Reducing the Contribution of Street Gangs and Organized Crime to Violence

More social cohesion, less crime

Stronger bonds, safer societies

Caribbean governments must make security a policy priority

Reducing the Contribution of Street Gangs and Organized Crime to Violence

Introduction

Over the last several years, street gangs and organized criminal groups have become increasingly perceived in many regions of the world as a major problem contributing to violence and crime and undermining local economies, the rule of law, and human development. The Caribbean is no exception. Nations across the Caribbean region are struggling to determine the scope, nature and causes of the problem of crime and the appropriate mix of programmes and resources to be dedicated to suppression and prevention to respond to street gangs and organized crime. This chapter focuses on street gangs and organized crime in seven Caribbean nations (the Caribbean-7). Its primary concern is the connection among street gangs, organized crime and violence. It does not focus on the links to drug-trafficking and related issues such as money laundering, which have been covered in prior reports.[1] Following the definitions of street gangs and organized crime, the chapter presents a cross-national approach to examining the scope and nature of the problems, the causes of street gangs and organized crime, and the current responses throughout the region.

There is often substantial confusion and debate over the terms street gang and organized crime. The difference between the two is important, however, not only for diagnosing the related issues accurately, but also for the implementation of effective and efficient responses. Street gangs and organized crime are different and require different responses. While organized crime can have greater consequences for nations, attention to street gangs is needed because of the high risks associated with policies that are directed towards delinquent youth in general and gangs in particular, but that are poorly conceived and implemented. Other reports have focused primarily on organized crime and neglected to differentiate organized crime and street gangs.

In general terms, there is agreement that street gangs are characterized as "any durable, street oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity".[2] Durability generally means that the group has been around longer than a few months. Street oriented refers to the group spending substantial time on the streets and in parks, malls and other public places. Youth refers to those who are, on average, between 13 and 25 years of age. Illegal activity refers to criminal activity, not merely disorderly conduct or presenting a public nuisance. Identity refers to the sense of the group, not merely to an individual's self-image.[3] Organized crime, in contrast, "is characterized by enterprise activity, the use of violence (actual and/or threatened) and corruption as typical means and exploitable relationships with the upper-world."[4] In this regard, enterprise activity involves the provision of illegal goods or services to individuals. Traditional examples have revolved around trafficking in drugs, guns and people, as well as extortion. Organized crime groups are also characterized by their organizational sophistication. In general, their organizational structure can be observed in two forms: corporate and relational. Those groups that operate within the corporate model possess formal hierarchy and clear lines of authority. Those groups that operate with a relational model are organized based on personal and social networks that often already exist in a community or area.[5] Street gangs are different from organized crime groups in several ways. For example, street gangs typically lack organization and have limited centralized leadership, whereas organized crime groups have clear lines of authority. Street gangs are also more likely to be

motivated by issues of status, while organized crime groups are often economically motivated. Whereas street gangs may be involved in neighbourhood-level drug sales, organized crime groups are involved in the wider distribution and trafficking of drugs.

Scope and Nature of the Problem

Research on street gangs and organized crime has a long and extensive history in the United States; in Europe, the topic has also received increasing attention, but these phenomena have not been as systematically examined in the Caribbean. According to the *Central American Human Development Report 2009–*

2010, the key finding is to realize that youth gangs are a complex, changing and differentiated phenomenon.[6] A comprehensive review of studies on this topic reveals the dangers of oversimplifications, especially the ones that picture gangs as out-and-out criminal groups or as innocent youth clubs. The lack of research in the Caribbean should not come as a surprise given that, as Caribbean scholars report, little attention has been given to citizen insecurity until recently and even less attention has been dedicated to gangs and problems related to organized crime. Most of what is known comes from the two largest Caribbean nations: Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.
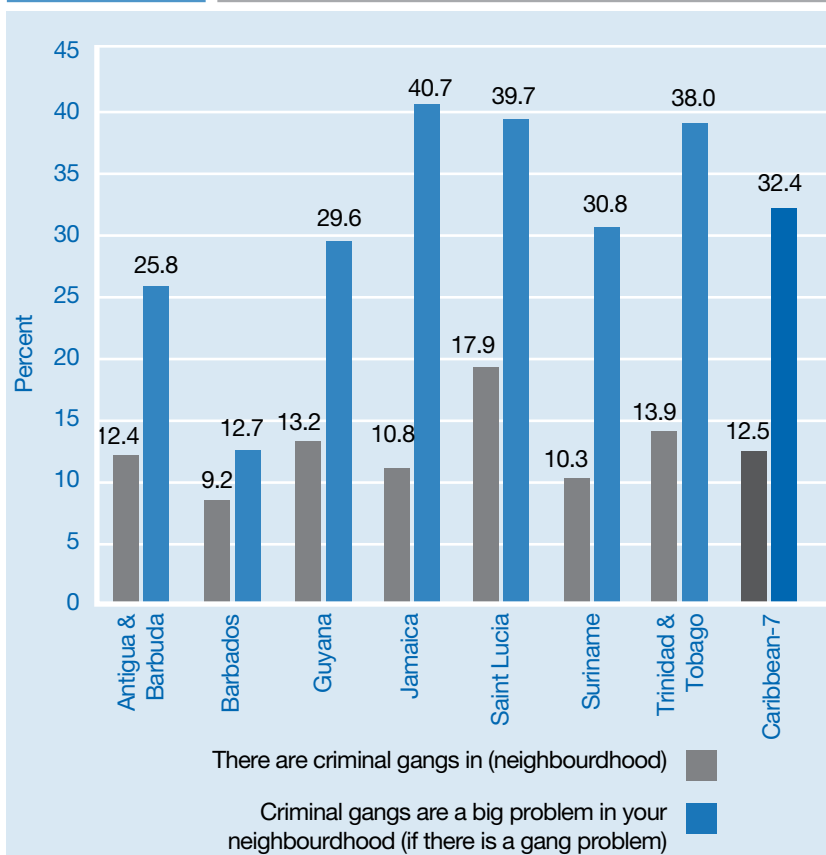
Prevalence of the Problem

Multiple data sources show that street gangs are active in much of the Caribbean region, albeit the magnitude of the problem in each nation varies substantially. Popular tools in the research on the issues are resident perception data, official police data and self-reporting data.[7]

Of the respondents to the UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010 across the Caribbean-7, 12.5 percent believe that gangs are in their neighbourhoods (chart 3.1). However, perceptions vary by nation. Almost 18 percent of residents surveyed in Saint Lucia report the presence of gangs in their neighbourhoods, followed by Trinidad and Tobago (13.9 percent), Guyana (13.2 percent) and Antigua and Barbuda (12.4 percent). About 9 to 18 percent of the residents claim there are gangs in their neighbourhoods. Chart 3.1 also shows that, among those who report a gang presence in their neighbourhoods, about 32.4 percent state that the problem is a big one. These perceptions of the magnitude of the gang problem also vary by nation. Around 41 percent of residents in Jamaica, 40 percent in Saint Lucia, and 38 percent in Trinidad and Tobago state the problem is a big one because of gangs in their neighbourhoods. Between 26 and 30 percent of residents in Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, and Suriname report the same. Meanwhile, only about 13 percent of residents in Barbados so report.

