

PacificMUN

Dare to Speak



UNODC-Topic A
Backgrounder Guide



Mitigation of Urban Youth Gang Violence - UNODC

Topic A



PacificMUN



Letter from the Director

To the Delegates of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Welcome to the UNODC at PacificMUN 2019. My name is Andrew Wang, and I am a junior at Interlake High School, in the land of the free and home of the brave. In the past 3 years, I have delegated and staffed numerous conferences in both the US and Canada, but this is my first time staffing a Canadian conference. I am honored to be directing at such a prestigious conference and alongside such incredible dais members: Nick Young, who will be chairing this committee, and Bridget Young, who will serve as your assistant director. I am thrilled to meet everyone, and eagerly anticipate new learning experiences.

In a 2015 interview, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov exclaimed that “National borders do not stop criminals.” In recent years, international cooperation is more important than ever as crime becomes increasingly international and difficult to resolve. Yet at the same time, many of the UN’s greatest struggles so far have been ensuring the enforceability of their resolutions.

The two topics the UNODC will deal with this year embody these trends. The first topic, the mitigation of urban youth gang violence, is ubiquitous yet often overlooked by international organizations because most youth gangs do not qualify as transnational crime groups. The second topic, migrant smuggling, has largely faded from the public awareness as the Mediterranean refugee crisis diminishes in severity. Nevertheless, both issues remain prominent worldwide and individual country actions have yielded very little results.



In preparing for this committee, delve into the tangled, dynamic web of connections between crime, development, and politics underlying these two topics that has outwitted and outlasted the best efforts our world has offered so far. You will find that the complex world around you has been unraveled a bit more. Most importantly, remember that the welcoming community and educational experiences are the core of Model UN. Regardless of what happens, I sincerely hope delegates will leave this conference with new friends and a richer understanding of global politics.

Until February,

Andrew Wang
Director of UNODC
PacificMUN 2019

Committee Overview

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was formed in 1997 in accordance to the General Assembly Report 950 A/RES/51/950. Based in Vienna, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has 21 field offices and operates in over 150 countries. Building upon the work of its predecessors, the UNODC works to “address the interrelated issues of drug control and transnational crime” through field-based technical cooperation projects, research and analytical work, and normative work.

As global economics and politics becomes increasingly interconnected, international crime grows in prevalence, scale, and level of organization. Thus, the multilateral international cooperation facilitated by the UNODC has become essential in addressing issues of crime, drugs, and terrorism.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is separated into four divisions that conduct both policy recommendation and implementation. Policy recommendation is conducted by the Division for Treaty Affairs, which can submit reports and resolutions directly to the ECOSOC and eventually the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly. Implementation of these policies are conducted by the Division for Operations and reviewed by the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs. Additionally, the UNODC is coordinated by the Division for Management, which operates as a secretariat body.

Topic A: Mitigation of Urban Gang Youth Violence

Millions of youth are involved in urban gangs worldwide, where they are exposed to and perpetuate extremely high rates of violence. In the year 2000 alone, nearly 200,000 youth between the ages of 10



and 29 were killed in homicides.¹ Due to the effects of rapid urbanization, disparate economic development, and political instability in the past century, youth gang membership has become increasingly prevalent and dangerous. Urban youth gangs are often associated with a plethora of other drug-related crimes and adult criminal organizations. Though occurrences of gang violence have historically fluctuated, there is undoubtedly an downward spiral in most urban areas.

The low median age of worldwide gang-related homicide perpetrators indicate that teens and young adults are the primary demographics involved in gang violence. As further considering the scarcity of studies which distinguish between youth and adult gang members, sizeable portions of this guide will discuss gang-related violence as a whole.

Youth involved in urban gangs are both victims and perpetrators of violence, ranging from bullying to assault and murder. Statistics show that gang members are anywhere from 1.7 to 3 times as likely to commit violent crimes compared to youth of similar socioeconomic background and location, and the victims of gang-related violence are often gang members as well.² However, urban youth gang violence also often disrupts entire communities and endangers its inhabitants. Left unresolved, youth gangs become increasingly intertwined with communities and ever more difficult to address.

The problem of urban youth gang violence is closely associated with issues of economic and social development, inequality faced by various minority groups, and drug abuse and trafficking. Urban youth gang violence has been a longstanding issue, and countries' continued inability to address it demonstrates both the issue's complexity and the need for a coordinated effort to combat it.

Timeline

1600's - Some of the earliest modern urban gangs in London emerge, notable for their distinctly juvenile composition.

