

Wounded city: violent turf wars in a Chicago Barrio

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Abstrak

This book charts a new direction for explanations of neighborhood violence that focuses on the underexamined role of adversarial relations (turf wars) among politicians, gangs, and the police. This case study of the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago investigates why shootings and arsons were concentrated on clusters of blocks in the neighborhoods eastside. Using a mix of ethnographic, historical, and statistical data, the book focuses on two turf wars that triggered incidents of violence and undermined residents violence prevention efforts. First, the political turf war between Chicagos Democratic Party and the neighborhoods independent political leadership curtailed community efforts to prevent violence. The majority-Democrat city council routinely gerrymandered ward boundaries in the neighborhoods eastside to prevent it from becoming another politically independent ward. With few ties to the citys political system, blocks on the eastside had insufficient resources and no organizational infrastructure to prevent violence. Second, the turf war between gangs and police routinely triggered acts of violence. To prevent residents from cooperating with police, gangs committed acts of arson against informants. In response police arrested gang leaders, which ignited violent competition among neighborhood gangs for territory thus made vacant. Wounded City uncovers links between urban political economy and rates of violence on residential blocks. It demonstrates how cities plagued by violence need to heal from physical wounds inflicted by violence as well as wounds inflicted by competition for political power.