is inconsistent across two-year windows: violence evolved via dynamic changes in generating mechanisms.

Discussion Questions

1) We should consider three things as the basis for this question: this paper was published in 2020, with data that is more than 20 years old. Time wise, the authors admit that time could affect rules of the game - “not only did we document an evolving landscape of violence, but also [dynamic change] in the mechanisms that generated it” (p. 1852). Given that mechanisms of gang violence over the last two decades might have changed, would we need more to prevent gang violence in this era than the authors suggest, as per their findings?

2) If these rules of the game shape whether gang violence will occur, what would you describe as the rule of the game on virtual spaces since gangs also use such spaces? Or where will the virtual space rules fit in among the three rules and why do you think so?

Conti: World's Most Dangerous Ransomware Gang

MATT BURGESS

WIRED

Conti Gang

Extorted \$180 million from cyberware attacks last year.

Backed Putin for the Russia Invasion. This led to the “Conti Leaks” highlighting the hierarchical structure.

Has a business-like hierarchical structure: HR, administrators to coders and researchers.

Stern- “Big Boss”

Mango- “General Manager”

Revers- “Middle Manager”

Fluctuates between 62—100 people at any given time.

Conti Gang

All members use pseudonyms

Operates like a software development company

Salaries and a majority do not take part in the ransoms

Mango provided advice regarding staying out of trouble and confronts problematic individuals

Using multiple channels to operate their business that had 2-4 participants with different levels of seniority and responsibilities

Hierarchy occurs in the virtual realm

Discussion Question

Throughout the readings, we saw how status and hierarchy were formed in schools, prisons, and in gangs. However, what we have not discussed is the formation of virtual hierarchies. What are the similarities and differences between a hierarchy in the physical and virtual realm? What role do you think being anonymous online plays in the hierarchy formation?