

# Webinar

## Urban Youth Crime and Violence: Can it be Prevented?

*Urban Violent Youth, Organized Crime And International Development*

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# This lecture will focus on

- Are we less secure? Why youth rebels?
- How do certain police tactics provoke urban violence and youth disrespect?
- How drugs and guns fuel the fear of crime, violence and unrest?
- Why do young girls join the gangs?
- How does organized crime and corruption undermine crime prevention in developing countries?
- What the academic curricula should have for making international crime prevention work?

# Are we less secure?

- The popular conception is that violent and property crimes that cause danger to life and property pose high risk for the safety and security of individuals.
- Looking at the limitations of existing data on violence and property crime it is hard to say if we are less secure.
- However, looking at the data on intentional homicides around the world it appears that only a small part of the world **particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and South America are at high risk for violence.**
- Countries that traditionally have had higher levels of property crimes, especially developed economies, are showing reductions in those crimes due to a variety of private and public safety measures including situational crime prevention measures
- In summary, it is clear that some countries are much less safe than others, but overall, the risks of violent victimization across the world seemed to be declining.

# Why youth rebels?

- According to Robert K. Merton there are certain goals which are strongly emphasized by society. Society also emphasizes certain means to reach those goals (such as education, hard work, etc.,)
- Rebellion, occurs when the cultural goals and the legitimate means are rejected. Individuals create their own goals and their own means, by protest or revolutionary activity.
- As Albert Cohen would say, young people become rebellion due to "status frustration" or reaction formation

# Police tactics that provoke urban violence and youth disrespect

- Studies have shown that police misconduct, including
  - insensitivity and overreaction when dealing with young demonstrators
  - humiliation due to lack of understanding of youth culture
  - excessive use of power in undertaking stop and search procedures can all provoke youths.
- Contemporary youth culture reflects their expectation of moral dignity and respect of their emotions and feelings.

# Role of drugs and guns in fear of crime, violence and unrest

- Data from 45 countries reported in the Tenth UN Crime Trends Survey suggests that around 60 per cent of **homicides** are committed with **firearms**, ranging from 77% in Central America, to 19% in Western Europe.
- The drugs and crime literature has documented a strong relationship between **drugs and violence**.
- While independently drugs and guns fuel violence and fear of crime, the gang literature suggest that drugs and guns together explain violence and fear of crime in inner city neighbourhoods.
- Youths, especially those who are involved in gangs and who deal drugs, often carry guns and are much more likely to be involved in a homicide as either offenders or victims.
- In conclusion, drugs and guns are facilitators of crime and violence.

# Reasons why girls join gangs

- Some studies show that these are not very different for girls and boys.
- Other studies show that female gang membership is largely attributable to factors such as
  - peer pressure
  - the desire for group affiliation
  - excitement
  - companionship and
  - moneymaking opportunities within gangs.
- According to feminist scholars, girls join gangs in order to mimic boys.
- Further, some studies show that belonging to a gang provides protection for females from other gangs as well as providing refuge from abusive family environments.

# Organised crime, corruption and crime prevention in developing countries

- The United Nations Convention against Corruption adopted in 2004 recognizes the facilitating links between corruption and organised criminal activities, and the ways in which corruption undermines a government's ability to provide basic services to its citizens.
- Studies have also confirmed a very strong level of association between the index for levels of organised crime and the index for public sector corruption that relate to the quality of core public state institutions, such as the police, prosecution and the courts.
- Organised crime groups have the money to corrupt public institutors especially when the state is weak.
- Transparency International's Corruption Perception index reveals that most developing countries score low, which indicates a higher level of corruption in those countries.



# Academic curricula and international crime prevention

- Two main crime prevention perspectives are discussed in the academic literature:
  - 1. to remove the “root causes” of crime through long term social measures
  - 2. to reduce crime opportunities by immediate situational responses including focused deterrence, problem oriented policing, CEPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), intelligence led policing,
- Using best practices and evidenced based research on these two paradigms and, giving equal importance in reducing crime and criminality, then we can make international crime prevention work.
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice is in the process of launching a certificate program at the Masters level in crime analysis and crime prevention which should indeed meet the desired curricula.

Thank you for your attention