Chart 3.2 examines when respondents in each of the Caribbean-7 first observed the

| Chart **3.1** | **Perceptions of the Street Gang Problem, Caribbean-7, 2010** |

There are criminal gangs in (neighbourdhood) ▮

Criminal gangs are a big problem in your neighbourdhood (if there is a gang problem) ▮
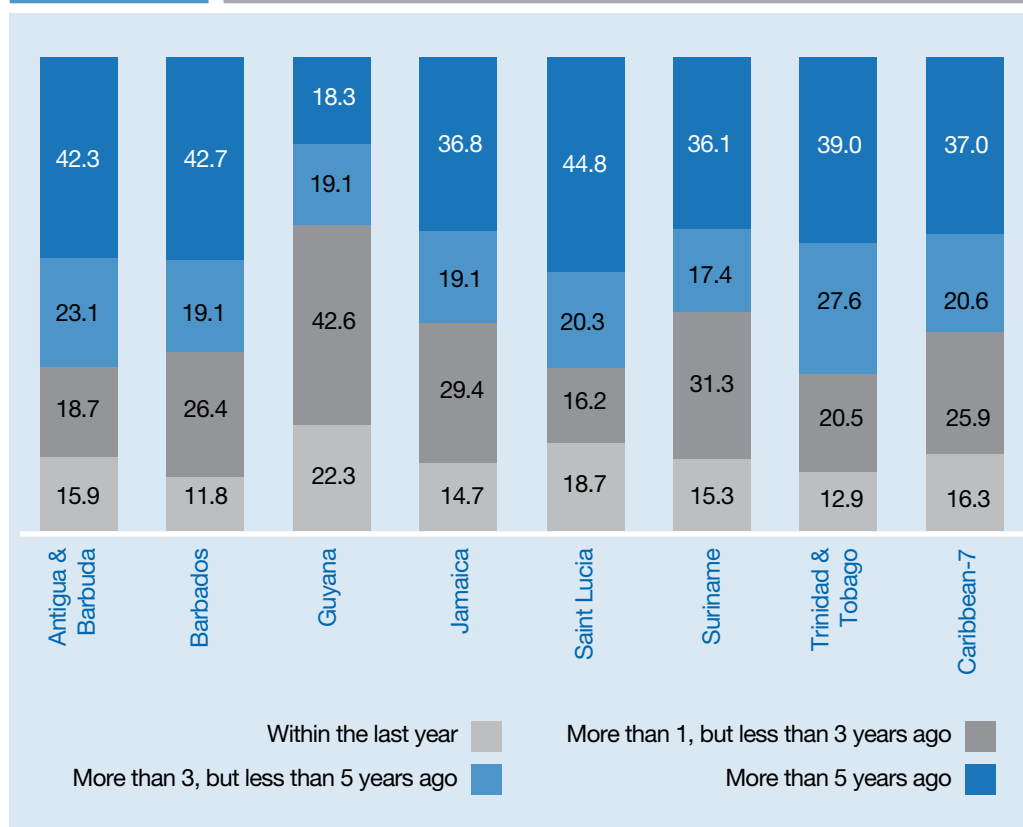
Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: respondents who answered that gangs were in their neighbourhoods (N = 1700). Questions: "Is there a criminal gang (or gangs) in your neighbourhood?" "To what extent is there a criminal gang problem in your neighbourhood?" The chart shows, for the first question, the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" and, for the second question, the percentage of respondents who answered "A big problem". *p<.05

Chart 3.2 — The First Appearance of the Gang Problem in Neighbourhoods, Caribbean-7, 2010

	Within the last year	More than 1, but less than 3 years ago
	More than 3, but less than 5 years ago	More than 5 years ago

Antigua & Barbuda: 15.9 / 18.7 / 23.1 / 42.3
Barbados: 11.8 / 26.4 / 19.1 / 42.7
Guyana: 22.3 / 42.6 / 19.1 / 18.3
Jamaica: 14.7 / 29.4 / 19.1 / 36.8
Saint Lucia: 18.7 / 16.2 / 20.3 / 44.8
Suriname: 15.3 / 31.3 / 17.4 / 36.1
Trinidad & Tobago: 12.9 / 20.5 / 27.6 / 39.0
Caribbean-7: 16.3 / 25.9 / 20.6 / 37.0

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: respondents who answered that gangs were in their neighbourhoods (N = 1,700). Question: "If yes (if there is a criminal gang or gangs in your neighbourhood), since when has this become a problem?"

gang problem. While a small proportion of Caribbean residents observed the gang problem emerged over the previous year (16.3 percent), most said it had emerged over the previous three to five years (20.6 percent) or five or more years ago (37.0 percent). While this pattern was similar across most Caribbean countries, Guyana was a notable exception. The data clearly show that respondents in Guyana observed the emergence of gangs in that country much later than respondents in most other Caribbean countries, with about two thirds of the observers in Guyana reporting that gangs had emerged in their neighbourhoods in the previous three years. These findings suggest that, with the exception of Guyana, many Caribbean nations have had a gang problem for five years or longer.

Another method of measuring a nation's gang problem is through official police data. Official police data capture information from people who come into contact with the police, and this information therefore tends to refer to older individuals who are more heavily involved in criminal activity.[8] As shown in Table 3.1, the police in Jamaica have identified 268 gangs and approximately 3,900 gang members. In Trinidad and Tobago, the police have identified 95 gangs and approximately 1,269 gang members. Law enforcement officials in Antigua and Barbuda have reported 15 gangs and estimated there are between 264 and 570 gang members. Barbados has reported 150 gangs and 4,000 gang members, but these figures may be inflated. Police estimates of the street gang problem in Guyana, Saint Lucia and Suriname are unavailable, which

Table 3.1. Official Police Estimates of the Population of Street Gangs, Caribbean-7

Country	Gangs, number	Gang members, number	Estimate year	Source
Antigua & Barbuda	15	264-570	2008	OAS (2008a)
Barbados	150	4,000	2008	OAS (2008b)
Guyana	—	—		
Jamaica	268	3,900	2010	Data of Ministry of National Security
Saint Lucia	—	—		
Suriname	—	—		
Trinidad & Tobago	95	1,269	2006	Katz and Choate (2006)

Note: The notation "— " indicates unavailability of data.

represents a challenge to policy makers in these nations to have an accurate understanding of the problem. Some Caribbean police agencies do not have the capacity to diagnose the scope of local gang activities.