1829 - The increase in crime caused by rapid urbanization necessitates the establishment of the first official, full-time police force in London.

1899 - The first juvenile justice court is established in Cook County, Illinois, based on the belief that youth delinquents should be treated differently from adult criminals.

1920's - The 38th Street Gang is established. It is one of the oldest major active gangs today.

¹ www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/51/950

² <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147440>



1969 - The Crips gang is founded by a group of 17 year olds. It now has over 30,000 members and over 800 subdivisions.

June 1971 - US President Nixon declares drugs as “public enemy number one” and initiates a War on Drugs which results in the incarceration of millions of youth.

December 14, 1990 - The UN adopts the Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (A/RES/45/112), also known as the Riyadh Guidelines.³

1997 - A growing awareness of the need for research on youth crime results in the establishment of the Eurogang project, a research collaboration project engaging both European and American researchers.

2008 - At this point, more than half of the world’s population resides in urban environments, demonstrating the extent of urbanization and development.

June 30, 2016 - Duterte is inaugurated President in the Philippines. His tough stance on drugs and crime is notoriously brutal, even towards youth criminals. His policies are highly controversial and again highlight a debate around the proper treatment of youth gangs.

Historical Analysis

Urban youth gangs generally originate from one of two sources: either from top-down influence from adult criminal organizations or from neighborhood gangs that closely resemble reckless groups of children. The existence of these gangs can be accredited to social turmoil, where a lack of proper social institutions leaves a vacuum of formal supervision or organization. In this context, gangs act as pseudo-institutions, taking control of settings that lack order and unity.⁴

While these gangs may have existed in ancient urban areas, such as Rome or Constantinople, the patrimonial organization of ancient governments and families would have competed with gang leaders for legitimacy and power; furthermore, the relative scarcity of urban populations, especially when compared with recent post-industrialist centuries, meant urban gangs were comparatively rare.⁵ Thus, this historical analysis will focus on gang violence in the past few centuries.

³ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r112.htm>

⁴ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147440>

⁵ www.jstor.org/stable/41328549



Origins of Urban Gangs

In Europe, urban youth gangs have existed for at least four centuries. During the 17th century, gangs had become prominent organizations in London, with members wearing colored ribbons to identify themselves. The mere presence of identifying and unifying attire among gang members demonstrates a strong sense of solidarity within these gangs and indicates that these urban youth gangs were already entrenched in society by that time.

These groups serve as an example of early local gangs, which were prevalent worldwide, especially in the absence of well-maintained social order. For example, the infamous Sicilian Mafia has its roots in the collapse of feudalism in 19th-century Sicily. Weak state police and resistance to social change created a demand for social order. Because government institutions failed to fill this vacuum, criminal organizations rose to power instead.⁶ Similarly, the earliest Chinese Triads along with the Japanese Yakuza, which were a major influence on East Asian youth gangs, can be traced back to the social upheaval experienced during the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty by the Qing Dynasty in the 17th century. The many branches of the Triad today almost invariably originate from the Hong Men society, an underground organization whose original governing ideology was based on a restoration of Ming Chinese rule. The eventual collapse of the Qing dynasty in the early 20th century caused the Hong men's ideology to degenerate along with their organizational structure, giving way to the many criminal triads known today.⁷

The Rise of Violence Among Youth Gangs

While the emergence of gangs in general – particularly youth gangs – can be attributed to various forms of social instability, the growth of youth gangs into sophisticated and violent organizations is due in large part to the influence of more powerful institutions. The earliest youth gang leaders in the US during the 19th century often owed allegiance to either Tammany Hall or the Know-nothings, a highly nationalist American political party.⁸ Youth gangs utilized their relationship with these more powerful entities to receive organizational and logistical support, contributing to an increased ability and willingness to act criminally or violently.

