

Diagnosing Gangs & Gang Problems in the Caribbean

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Diagnosing Gang Problems

- How we learn about gangs affects how we understand them
- We must understand gangs, to know how to respond effectively to them
- Triangulation helps us understand the problem and develop effective responses

How to Understand Gangs

United States

- Expert gang surveys
- School surveys
- Arrestee surveys
- Gang intelligence & criminal history databases
- Qualitative assessments
- Evaluating interventions

Europe

- Expert gang surveys
- School surveys
- Qualitative assessments

Trinidad and Tobago: Pioneers in the Caribbean

- Gang Expert Survey
 - Developed as part of the Eurogang research program
 - Surveyed gang experts in 52 station districts
- Besson Street Gang Intelligence and Criminal History Projects
 - Non-gang sample (n=878)
 - Gang sample (n=368)

Trinidad and Tobago, Cont.

- Trinidad Arrestee Project Survey (TAPS)
 - Based on the DUF/ADAM
 - Interviewed 421 recently booked adult arrestees
- Trinidad Detention Survey (TDS)
 - Interviewed about 60 adult detainees
- Trinidad and Tobago Youth Survey (TTYYS)
 - Adapted from the Social Development Research Group/Six state Consortium and the TT Peace Programme.
 - Surveyed approximately 4,000 students, Forms 4 thru 6, (i.e., USA comparison grades 8th, 10th, and 12th).

Trinidad and Tobago, Cont.

- Mapping gang territories
 - Helpful for understanding territoriality
 - Also helpful as a diagnostic tool for evaluating police knowledge of gangs
- Evaluating gang violence interventions
 - Two systematic evaluations of gang truces underway with more planned.
- Interviewing gang members
 - Several unsystematic interviews already completed with gang leaders.
 - Plans for more systematic interviews with a larger sample currently being developed

Number of gangs and gang members in Trinidad & Tobago

- 95 gangs
- 1,269 gang members
- 25.8% of gangs formed before 2000
- 74.2% of gangs formed between 2000-2006

Composition of Gangs in TT, Cont.

- About 83% are African, 13% are East Indian
- No female dominated gangs
- About 87% are comprised of adults
- Two-thirds of gangs are comprised of 6 to 50 members
- 95% of gang are comprised of citizens of TT

Organizational Characteristics of Gangs in TT

- 86% have group name
- 61% refer to themselves as a gang, 26% crew, 4.2% Clip/Unit
- 88% claim turf & 75% defend their turf
- 85% do NOT have symbols (i.e., physical identifiers, signs, other)
- 99% illegal activity is accepted by group

Criminal Involvement of T'T Gangs

- Frequent use of alcohol, drug use, and drug sales
- Two-thirds involved in fights with rival groups
- Experts emphasized that gangs most frequently involved in drug sales, robbery and firearms activity