Possibly the most common strategy adopted in examining the prevalence of gang-related phenomenon is the use of self-reporting. Self-reported data have proven to be a robust, valid and reliable method for collecting information from gang members.[9] Ohene, Ireland, and Blum (2005) have conducted one of the few studies that examine the prevalence of gang membership across the Caribbean. They have collected self-reported data from 15,695 school-aged youth in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. They find that 17–24 percent of males and 11–16 percent of females (varying by age) report they have been involved in gangs. Their research suggests that, compared with more developed nations, the Caribbean

might have a relatively significant gang problem. Similarly, Katz, Choate, and Fox (2010) have examined a sample of 2,292 youth attending schools in urban areas in Trinidad and Tobago. Their analysis indicates that 12.5 percent of school-aged youth self-report they have been in gangs. In contrast, self-reported data obtained from school-aged youth in Jamaica indicate substantially lower rates of gang membership. Wilks et al. (2007), utilizing a community-based sample of 1,185 youth, find that only 6.4 percent self-report ever being in gangs; using a school-based methodology, Fox and Gordon-Strachan (2007) find a like proportion (6 percent). Data collected through focus groups and survey-based convenience samples of school-aged youth in Antigua and Barbuda have confirmed the presence of gangs in neighbourhoods and schools, although quantitative estimates are unavailable.[10] Self-reported data collected from adults on their participation in street gangs in the Caribbean are rarer. As part of the 2009 Jamaican National Crime Vic-

timization Survey, over 3,100 residents were surveyed, of which fewer than 0.51 percent of those aged 16 years or older self-reported ever being in a gang.[11] Katz, Maguire, and Choate (2011) interviewed over 400 arrestees who had been booked in Port of Spain, Trinidad. They find that 5.1 percent of recently booked arrestees self-reported current street gang membership.

Measuring the prevalence of organized crime is substantially more difficult. Organized crime groups, in their many forms, have been found in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. However, the number of groups and the number of individuals who identify with such groups are relatively unknown. The most comprehensive examination of organized crime in the Caribbean has been conducted in Jamaica by Anthony Harriott, Glaister Leslie, and Donna Moncrieffe. Moncrieffe (1998) estimates that there were seven organized crime groups in Jamaica in 1998. A decade later, Leslie (2010) counted 12, and Harriott (2009) found 20. Harriott (2011) notes that organized crime in Jamaica is now more active, powerful and entrenched and perhaps more well tolerated by the people and some of their political representatives than ever before. While there is anecdotal evidence of organized crime in the other six Caribbean-7 nations, there has been almost no systematic research examining prevalence. As a consequence, the data and information required to understand the problem are lacking in the Caribbean basin.

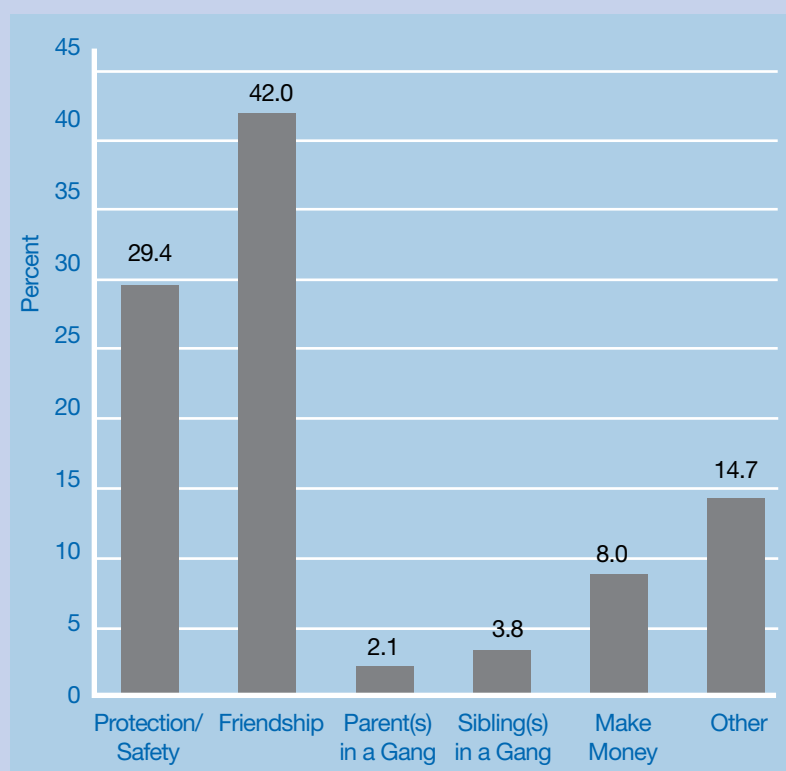### The Sex and Age Composition of Caribbean Street Gangs

We know little about the socio-demographic characteristics of street gang members in the Caribbean. Preliminary evidence on Jamaica and on Trinidad and Tobago indicate that, among school-aged youth, the majority of street gang members are male; however, female gang membership is also prevalent. For example, Katz, Choate, and Fox (2010) find that, among a national sample of Trinidadian youth in urban schools, 40.1 percent of self-reported gang members were females. Similarly, Meeks (2009) notes a strong presence of

females in Jamaican street gangs. Police data suggest, however, that gang membership is predominately male. A survey of experts with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service found that there were no female-dominated gangs in the country.[12] Similar findings were reported in a study comprised of police experts in Antigua and Barbuda.[13] Together, these findings might suggest that, while females are involved in street gangs in the Caribbean, their involvement might not be sufficient to come frequently to the attention of police. Regardless,

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Box 3.1. Why Do Caribbean Youth Join Street Gangs?

There is almost no Caribbean-based empirical research examining why youth join street gangs. One of the few studies to examine the issue collected self-reported data from almost 2,300 school-aged youth in Trinidad and Tobago. The study found that most youth joined for reasons of friendship (42 percent) and protection or safety (29.4 percent) (chart a). The remaining joined because a family member was in a gang (5.9 percent), to make money (8 percent), or for other reasons (14.7 percent).

Chart a. The Reasons Given by Trinidadian Youth for Joining Gangs

Source: Katz, Choate, and Fox (2010).

these findings hint that increased focus needs to be placed on understanding how females impact gang structure, culture, and criminality and the role females fulfil in gangs.