An increase in urban gang membership and organizational sophistication in the past few decades has led to a rapid rise of urban youth gang violence. The rise in gang membership is easily accounted for by the increase in urban population from 746 million in 1950 to 3.9 billion in 2014.⁹ Because most governments have not adequately addressed the underlying conditions that foster youth gang membership, the ratio of youth that join gangs has not greatly improved. Thus, a rise in the urban youth

⁶ <https://web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-031609-103313/unrestricted/JsardellMafia.pdf>

⁷ www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396607/obo-9780195396607-0115.xml

⁸ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147440>

⁹ www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/population/world-urbanization-prospects-2014.html



population still results in a rise of urban youth gang membership. This, in turn, results in more youth involved in violence. Further exacerbating the issue is the fact that many youth gangs have become more sophisticated, as in the case of upper New York gangs, whose access to weapons and hierarchical structure makes them particularly dangerous.¹⁰ However, there is a lack of general consensus on the precise cause of the greater sophistication of youth gangs. One prominent culprit is the close relationship between youth gangs and drug trafficking, among other types of crime. These activities have contributed to youth gangs developing sizeable financial interests, and often closely affiliates them with adult criminal organizations, which provide these youth gangs with coordination and resources. Recently, there have been prominent instances of internationalization of urban youth gangs, such as the spread of the MS13 gang, which originated in Los Angeles and spread to El Salvador where the US deported gang members after the Salvadoran Civil War.¹¹

Current Situation

Urban Youth Gang Structures and Demographics

Though many gangs operate with economic motives achieved via illegitimate and criminal activities, youth gangs remain, at their core, delinquent organizations. This is a key difference between adult criminal organizations and urban youth gangs. The depiction of gangs operating with corporation-like management of illicit activities is representative of only a small number of exceptions, particularly among youth gangs.

In reality, urban youth gangs are involved in very little coordinated crime. The capital necessary for the maintenance of a gang's coherence is often generated through members' individual and uncoordinated criminal pursuits and sometimes legitimate means of income.¹² Furthermore, the vast majority of crime committed by youth gang members is minor property-related crime, and most criminal activity is either opportunistic or used as a last resort method of protecting a gang's interests.¹³ Indeed, prominent scholars have questioned the validity of a causal relationship between gang membership and violence; though the two traits are certainly correlated, it is very possible that gangs do not entirely cause greater youth violence but instead arise in response to preexisting prevalence of violence. For example, the violent and chaotic Salvadoran civil war during the 1980's and 1990's paved the way for a dramatic rise in gang activity and violence, and el Salvador remains plagued with one of the highest rates of gang-

¹⁰ www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120626/harlem/youth-gangs-getting-younger-more-sophisticated-cops-say/

¹¹ unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/5203_38635_Bk-5.pdf

¹² www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sop.2008.51.3.473

¹³ www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/drivers_urb_change/urb_society/pdf_social_emancip/HABITAT_UMP_Ochola_Street_children_Gangs_African_Cities.pdf



related violence.¹⁴ Thus, unlike adult criminal organizations, youth gang members are generally not hardened criminals.

Youth gangs arise almost exclusively as a result of harsh socioeconomic conditions. Urban youth generally join these gangs for increased protection and sense of identity. Though specific data on the conditions that foster gang membership is painfully scarce, a study of US youth in 2006 revealed that over 84 percent of gang members were children from historically severely impoverished or working class children.¹⁵ Though youth gang members may be products of extremely disadvantageous environments, youth gangs themselves remain highly dangerous. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated a significantly higher propensity for violence among both gang-affiliated youth and unaffiliated youth of similar socioeconomic conditions. Furthermore, the ever-present rivalry generated by the presence of youth gangs fuels violent crime and retaliation, creating a cycle of violence that becomes deep-set in local communities.

An important demographic consideration is that gang members in the US and Western Europe are most often ethnic or racial minorities or, as in the case of Southeast Asia, immigrants or refugees.¹⁶ This is a manifestation of the historic and often ongoing social and economic hardships or oppression faced by these groups, and provides some explanation for the disparate impacts of urban youth gangs by region.