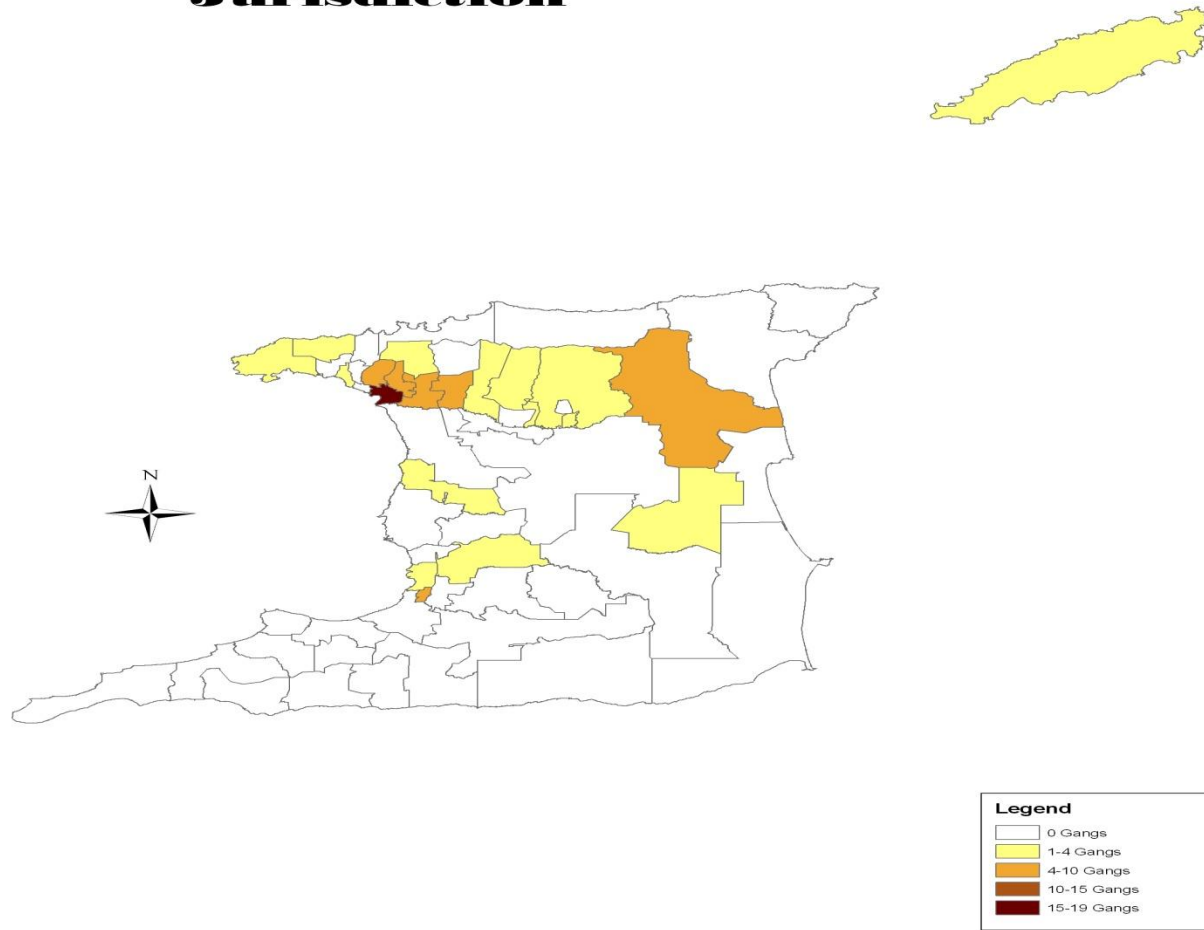
Organizational description of gangs in Trinidad & Tobago

Type	Percent
Classical	8.5%
Neo-classical	4.3%
Compressed	13.8%
Collective	21.3%
Specialty	48.9%
None	3.2%
Total known	94

Gang concentrations in station districts

Five districts with most gangs		# of Gangs	# Gang Members
	Besson Street	19	385
	San Juan	8	130
	Sangre Grande	8	90
	St. Joseph	7	55
	Belmont	6	165

Number of Gangs by Jurisdiction



Besson Street Gang Intelligence, Criminal History Project

Sample characteristics

Characteristic	Non-Gang		Gang Member		Total	
	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Valid Percent
Age distribution						
17 or Younger	4.6	5.7	3.8	5.3	4.3	5.6
18 to 21	18.6	23.3	18.8	26.1	18.6	24.1
22 to 25	21.4	26.9	18.2	25.4	20.5	26.5
26 to 35	23.0	28.9	24.2	33.7	23.4	30.2
36 to 45	8.7	10.9	5.7	8.0	7.8	10.1
46 to 55	1.9	2.4	1.1	1.5	1.7	2.2
56 or Older	1.6	2.0	28.3		1.1	1.5
Missing	20.3				22.6	
N=	878	700	368	264	1,246	964
sig.			**			

Note: Age was computed from date of birth (where known) until August 15, 2005 (date of data extraction).