This same body of research suggests that individuals join street gangs at a young age (see box 3.1). In Trinidad and Tobago, school-aged youth who self-reported gang membership stated that, on average, they had first become involved with their gangs when they were 12 years old.[14] Surveys of school officials in Antigua and Barbuda have indicated that most gang members are between the ages of 12 and 15 years.[15] These preliminary findings together imply that the street gang problem is largely confined to young marginalized males. School-based gang prevention efforts should therefore begin early in life to inoculate youth from gang membership.

The Organizational Characteristics of Street Gangs

Available research finds that the organizational characteristics of Caribbean street gangs vary by nation. Studies based on data collected from law enforcement experts in Antigua and Barbuda and in Trinidad and Tobago indicate that street gangs typically have an accepted name and that gang members refer to themselves as a gang or crew, spend a lot of time in public places and claim turf. While, in Trinidad and Tobago, according to police experts, most street gangs do not have symbols such as recognizable styles of clothing, ways of speaking, or signs, police experts in Antigua and Barbuda say that most street gangs do make use of such symbols.[16] Relying on self-reported data from self-identified school-aged gang members in Trinidad and Tobago, Pyrooz et al. (2012) indicate that, while most gang members state that their gangs hold regular meetings (56 percent) and have rules (52 percent), fewer than half state that their gangs have a leader (45 percent) or insignia (45 percent). While these gangs exhibit relatively low levels of organization, Pyrooz et al. (2012) find that gang organizational structure is positively related to delinquency. In other words, the more structurally organized a gang, the more the gang

members self-report delinquency. A report by an officer of the Royal Barbados Police Force suggests that street gangs in that country use symbols and initiation rituals.[17] Street gangs in Jamaica, however, appear to be more well organized. According to Leslie (2010), gangs there are characterized by an organizational hierarchy and a division of labour, typically including an all-powerful leader, an upper echelon, a middle echelon and bottom-level 'workers'. Gangs in Jamaica exhibit several typologies that range from small, loosely organized gangs to large highly organized gangs. Leslie (2010) also notes that these gangs lack defined territories and do not use identifying signs such as tattoos or gang colours.

Much less is known about organized crime groups in the region. In Jamaica, organized crime groups are hierarchical and are led by 'dons'. Dons typically have several 'soldiers' who perform many functions. While some may be involved in a gang or criminal lifestyle; others may be more involved in local politics. Soldiers have access to the resources that are derived from their activities.[18] Dons play a leadership role in politics, community affairs and the underground economy. For example, they have veto power over political party decisions and regularly provide essential public services that the government cannot provide such as food, jobs and community safety.[19] These organized crime groups have identifiable territories, referred to as 'garrisons', that are considered safe havens from law enforcement. Harriott (2008b, 24) notes that "entry into these areas by the police may precipitate armed battles that are costly in lives lost and may be politically costly for the police and the political administration."

In Trinidad and Tobago, there have been several drug-trafficking networks, some of which have evolved into organized crime groups. There are, however, alternate trajectories to organized crime. Members and ex-members of the Jamaat al Muslimeen constitute a network that is involved in organized crime activities. The network is reportedly highly organized and prolific.[20] International attention turned to the group in 1990 when members attempted to overthrow the government of Trinidad and Tobago.[21] The structure

of organized crime groups in Guyana and Suriname is less well known, but is believed to be comprised of loosely organized networks that support the drug and gun trade.

The Consequences of Street Gangs and Organized Crime

Street gangs and organized crime groups are major obstacles to meeting regional development goals. They affect the quality of life, erode the development of human and social capital and divert substantial resources away from more productive uses. Below, we illustrate how street gangs and organized crime have contributed to violence and crime and undermine local economies, the rule of law and human development.

Crime and violence are perhaps the most publicly visible consequences of street gangs and organized crime (box 3.2). Available data indicate there is substantial variability in the degree

to which countries are affected by gang-related crime and violence. For example, in Antigua and Barbuda, homicide data for 2006–2007 show that only 1 of the 29 homicides reported in that country were gang related.[22] In Barbados and Guyana, while the problem does not appear prevalent, there are periodic news reports of gang homicides.[23] However, the situation in these countries has not been systematically examined. The number of gang homicides in Saint Lucia appears to be growing and contributing to a greater share of the nation's homicides, but there is no systematic research. The number of gang homicides in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago, however, are substantial and increasing. In Jamaica, in 2006, there were 1,303 homicides, of which 32.5 percent (n = 423) were classified as gang homicides, and, in 2009, the country experienced 1,680 homicides, of which 48.1 percent (n = 808) were classified as gang related. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, in

Box 3.2. Do Gangs Have an Impact on the Number of Homicides in Communities?

After controlling for social-structural factors, the authors of a recent study have found that there is a strong relationship between the presence of gangs and gang members and the incidence of homicide in communities. Thus, for every additional gang member in a community, the number of homicides increased by 0.4 percent, and, for every additional gang in a community, the number of homicides increased by about 10 percent (table a).

Table a. The Relationship between Gangs and Homicides

Increase in gangs, number	Increase in homicides, %	Increase in gang members, number	Increase in homicides, %
1	9.1	1	0.4
2	19.0	5	2.0
3	29.9	10	4.1
4	41.7	50	22.1
5	54.6	100	49.1
10	138.9	150	82.0
20	470.8	200	122.2
		400	393.7

Source: Katz and Fox (2010).

2006, there were 371 homicides, of which 26.4 percent (n = 98) were classified by the police as gang related; in 2009, the country reported 506 homicides, of which 34.8 percent (n = 176) were gang related. Accordingly, not only did the proportion of gang-related homicides increase in both countries, but the number of gang-related homicides almost doubled in both countries over the same period.
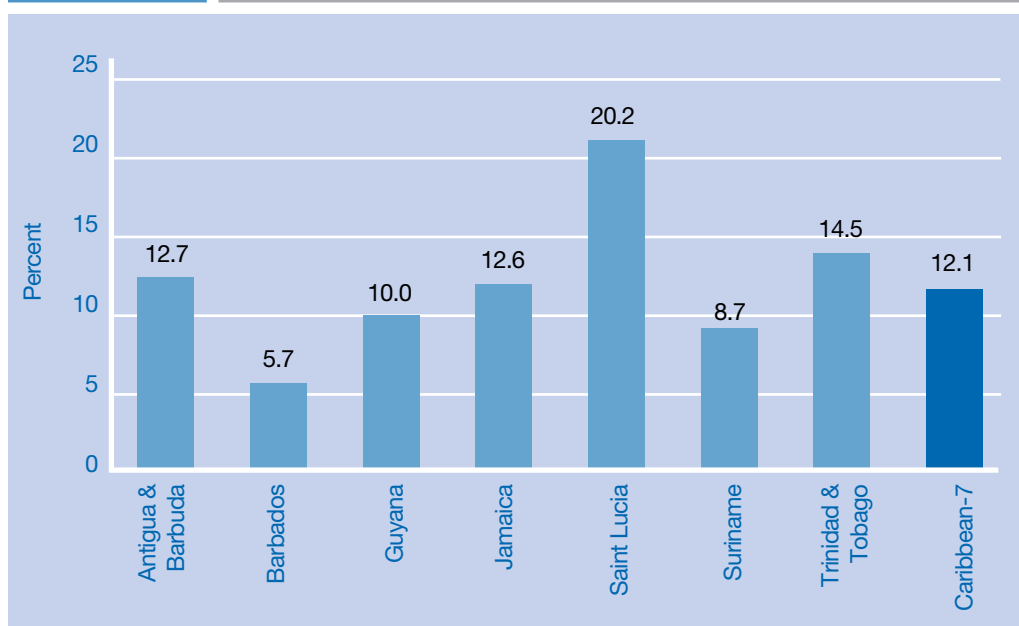
Research suggests that these figures may underreport the extent of the problem. Over the last several decades, a number of researchers have described the limitations of gang homicide data and the under classification of homicides as gang related.[24] One such study was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago. Katz and Maguire (2006) examined the nature of the homicides in the Besson Street Station District, a station district with one of the worst homicide rates in the nation. They determined that, while the police classified about 25 percent of the district's homicides as gang related, interviews and document reviews revealed that at least 62.5 percent of the homicides were actually gang related. This suggests that, through-