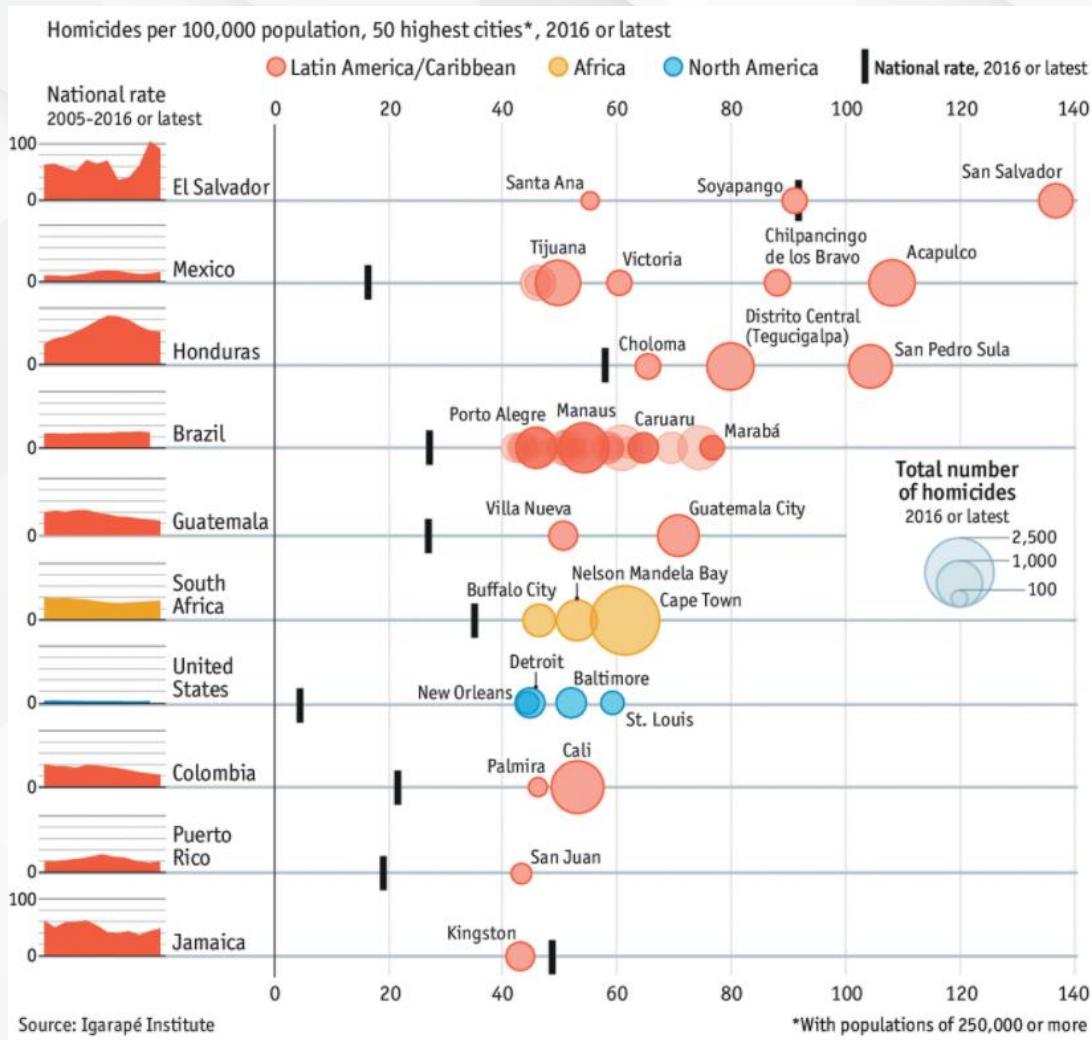
The Impact of Violence

Urban youth gang violence disproportionately affects lower-income areas, as well as regions with greater ethnic or racial minority populations. For example, an examination of the mean income by ward of London and its relationship with gang territories (shown below) reveals these disparities.

¹⁴ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27751430>

¹⁵ people.missouristate.edu/michaelcarlie/what_i_learned_about/gangs/racial_composition.htm

¹⁶ Cowart, Melinda T., and Ronald E. Cowart. "Southeast Asian Refugee Youth And the Cycle of Violence." *NASSP Bulletin*, vol. 77, no. 557, 1993, pp. 41–45., doi:10.1177/019263659307755709



Homicides per 100,000 population, 50 highest cities (2016).¹⁷

Admittedly, urban youth gangs were not always perceived as violent: throughout much of the 70's the US government even insisted that "youth gang violence is not a major crime problem." These gangs were viewed more as neighborhood gatherings of juveniles. However, gang members are vastly more likely to commit violent crimes and be the victims of violent crimes compared with non-gang members. Urban youth gangs promote delinquency and incubate adult gang members, perpetuating criminal organizations.

The presence of gangs is detrimental to whole communities. Although a vast majority of gang homicide targets are other gang members, bystanders and those with connections to gangs are at risk of implication, and vulnerable women in many areas are sometimes exploited in the support, cover-up, or

¹⁷ www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2017/03/31/the-worlds-most-dangerous-cities



direct involvement of violent crimes. The presence of gangs disrupts education and social institutions, and promotes dropping out of high school.