* Indicates significant difference between gang and non-gang at $p \leq .05$

** Indicates significant difference between gang and non-gang at $p \leq .01$

Sample characteristics, continued

Characteristic	Non-Gang		Gang Member		Total	
	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Valid Percent
Ethnicity						
African	57.1	81.6	87.5	96.7	66.1	86.9
Indian	3.5	5.0	0.8	0.9	2.7	3.6
Mixed/Biracial	7.6	10.9	1.9	2.1	5.9	7.8
Spanish	1.4	2.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.4
Caucasian	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3
Missing	30.1		9.5		24.0	
N=	878	877	368	333	1,246	1,236
sig.			**	**		
Gender						
Male	92.8	92.9	92.9	95.3	92.9	93.6
Female	7.1	7.1	4.6	4.7	6.3	6.4
Missing	0.1		2.4		0.8	
N=	878	613	368	359	1,246	943
sig.			**			

Note: Age was computed from date of birth (where known) until August 15, 2005 (date of data extraction).

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** Indicates significant difference between gang and non-gang at $p \leq .01$

Sample characteristics, continued

Characteristic	Non-Gang		Gang Member		Total	
	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Valid Percent
Ever Arrested						
Percent		20.2		51.4		29.4
N=		878		368		1,246
sig.				**		
Number of arrests						
Mean		0.68		2.09		1.10
SD		1.82		3.52		2.53
N=		878		368		1,246
sig.				**		

Note: Age was computed from date of birth (where known) until August 15, 2005 (date of data extraction).

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Incidence and prevalence of crime by gang membership

Arrest Offense Category	Non-Gang (n=878)		sig.	Gang Member (n=368)		Total (n=1,246)	
	<i>n</i>	Percent		<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Ever Arrested	177	20.2	**	189	51.4	366	29.4
Ever arrested by crime type							
Violent Offense	91	10.4	**	116	31.5	207	16.6
Firearm Related	76	8.7	**	95	25.8	171	13.7
Drug Sales	28	3.2	**	56	15.2	84	6.7
Drug Use/Possession	70	8.0	**	86	23.4	156	12.5
Property Offense	67	7.6	**	51	13.9	118	9.5
Sex Crime	16	1.8		10	2.7	26	2.1
Other	50	5.7	**	46	12.5	96	7.7

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Incidence and prevalence of crime by gang membership, continued

Arrest Offense Category		Non-Gang (n=878)		sig.	Gang Member (n=368)		Total (n=1,246)	
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Number of Arrests		0.68	1.82	**	2.09	3.52	1.10	2.53
Number of arrests by crime type								
	Violent Offense	0.33	1.38	**	0.81	1.59	0.48	1.46
	Firearm Related	0.22	1.04	**	0.45	0.91	0.29	1.01
	Drug Sales	0.05	0.28	**	0.24	0.65	0.10	0.43
	Drug Use/Possession	0.12	0.46	**	0.32	0.64	0.18	0.53
	Property Offense	0.17	0.84	**	0.36	1.62	0.23	1.13
	Sex Crime	0.03	0.30		0.03	0.19	0.03	0.27
	Other	0.16	0.91		0.20	0.60	0.17	0.83