out the Caribbean, gang homicides may be more pronounced than official police statistics and news reports indicate.

Perhaps our greatest understanding of the threat posed by Caribbean street gangs was provided by research conducted in Trinidad and Tobago. A national study diagnosing the issue of street gangs was funded by the Ministry of National Security. It examined several data sources, including official data, self-reported data of school-aged youth, and self-reported data of arrestees. All three data sources yielded similar outcomes. The official data showed that gang members, relative to non–gang members, were two times more likely to have been arrested for property crimes, three times more likely to have been arrested for violent, gun, or drug offenses, and five times more likely to have been arrested for drug sales.[25] Self-reported data of school-aged youth showed that, compared with non–gang members, gang members were about 11 times more likely to be involved in drug sales, 7 times more likely to be involved in violence, 5 times more likely to be involved in property crimes, and three times more likely

| Chart **3.3** | **Neighbourhood Experiences of Gang Violence, Caribbean-7, 2010** |

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). Question: "In the last year, did any of the following crimes/behaviours occur in your neighbourhood?" The chart shows the percentage of respondents who answered "Gang violence".

to have been arrested.[26] While similar findings were reported by adult arrestees, analysis indicated that many gang members in the nation possessed firearms (52.6 percent), which were carried for self-defence.[27]

Surveys of residents are another common strategy for understanding the consequences of street gangs and organized crime. The UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010 reveals varying levels of gang violence in the Caribbean-7. Slightly more than 12.1 percent of the residents in these nations stated that gang violence takes place in their neighbourhoods (chart 3.3). Saint Lucian residents were the most likely to report such gang violence (20.2 percent), followed by Trinidadians (14.5 percent), Antiguans (12.7 percent), Jamaicans (12.6 percent), Guyanese (10.0 percent), Surinamese (8.7 percent), and Barbadians (5.7 percent).

We also explored the impact of street gangs by examining the personal experiences of residents as victims during the year previous to the survey. We compared the victimization rates among residents who lived in neighbourhoods with gang problems and the rates among residents in gang-free neighbourhoods. Table 3.2 shows that, regardless of country, people who live in areas with gangs were about twice as likely to have been crime victims during the year previous to the survey. While extortion has been strongly related to the presence of gangs in neighbourhoods in Central America, this does not appear to be the case in the Caribbean. Property crime, however, is associated with the presence of gangs in the Caribbean. In Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana and Suriname, people who live in neighbourhoods with gangs were more than twice as likely to have been the

Table 3.2. Victimization and Neighbourhood Gang Presence, Caribbean-7, 2010

percent

Country	Any victimization		Violent victimization		Property victimization		Extortion victimization	
	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs
Antigua & Barbuda	9.3	23.3	3.1	12.7	4.8	12.7	0.1	0.0
Barbados	10.1	26.1	4.3	14.1	4.0	11.5	0.1	0.0
Guyana	6.2	17.7	1.7	6.9	2.9	6.9	0.2	0.0
Jamaica	5.3	8.3	1.8	4.3	2.4	4.3	0.0	0.0
Saint Lucia	9.1	19.7	3.2	11.4	4.9	9.3	0.1	0.4
Suriname	8.7	18.1	2.0	7.1	6.7	13.8	0.0	0.0
Trinidad & Tobago	9.6	16.0	3.7	10.1	4.2	5.3	0.2	0.0
Caribbean-7	8.4	18.5	2.8	9.6	4.4	9.0	0.1	0.1

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). Questions: "In the last year, were you victim of a crime, a violent crime, property crime, financial crime?" and "Is there a criminal gang in your neighbourhood?" The table shows, according to the presence or absence of gangs, the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" to the first question by type of crime. *p<.05

victims of property crimes. In Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago, there was not a significant relationship between gang presence and property crime victimization. With respect to victimization through violence, the relationship was particularly strong in the Caribbean-7: almost 10 percent of the residents of neighbourhoods with gangs had been victims of violent crimes, compared with about 3 percent of the residents of neighbourhoods with no gang problems. The highest rates of victimization by violence in neighbourhoods with gangs were found in Barbados, a country in which the gang problem appears to be fairly modest relative to the other countries; the lowest rates were in Jamaica, a country in which the gang problem is fairly substantial relative to the other countries. These findings may arise from the fact that neighbourhoods with emerging gang problems experience greater conflict than neighbourhoods with long-standing and chronic gang problems.
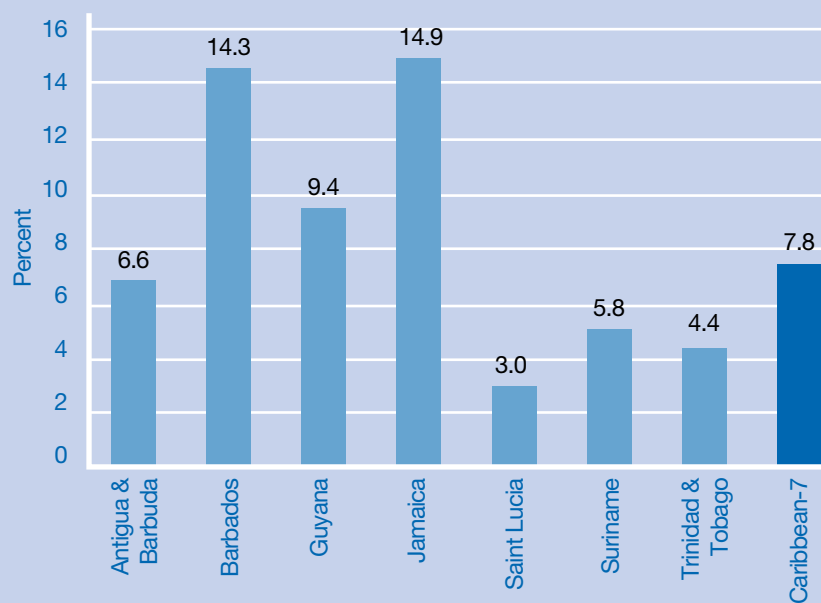
We sought to understand these same issues by examining the perceptions of residents in terms of the impact of gangs on neighbourhood safety. Specifically, we were interested in determining if residents believed that the presence of street gangs made their neighbourhoods safer or less safe. While most respondents stated that gangs made their communities less safe, a surprisingly large share of the respondents in Barbados (14.3 percent) and Jamaica (14.9 percent) stated that gangs made their neighbourhoods safer (chart 3.4). This might reflect the concern of Barbadians about the high risk of victimization and their perception that gangs might provide citizen safety. In Jamaica, these findings may reflect the view of resident that the state has failed in its responsibilities to ensure citizen security, and gangs have filled the void.