While female gang members are rare among urban youth gangs and targets are almost exclusively male, the impact of youth gang violence on women cannot be overlooked.¹⁸ Besides the impact of gang violence on women involved with gangs, nonaffiliated women are also severely impacted as part of the communities gangs wield power in. In most areas with youth gangs, young women and girls are at a much higher risk of suffering violence and sexual abuse.¹⁹ As with many areas related to urban youth gang violence, not enough research has focused on the extent of youth gangs' effect on women.

United Nations Involvement

While most action taken against urban youth gang violence has been taken by individual countries, the United Nations has provided coordination and resources for local programs to take place. Like its handling of other issues, the UN has primarily supported a progressive approach of providing vulnerable youth an alternative to joining a gang. Unlike law enforcement or other more aggressive approaches, UN-supported programs emphasize redirection of youth through social intervention and works to create economic opportunities. The UNDP specifically emphasizes "achieving a better balance between legitimate law enforcement and preventive measures, with a stronger focus on prevention" in dealing with gang violence.²⁰

For example, the UN Development Group (UNDG), which is composed of 32 UN bodies including the UN Development Program and the UNODC, has created regional offices in areas prone to gang violence. These offices work with human development experts to guide local policy in addressing youth gang violence. In Peru, the UNODC has partnered with various other international and local agencies since 2015 to create a sports promotion initiative to reduce gang membership and violence.²¹ The UN, along with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and Regional Commission on Youth Violence and its Technical Advisory Group, has further provided resources to the implementation of the Regional Security Strategy of the 2008-2012 Central American Integration System (SICA) of Central America and Mexico, which supports the reduction of risk factors and reintegrates delinquents into mainstream society. As well, in tandem with international action focused on preventing youth from

¹⁸ efus.eu/en/topics/risks-forms-of-crime/collective-violence/efus/2567/

¹⁹ Miller, Jody, and Scott H. Decker. "Young Women and Gang Violence: Gender, Street Offending, and Violent Victimization in Gangs." *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2001, pp. 115–140., doi:10.1080/07418820100094841

²⁰ www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2012/02/08/gang-violence-takes-rising-toll-in-lives-threatens-caribbean-economies-says-undp.html

²¹ www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2015/January/peru-in-focus_youth-sports-against-gang-violence.html



joining gangs, the World Health Organization has focused on intervening to directly mitigate violence through financial support and guidance.

Furthermore, UN peacekeeping forces have endorsed Community Violence Reduction (CVR) programs in sub-Saharan Africa which generally focus on grassroots initiatives to improve quality of life and address the concerns that enabled the rise of and continuation of gangs.²² These programs have proven particularly effective in reversing the growth of gang violence in Haiti when gang violence was at its peak. Meanwhile, the programmes have specifically discouraged hardline repressive action, as represented by the UNHCR's condemnation of the extermination squads used briefly in El Salvador against urban gangs whose members were often young adults or children.²³

Finally, international agencies have recognized the importance of general economic development and social reform to mitigating youth gang violence. The World Bank, the UNDG, and World Health Organization, all emphasize lack of economic opportunity and social alienation as key root causes of urban youth gang violence. Addressing these factors will aid in reducing the prevalence of youth gangs.

Seeking Resolution

There are two primary approaches commonly recognized by international groups to mitigating urban youth gang violence: repressive methods and redirection. The redirection approach has also often been separated into prevention and intervention categories.

Attempted resolutions can either be directed specifically at reducing violence without reducing gang membership, such as through gun control laws or, at increasing welfare to discourage youth from participating in gang-related activities.

Repressive Methods

Historically, the majority of responses to gang violence have been repressive. These methods involve stricter law enforcement policies, and are characterized by sizeable spending on and deployment of law enforcement and occasionally military personnel.

Repressive methods have encountered questionable success among adult criminal groups, and their effectiveness in addressing youth violence is highly uncertain. Though many defend the utility of these policies, implementations as strict as the United State's "Zero Tolerance" policy and Nixon's "War on

²² aldianews.com/articles/politics/un-vengeful-police-violence-against-el-salvador-gangs-intolerable/50763

²³ https://www.oas.org/dsp/documentos/pandillas/2sesion_especial/undp/undp%20experience%20on%20youth%20gangs%2018feb10.docx



Drugs" have been largely unsuccessful and widely criticized for exacerbating not only inequality but also the very crimes they were supposed to prevent.²⁴ Generally, repressive approaches have been deemed unsuccessful. Thailand's campaign against drugs in the early 2000's resulted in over 2000 deaths, around half of which claimed the lives of innocent civilians, and Gaviria, who was president during the height of Colombian drug cartels' power, has also warned that simply increasing law enforcement is ineffective.²⁵ Incarceration of youth gangs further reduces opportunity for these youth outside of criminal activity and gang membership. When policies seek to punish those that have little opportunity and choice but to turn to crime instead of facilitating their reintegration, society often suffers the impact of their losses.