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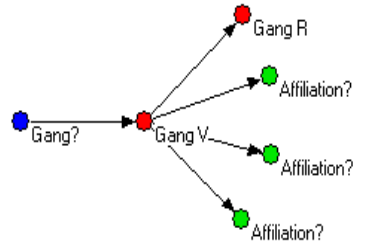
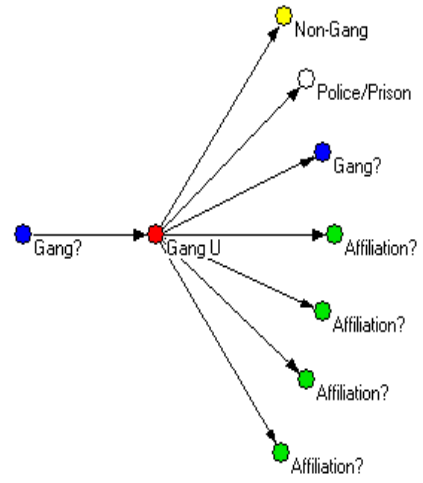
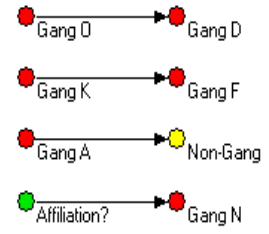
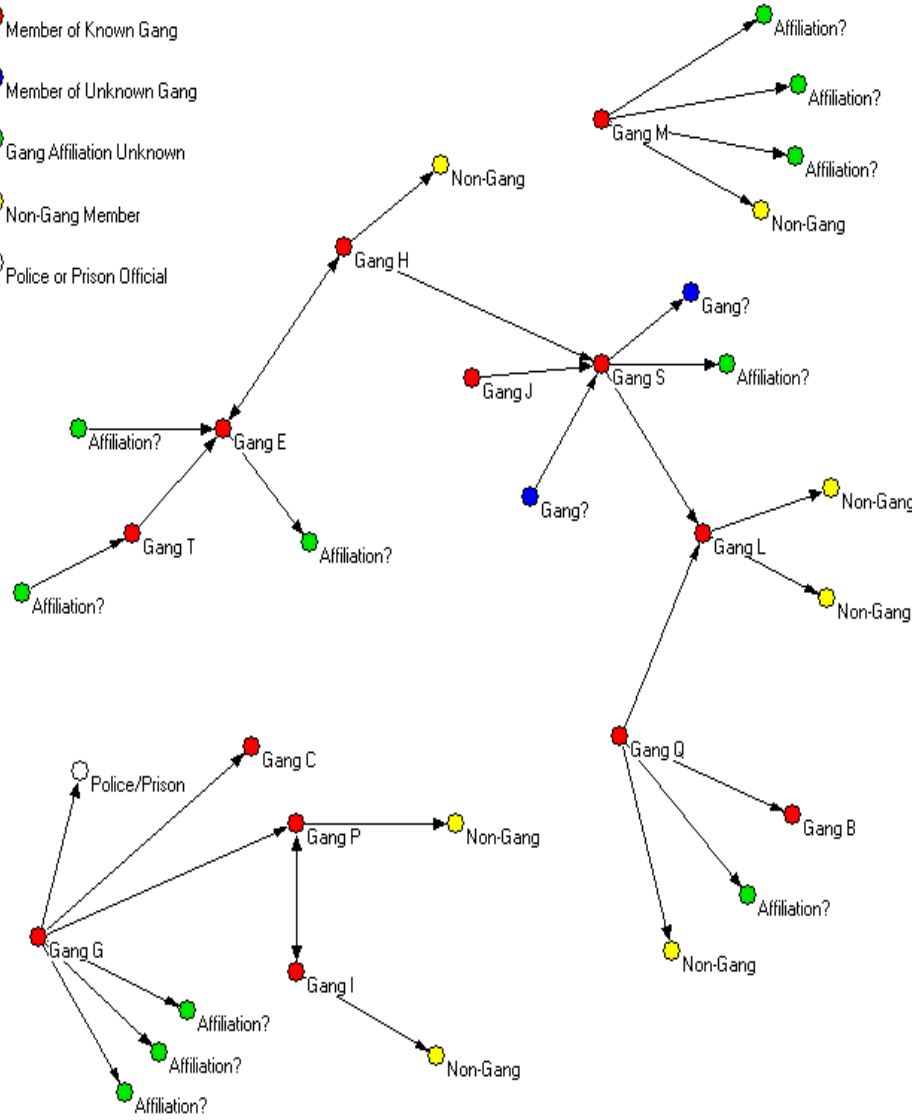
Chronic offenders and their contribution to crime (n=372)

	n	% of Sample	Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests
Chronic offenders	24	6.4	298	38.7
Other offenders	348	93.6	472	61.3
Chronically violent offenders	27	7.2	149	50.0
Other offenders	345	92.3	149	50.0
Chronic drug traffickers	9	2.4	29	33.3
Other offenders	363	97.6	58	66.7
Chronic gun/ammo possession offenders	18	4.8	62	38.3
Other offenders	354	95.2	100	61.7

Gang Involved Homicides in the Besson Street Station District by Known Victim and Suspect Affiliation (1/1/05-1/26/06)