Organized crime groups are engaged in activity that is often less visible to the public, but that can nonetheless have an equally or more damaging effect than the activity of street gangs. Data are sparse; for most nations, we must rely on learning about the consequences of organized crime through anecdotal evidence. For example, such evidence indicates that, in Guyana and Suriname, both South American nations geographically, but Caribbean in culture, the consequences of organized crime are varied, but are often related to drug-trafficking. Local officials note that "the people who are involved in moving drugs are often the same people who will use the same operation for many other illegal activities" such as money laundering and terrorism.[28] Drug-trafficking perpetuated by organized crime groups also often leads to local drug use problems because traffickers are frequently not paid in cash, but in product and are therefore required to sell in domestic markets, which then has consequential effects on local criminality, including youth gangs, prostitution, and violent and property crime related to drug markets.[29] Drug-trafficking likewise leads to the proliferation of firearms, which are frequently traded for drugs, and the presence of armed men to protect turf and other illegal property. Indeed, drug-trafficking has been linked to the rise in execution-type killings, which account for around a third of homicides in Guyana each year.[30] Additionally, it fosters the corruption of public sector employees and

| Chart **3.4** | **Respondents Who Believe Gangs Make Neighbourhoods Safer, Caribbean-7, 2010** |

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: respondents who said gangs were in their neighbourhoods (N = 1,700). Question: "Have the gangs made the neighbourhood safer or less safe?" The chart shows the percentage of respondents who answered "Safer".

law enforcement personnel by drug traffickers, who use their wealth to buy influence and protection from prosecution. Finally, in Guyana, drug-trafficking distorts the local economy and undermines legitimate economic activity because the monies derived from drug sales are laundered by pricing commodities and services much lower than the prevailing market rate.[31]

While all the Caribbean island nations experience problems associated with drug-trafficking, Jamaica continues to be the largest Caribbean supplier of marijuana and serves as a major transit point for cocaine trafficked from Central and South America to North America. Drug production and trafficking in Jamaica are both enabled and accompanied by organized crime and domestic and international gang activity. Cases such as United States vs. Knowles and the indictment of Jamaican drug lord Christopher Coke illustrate the transnational nature of the drug-trafficking component of organized crime.[32] In Jamaica, similar to Guyana, there is also a strong relationship between the illicit drug trade and the illicit arms trade. The trade in guns in exchange for illicit drugs exacerbates the crime problem because unregistered handguns flow freely into the country, contributing to the high rates of firearm-related crimes.[33] In like fashion, but to a lesser extent, officials of the Royal Barbados Police Force report that organized crime has been linked to drug-trafficking and fighting over turf, primarily at sea, where disputes over drug shipments have led to deadly violence.

While drug-trafficking has often dominated public dialogue, trafficking in persons has been identified as a new problem in the region (see chapter 1). Criminal networks in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and Jamaica are increasingly becoming involved in human trafficking. For example, investigative work in Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados recently discovered that the majority of prostitutes in the country were immigrant women forced into the sex trade. The investigation uncovered at least 80 women who were told they would be earning decent salaries as bartenders, masseuses, hotel workers, or dancers. Instead, the women, who were mainly from Guyana, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia were forced to serve as sex workers in nightclubs. The investigation determined that organized crime groups obtained the cooperation of immigration officers and senior officials, who were frequently bribed to allow the women into the country.[34] Similarly, Jamaica is a source of internally and externally trafficked children and adults. A US State Department (2010a) report indicates that Jamaica serves as a transit country for illegal migrants going to Canada and the United States and that Jamaicans are trafficked into forced labour in the United States. Foreign victims of this trafficking have also been identified in Jamaica. These findings raise questions about the effectiveness of policies that constrain free movement throughout the Caribbean for the purpose of suppressing human trafficking or of policies that address organized crime issues related to guns and drugs.

In Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago, business scams are becoming more sophisticated and more difficult to detect. For example, Jamaican Lotto scams, which are concentrated primarily in Montego Bay, disproportionately target elderly people in the United States. Lotto scammers email or phone individuals claiming that the individuals have won large sums of money and only need to wire small administrative fees to Jamaica to receive their winnings. The scams reportedly generate US$30 million a year for organized crime groups, and more than 100 killings have been linked to the scams. The scammers have been found to illicit the help of local police officers. In one Jamaican police station, 10 officers were asked to retire because of their role in the scams.[35]

In Trinidad and Tobago, criminal groups commit high-level fraud through the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP), which is designed to provide short-term employment to the jobless. The criminal groups obtain contracts to manage URP projects and fraudulently magnify the number of persons required to complete particular jobs. For instance, a job requiring only one person is presented as if it requires seven people. The ghost operations are staffed, on paper, by the seven individuals, who eventually receive cheques from the government for their supposed work and

turn over part of the proceeds to the criminal group. URP contracts offer the crime groups opportunities to provide resources not only to those who support them (their soldiers), but also to community residents in need, such as the elderly, children, or pregnant women, and this garners good will for the benefit of the criminal groups. Because URP contracts are administered through local community leaders, organized crime groups seek to increase their territory by pressuring community leaders to cooperate so that the groups may obtain more URP contracts. Disputes over territory frequently arise. There are no official statistics, but one report indicates that, since 2002, over 100 URP supervisors, foremen, contractors, and workers have been killed because of the schemes.[36]