However, increased law enforcement presence retains its advantages. Controlling large adult criminal organizations who heavily influence youth gangs in Asia and Latin America requires the use of force. Additionally, appropriately implemented law enforcement may provide deterrence against violence among gang members. While repression is imperfect and historically frowned upon by the UN, it has notable benefits: it is often considered an efficient and even necessary method for directly protecting communities from gang violence. Consider the example of Philippines President Duterte's "War on Drugs" campaign: though it has been condemned for its extraordinary brutality and extrajudicial killings, and despite the fact that 73% of adult Filipinos worrying they or someone they know will be killed as a result, surveys have shown a consistently high satisfaction rate with Duterte's campaign, often above 70%.²⁶ Of course, Duterte's example is not meant to encourage such brutal methods, but does effectively demonstrate the efficiency and efficacy of repressive methods in certain scenarios. There is a clear distinction between using police forces for protection and punishment, and emphasis should be placed on the protection of the community, including youth gang members, rather than the simple punishment of delinquents. At the same time, punishment of gang members may serve as an important deterrent. In countries where youth commonly incorporate into adult gangs, or even where youth gang violence surpasses a certain threshold of prevalence or is sufficiently entrenched within society, directive methods may prove ineffective or unsafe, and repressive methods may prove to be the better option.

Directive Methods

An obvious approach to reducing violence among urban youth gangs is reducing the number of youth gang members. However, failures to provide economic opportunity and social inclusion, which are the primary causes of youth gang membership, are difficult to address. After all, these issues are underlying causes for a vast majority of problems the world faces today. Thus, preventative approaches to reducing

²⁴ www.jstor.org/stable/29768527

²⁵ www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-05-01/why-trump-s-duterte-invite-has-some-jaws-dropping-quicktake-q-a.

²⁶ Sarmiento, Bong S. "Why Filipinos Support Duterte's Drug War." *Why Filipinos Support Duterte's Drug War / Asia Times*, Asia Times, 23 Aug. 2017, www.atimes.com/article/filipinos-support-dutertes-drug-war/.



youth gang violence generally focus on reinforcing specific aspects of economic development and social integration.

Often, preventative methods place particular emphasis on education. While this is intuitive, as education is often considered essential to if not the key to economic advancement, notable studies have demonstrated that gang-affiliated youth are unwilling to attend school and lack faith in education systems. Furthermore, such programs are often directed at warning children against joining gangs, and forgo the creation of actual alternatives that college or career-focused education provides.

Successful implementation of preventative programs is perhaps best documented in and represented by the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang (or “Spergel”) Model, a multifaceted approach which involves community mobilization, social intervention, opportunities provision, suppression, and organizational change and development.²⁷ The program was effective in “reducing the levels of arrests for serious violence for all age groups” and “reducing drug arrests for program youth.” However, the complexities and costs of implementation of this model proved difficult for many sites to handle, particularly the hiring and training of qualified, dedicated officials and shortage of funding for resources and staff wages. Thus, these shortcomings in implementation often reduced scope, length, or depth of involvement of these programs, resulting in a lower than projected decrease in youth gang membership. Such measures are difficult to implement in developing countries where governments may lack resources and experience. Additionally, many youth are introduced to gangs at an early age and in areas such as Southeast Asia,²⁸ where family ties may normalize gang involvement in children. In such areas, the power wielded by gangs also makes it exceedingly difficult for preventative programs to take hold. In these cases, the UNODC must consider how to address the full complexity and uniqueness of different cases, as well as how to most efficiently allocate its limited budget to these programs.

Historically, general social programs such as vocational training have proved particularly useful in alleviating the economic hardships necessary for a gang’s existence. These programs need not involve information relevant to gang membership, but may prove effective when targeted at gang members. When people are given the choice between legal, productive work over illegal, dicey work, they will often choose the former. Ultimately, urban youth gang violence can be treated similarly to an epidemic, where assistance serves as treatment while punitive measures serve as quarantine.

²⁷ “Addressing Youth Gang Problems: An Overview of Programs and Practices.” *Public Safety Canada / Sécurité Publique Canada*, 31 Jan. 2018, www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/ddrsng-prblms/index-en.aspx.

