

CASE STUDY

LOS ANGELES GANGS

Although most case studies we review in this book are about individuals, in this case we concentrate on groups, which is fitting for this chapter because virtually all the theories we will cover in this section are macro- or group-level theories. A recent scientific study by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, showed that when Los Angeles gangs and incidents of gang activities are mapped, the places with the highest frequency of violence are on the borders between two or more rival gangs.¹

WHEN LOS ANGELES GANGS AND INCIDENTS OF GANG ACTIVITIES ARE MAPPED, THE PLACES WITH THE HIGHEST FREQUENCY OF VIOLENCE ARE ON THE BORDERS BETWEEN TWO OR MORE RIVAL GANGS.

boundaries of gang territories, perhaps due to turf disputes or the increased likelihood of encountering rival factions. We shall see that this recently observed phenomenon among established gang territories was to some extent predicted and explained by Chicago School theories of crime and city growth proposed more than half a century ago. We will follow up on this case study toward the end of this chapter.

THINK ABOUT IT:

This 2012 report showed that, contrary to popular belief, the most dangerous places to be in Los Angeles are not the regions deeply within the territory of a dominant gang but rather on the

Why do you think the most violent areas of Los Angeles are those on the borders of rivaling gangs as opposed to regions that are strongly dominated by a single gang?



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