Organized crime can also have a substantial impact on the rule of law through the corrup-

tion of the judicial process.[37] Even if an individual or group of individuals are arrested, the rule of law can be subverted through multiple avenues. The UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010 suggested that judicial corruption is pervasive. For example, 53 percent of residents in the Caribbean-7 believe that politically connected criminals go free; about 50 percent believe that the justice system is corrupt; 47.3 percent believe powerful criminals go free; and 37.2 percent believe judges are corrupt (table 3.3). While organized crime appears to have undermined the faith of the public in the rule of law across the Caribbean, the problem appears particularly acute in Trinidad and Tobago. Almost 70 percent of the residents there believe the judicial system is corrupt and politically connected criminals go free, and about 62 percent of respondents believe powerful criminals go free and 59 percent believe judges

Table 3.3. Perceptions of Corruption, Caribbean-7, 2010

percent

Country	Judges are corrupt	Justice system is corrupt	Powerful criminals go free	Politically connected criminals go free
Antigua & Barbuda	32.3	44.3	37.8	44.8
Barbados	24.5	33.8	40.1	41.9
Guyana	39.0	47.7	46.9	51.8
Jamaica	36.3	57.3	52.7	57.8
Saint Lucia	33.7	48.1	47.7	51.3
Suriname	35.6	45.8	38.9	47.0
Trinidad & Tobago	58.7	69.8	61.6	70.2
Caribbean-7	37.2	49.6	47.0	52.5

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). Questions: "Using a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Don't know, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree), indicate your assessment of the performance of the criminal justice system on the following (fairness, integrity, effectiveness): 'The judges are not corrupt', 'The justice system is free of corruption', 'The justice system is unable to convict powerful criminals', 'Powerful criminals are likely to go free', 'Politically connected criminals are likely to go free'." The chart shows the percentage of respondents who answered "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree". *p<.05

are corrupt. While the nation has invested considerable resources in improving the police services, it appears that the judicial system is also in dire need of improvement and reform.

Combined, these crime and social problems impact Caribbean nations in a number of other, less visible ways. For example, gang homicides are much less likely to be solved or result in a conviction compared with other types of homicides. This undermines the rule of law in two main ways, as follows: (1) Residents lose faith in the government's capacity to exact justice. General and specific deterrence is weakened. The community at large perceives fewer formal consequences for criminal actions. Individuals who have committed crimes and who have not been punished view the benefits outweighing the consequences, increasing the probability they will commit such crimes again. (2) The citizenry begins to seek justice through informal mechanisms. Victims and others may seek retributive justice on their own or solicit others, such as a don or a gang leader, to execute justice on their behalf.

The crimes and corruptive influence of gangs and organized crime also lead to decreased economic performance.[38] Crime diverts a country's limited resources towards crime prevention and control initiatives and away from sectors that can fuel economic growth and human development such as education and the maintenance of physical infrastructure. Corruption helps discourage positive corporate investment decisions, foreign investment and private and public loans from abroad. In the Caribbean region, in particular, crime and corruption dampen tourism. Potential tourists are alienated by violence and criminal activities and search for other locations where there is no threat to personal safety. Finally, crime and corruption cause Caribbean citizens to divert substantial resources away from more productive and entrepreneurial uses. Finances are squandered on bribes, compensating for bureaucratic delays, and engagement with organized crime rather than on personal savings and investment and human and social capital development.

The Causes of Street Gangs and Organized Crime

This section focuses on the causes and correlates of street gangs and organized crime in the Caribbean. The first part of the section focuses on the social structural conditions that give rise to and sustain street gangs and organized crime. Specifically, it addresses such issues as community cohesion, social cohesion, and informal social control and the relationship these may have with the rise and spread of street gangs and organized crime in the Caribbean. The second part of the section focuses on the risk factors and the protective factors associated with street gang membership. Our purpose is to understand why people in the Caribbean are becoming involved in street gangs.

Community-Level Explanations

Community cohesion and social cohesion are important because they allow for the development of shared goals and provide the means for collective action. The willingness and ability to develop and achieve shared goals—labelled collective efficacy by Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997)—promote cooperative efforts to define, monitor and condemn undesirable behaviours occurring within a community. Absent these social ties and relationships, communities cannot exercise informal social control over their neighbourhoods. As a result of this diminished capacity for control, these neighbourhoods begin experiencing elevated levels of crime and delinquency relative to the neighbourhoods of other communities.[39]

Analysis of the data obtained through the UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010 suggests that informal social control, community cohesion and social cohesion are generally lower in communities with street gangs. In the Caribbean-7, neighbourhoods with gangs exhibited less community cohesion than neighbourhoods that did not have gangs (table 3.4).[40] In five of the Caribbean-7, informal social control was significantly less in neighbourhoods with gangs than in communities that did not have gangs.[41] These findings sug-

Table 3.4. Mean Levels of Informal Social Control and Community Cohesion with and without Gangs, Caribbean-7, 2010

Country	Informal social control		Community cohesion	
	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs
Antigua & Barbuda	−0.06	−0.42	−0.13	−0.71
Barbados	−0.10	−0.12	−0.15	−0.63
Guyana	0.15	−0.17	0.15	−0.44
Jamaica	0.31	0.13	0.41	−0.14
Saint Lucia	0.20	−0.31	0.03	−0.57
Suriname	−0.20	−0.28	0.01	−0.17
Trinidad & Tobago	−0.02	−0.32	0.13	−0.39
Caribbean-7	0.03	−0.23	0.07	−0.44

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). 'Gangs' and 'No gangs' refer to the presence or absence of gangs in the neighbourhoods of respondents. *$p<.05$

gest that community cohesion and informal social control might be important factors in understanding the causes of street gang formation in the Caribbean.

We also examined various dimensions of social cohesion and their relationship to the presence of gangs in the neighbourhoods of respondents. Our results indicate that some dimensions of social cohesion are specific to nations and that policy makers cannot necessarily generalize across the Caribbean (table 3.5). Across the Caribbean-7, respondents residing in neighbourhoods with gangs were significantly less likely to feel a sense of belonging than respondents residing in neighbourhoods without gangs. Belongingness is the sense of pride and loyalty that respondents feel towards their countries.[42] In Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago, respondents who lived in an area with gangs were significantly less likely to feel

a sense of belonging to their nation. Feelings of societal inclusion were also significantly associated with the presence of gangs in the neighbourhoods of respondents. Inclusion is the extent to which respondents believe they are similar to others in the country.[43] In Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, respondents who lived in neighbourhoods with gangs were significantly less likely to feel a sense of inclusion. Participation was also significantly related to the presence of gangs in the neighbourhoods of respondents. Participation was measured by the willingness of respondents to work with others to reduce violence and improve the country.[44] In Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, residents of neighbourhoods with gangs were less likely to state that they were willing to participate with others to reduce violence or improve the country. We also examined the relationship between neighbourhood gang presence and