²⁸ Nagoshi, Keisuke. “Filipino Gangs.” *Vice*, Vice, 1 Oct. 2006, www.vice.com/en_us/article/gqdpmm/philipino-v13n10.



Bloc Positions

Asian Nations

Asian nations generally adopt repressive approaches on youth gang violence. This is likely due to the difficulty of implementing redirective methods and the lack of libertarian advocacy among many Asian governments. In East Asian countries such as China and Japan, the power wielded by large criminal organizations and the close ties they share with many youth gangs mean youth involvement in gangs is already severe. Gang membership in Southeastern Asian countries such as the Philippines is often deeply entrenched as well. The fact that youth in Asia are generally affiliated with dangerous and powerful adult gangs make prevention and intervention approaches extremely difficult.

These countries advocate for strict legal policies and the use of law enforcement to repress gang activities in general, but generally distinguish very little between youth and adults in policing gang-related activity. Because of their hardline methods, UNODC involvement may prove theoretically disastrous to their country's current plans. Justifying hardline methods will likely require justifying the utilitarian benefits to their country's actions, and should seek a looser interpretation of human rights regulations. Because any UNODC resolution will likely strongly favor more progressive approaches, nations whose country policy favors repressive methods are fighting an uphill battle. Ultimately, these member states must advocate for the historically progressive UNODC to recognize the legitimacy of repressive methods: though the UN may powerfully support redirective methods, it must recognize that certain conditions in many member states necessitate the use of repressive methods.

North America, Australia, and European Nations

Globally, these countries enjoy greater wealth and are more developed nations. Thus, the state of youth gang violence in these nations is not as dire. Redirective methods to prevent and intervene in youth gang violence are feasible and tested, and thus these countries strongly favor a more redirective approach to the issue. Note, however, that the recent resurgence of conservatism in these countries means there will be significant room for repressive methods as well. It is most likely that these nations will seek to adopt a very balanced multifaceted approach to compromise not only with other countries but to a large extent with themselves.

Middle Eastern and African Nations

Middle Eastern nations have an extremely diverse range of perspectives on gang violence, at least according to past actions. Those that have faced or continue to face conflicts and instability have been unwilling or unable to address youth gangs. Though there lacks data on gang violence in most of these member states, youth gang involvement is expected to be quite prevalent in these countries due to political instability. Other middle eastern member states with more stable economies and governments have strict law enforcement overall, and have not made exceptions for youth gang violence.



Countries with greater gang violence, such as South Africa and Egypt, may find themselves facing a similar level of gang violence as Latin American Nations. Southern Africa has one of the highest rates of homicides, and the greater density, less developed infrastructure, and general lower per capita income of African urban areas compared to European and North American cities means urban youth gang violence is much more prevalent, though likely underreported, in African cities. Thus, historically these nations have adopted repressive approaches. These countries may consider negotiating provisions of increased aid if certain conditions of their approach to youth crime are met, but are unlikely to forgo repressive approaches.