Gang	Number Homicide Suspects	Number Homicide Victimizations	Total	% of Gang Homicides in District
Gang 1	2	8	10	12.35%
Gang 2	6	3	9	11.11%
Gang 3	7	1	8	9.88%
Gang 4	6	1	7	8.64%
Gang 5	3	3	6	7.41%
Gang 6	4	2	6	7.41%
Gang 7	6	0	6	7.41%

- Member of Known Gang
- Member of Unknown Gang
- Gang Affiliation Unknown
- Non-Gang Member
- Police or Prison Official



Besson Street Gang Homicide Case Processing Success (January 2005 through January 2006)

	Number	Total Percent	Probability of Event
Homicides involving Gang Member	53	----	100%
Arrests	3	5.6%	5.6%
Convictions	0	0	0.0%

**HPWG
Gang/ROP
Subcommittee**

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graph TD; A[HPWG Gang/ROP Subcommittee] --- B[Gang/ROP Task Force]; A --- C[Gang/ROP Intelligence Detail];
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Gang/ROP Task Force

Staffed with 1 supervisor & 10 officers from Intelligence, Homicide, OCNU, IATF, Besson CID, plus 1 prosecutor

**Gang/ROP Intelligence
Detail**

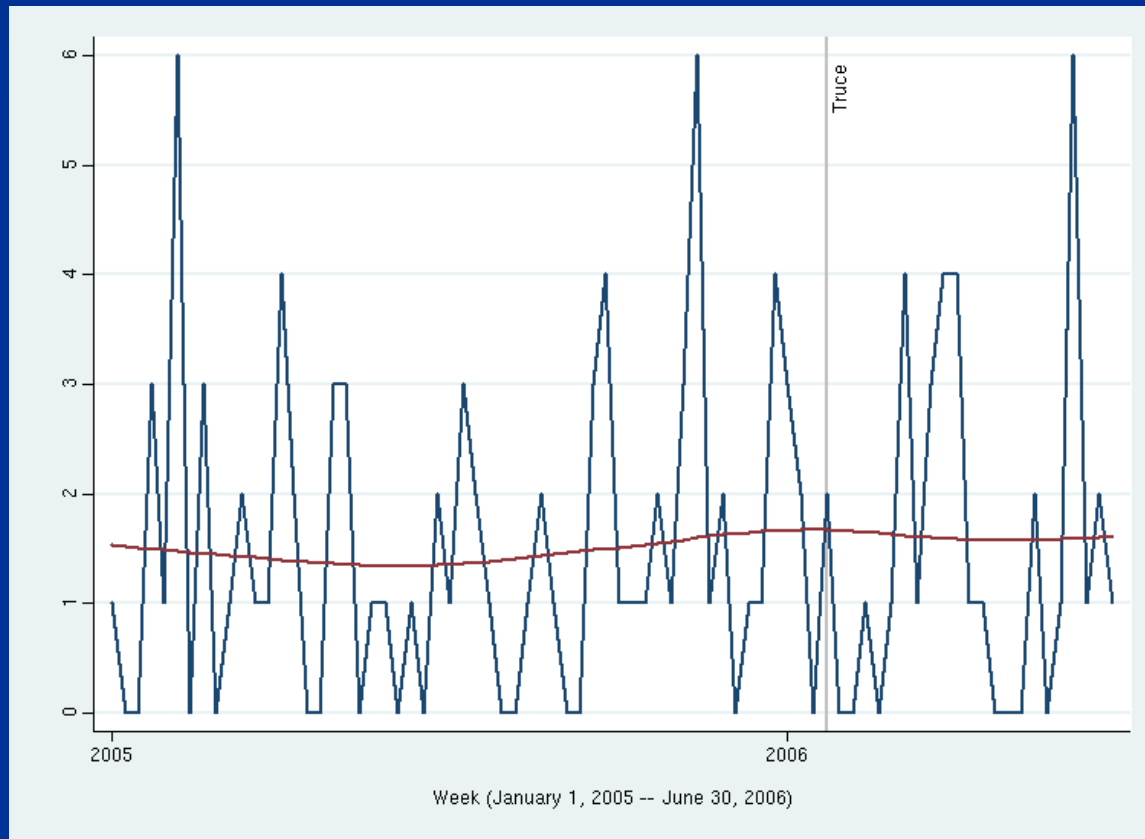
Staffed with 2 officers: one from Intelligence & one from Criminal History Records

Create Besson Street Gang/ROP Task Force

1. Identify gangs, gang members, and other chronic offenders to be targeted for enforcement
2. Target suspected chronic offenders for surveillance and arrest
3. Arrest chronic offenders who have outstanding warrants, and
4. Provide prosecutors with full information about the criminal histories of chronic offenders and working with prosecutors to arrest and prosecute chronic offenders to the full extent of the law.