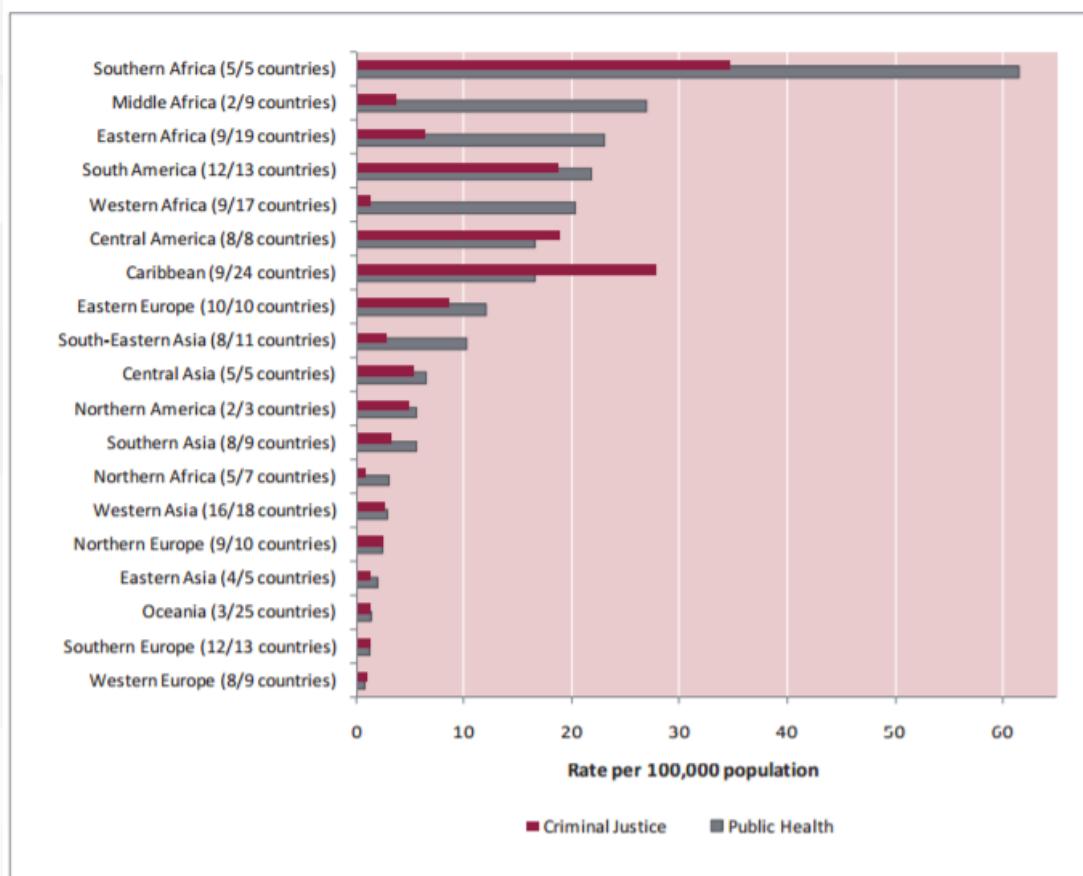
Latin American Nations

Latin American Countries face some of the most dangerous gang-related issues. Similar to Southeastern Asian countries, where gang membership is deeply ingrained into society, redirective measures targeted at youth may prove infeasible. Instead, these countries will likely focus on mitigating violence through intervention and combatting gangs through repression. However, as in the case of Columbia and Peru, Latin American states often supplement increased law enforcement with increased redirection. Such strategies serve as an effective compromise and could be used to solicit support in gaining further foreign support in repression, an expensive and draining task.

Of particular importance is the fact that Latin American gangs, where most youth are involved,²⁹ are inextricably linked to the production of drugs flooding North American countries,³⁰ giving the Latin American bloc powerful leverage as much wealthier North American nations have some vested interest in reducing Latin American youth involvement in gangs.

²⁹ Durán, Robert. "Over-Inclusive Gang Enforcement and Urban Resistance: A Comparison Between Two Cities." *Social Justice*, vol. 36, no. 1 (115), 2009, pp. 82–101. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/29768527

³⁰ "The International Drug War." *Drug Policy Alliance*, www.drugpolicy.org/issues/international-drug-war



Average homicide rate reported by Criminal Justice and Public Health organizations respectively, divided by region. While there lacks such data on gang-related homicide specifically, international disparities remain evident.³¹

Discussion Questions

1. To what extent should repressive methods be used on youth gangs?
2. How might a country's financial or social situation limit its ability to implement certain solutions?
3. What role should law enforcement play in repressive and redirective approaches?
4. Are there fundamentally different types of youth gangs that require different approaches?
5. How do societal disadvantages affect gang membership?
6. Under similar socioeconomic conditions, many youth do not join gangs. Are there other factors that compel certain youth to join gangs?
7. How much should your country value political alliances during debate?
8. How committed is your country to its current policy on youth or gang violence?
9. How might we differentiate between youth and adult gang violence?

³¹ https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Crime-statistics/International_Statistics_on_Crime_and_Justice.pdf



Further Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qkSMkiGWdg>

TEDxMileHigh: "I was an MS-13 gang member. Here's how I got out," by Gerardo Lopez

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97861/gang-violence-summary.pdf

Ending Gang and Youth Violence: A Cross-Government Report

<http://ccyj.org/our-work/reducing-gang-violence/>

Center for Children and Youth Justice: Gang Violence

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/ddrsng-prblms/index-en.aspx>

Public Safety Canada: Addressing Youth Gang Problems: An Overview of Programs and Practices

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284596411_Gang_violence_worldwide_Context_culture_and_country

Gang Violence Worldwide: Context, Culture, and Country

www.jstor.org/stable/24388251

Central American Gangs: Changing Nature and New Partners (Requires JSTOR account)

www.jstor.org/stable/1147440

Youth Gangs: Continuity and Change (Requires JSTOR account) *General overview of the state of gangs in western countries, including possible solutions.*



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