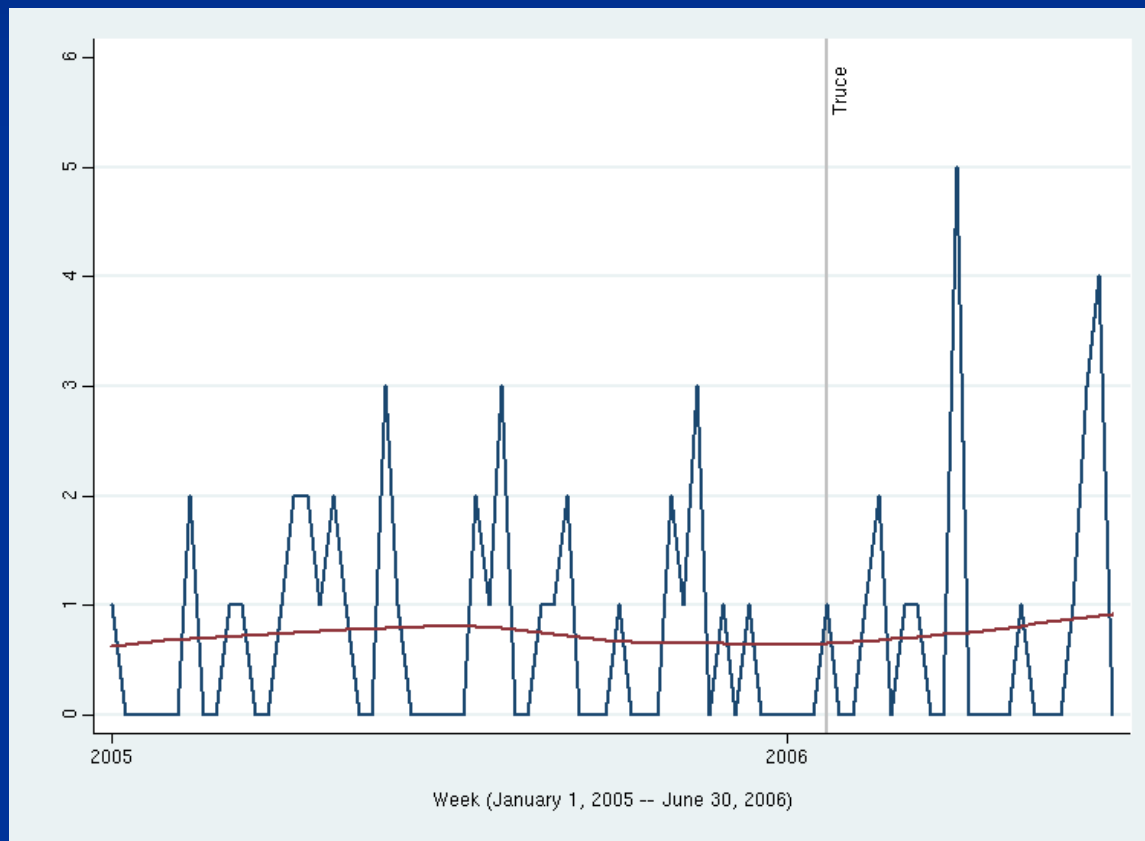
Evaluating a Gang Truce

Weekly violent events



Evaluating a Gang Truce

Weekly reported gunshots



Lessons

- Anecdotal evidence and gut feelings can be important to police
- Systematic evidence is important for strategic crime control
- Understanding gangs enables you to develop more effective strategies
- The “wheel” already exists, so there is no need to reinvent it