Table 3.5. Mean Levels of Social Cohesion in Communities with and without Gangs, Caribbean-7, 2010

Country	Belonging		Inclusion		Participation		Legitimacy		Respect	
	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs
Antigua & Barbuda	−0.25	−0.82	−0.11	−0.56	−0.06	−0.56	−0.04	−0.53	−0.18	−0.50
Barbados	0.17	−0.14	−0.06	−0.32	−0.39	−0.60	0.23	−0.02	−0.04	−0.31
Guyana	−0.25	−0.56	−0.04	−0.49	−0.06	−0.28	−0.23	−0.64	−0.15	−0.47
Jamaica	0.22	0.17	0.19	0.06	0.32	0.20	0.21	0.04	0.21	0.01
Saint Lucia	0.00	−0.19	0.01	−0.05	0.23	−0.05	0.20	−0.02	0.28	0.04
Suriname	0.07	0.05	0.03	−0.07	−0.04	0.05	−0.09	−0.14	−0.08	−0.11
Trinidad & Tobago	0.20	−0.08	0.20	−0.22	0.11	−0.17	0.02	−0.47	0.18	−0.22
Caribbean-7	0.03	−0.23	0.03	−0.23	0.01	−0.11	0.04	−0.26	0.03	−0.21

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). Questions: "Is there a criminal gang (or gangs) in your neighbourhood?" "To what extent is there a criminal gang problem in your neighbourhood?"

the perceptions of respondents about the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and the perceptions of respondents about the respect granted to them within society. Legitimacy was measured by the willingness of respondents to support institutions such as the police and the courts and the views of respondents on judicial fairness.[45] Respect was measured by the perceptions of respondents about whether they were respected by their fellow citizens, people earning more than them, and people of different ethnic origins.[46] With the exception of Suriname, the respondents in all the Caribbean-7 who were living in neighbourhoods with gangs scored lower on the legitimacy and respect scales than the respondents who were living in neighbourhoods without gangs. Together, these findings suggest that people living in neighbourhoods with gangs feel isolated, disenfranchised and apathetic and are less supportive of formal mechanisms of social control.

As a consequence of the lack of social cohesion, community cohesion and informal social control, as well as the lack of effective formal social control to respond to gangs and organized crime, criminal groups have filled the void, empowering them and helping them become engrained into the fabric of local communities (see below and chapters 5 and 6). In Jamaica, formal and informal social control and social and community cohesion have deteriorated to such an extent that some communities have turned to dons and street gangs for help. Mogensen (2005) reports that, in Jamaica, citizens do not believe that the police can effectively address crime, and they seek justice from local dons through kangaroo courts. "When crimes are carried out within the community, dons enforce discipline, including beatings or executions, to an extent considered commensurate with the level of the crime."[47] Dons also provide housing, food,

medical assistance, policing services, early childhood education and other assistance to citizens who are loyal, as well as greater opportunities for political advancement to people with political aspirations.[48] Research in Trinidad and Tobago yielded similar findings. One community leader, when asked about this issue, stated, "Gangs bring down crime. They instituted a community court that meets weekly where young males are punished and given strokes. . . . One to two local councillors have gone to the courts to observe their practice." Another stated, "Gangs are the first ones to respond to crime; the police are incompetent, they take too long and never finish the work. If you go to the gang leader you know they will take care of you." Still another explained, "If you live in a community where there is gang cohesion you are more safe because they [protect you]. . . . Gangs provide safety, create jobs . . . , give people food, give mother's milk for their babies."[49] Harriott (2008b) notes that, as a consequence, leaders of street gangs and organized crime groups have served as role models and mentors in some communities, which necessarily perpetuates a culture that places additional value on these criminal organizations and their positive role in communities.

Individual-Level Explanations

Another approach to explaining and understanding delinquent and criminal groups is through the risk factor prevention paradigm. Risk factors are those characteristics or symptoms that, if present, increase the odds that an individual will be involved in problem behaviour. Conversely, protective factors are those characteristics or symptoms that, if present, decrease the odds that an individual will be involved in problem behaviour.[50] The risk and protective model has been used extensively in public health since researchers first learned that heart disease was associated with risk factors such as tobacco use, lack of exercise, and family history of heart disease and that individuals were less likely to experience heart disease if protective factors such as exercise and low-fat diets were present in the individuals' lives.[51] Since then, the risk and protective factor approach has been used extensively to understand and develop public health policy surrounding cancer, mental health, and disease. Most recently, it has been applied to achieve greater understanding of the reasons people join gangs.

There is almost no research on the risk and protective factors associated with street gang membership. Anecdotal evidence hints that membership is related to risk factors such as neighbourhood social disorganization, neighbourhood levels of crime and drug use, lack of attachment to school, poor school performance, unemployment, poor family management, attachment to antisocial peers, and an

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Box 3.3. Deportees, Street Gangs and Organized Crime in the Caribbean

In the Caribbean, public policy makers and residents have made claims that deportees from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States have contributed to the problems of gangs and organized crime in the region. The claims have largely focused on the belief that individuals learn about criminal behaviour in developed nations and, after they have been deported home, are responsible for much of the crime. While there has been little research on this issue, preliminary evidence indicates that deportees are not a major contributor to crime and violence in the Caribbean.

A joint report by UNODC and the World Bank (2010), for example, shows that 13 percent of deportees to Barbados and 15 percent of deportees to Trinidad and Tobago were later charged with a crime. There have been similar findings in Jamaica. However, the UNODC and World Bank report noted that, while most deportees are not involved in crime, a small number might be responsible for much violence. For instance, the report states that, between 2001 and 2004, 224 individuals were deported to Jamaica who had previously been convicted of murder. The report concludes that, given the relatively small population of Jamaica, such a large number of deportees can have a significant impact on local crime rates.

Source: Katz and Fox (2010).

individual's prior involvement in delinquency and drug use. The only empirical study to date is the one conducted by Katz and Fox (2010) in their examination of school-aged youth in Trinidad and Tobago. The authors report that gang involvement is associated with youth who (1) have parents with attitudes that favour antisocial behaviour, (2) live in neighbourhoods that are characterized by high mobility, (3) live in neighbourhoods in which handguns are widely available, (4) have been involved in antisocial behaviour from an early age, (5) have the intention to use drugs, (6) have antisocial peers, and (7) have peers who use drugs. Also of interest was their finding that school-related risk factors were not, for the most part, significantly associated with gang involvement.[52] The case of deportees is also revealing (box 3.3).

Responding to Street Gangs and Organized Crime

Responses to street gangs and organized crime groups can be varied and multidimensional (box 3.4). Domestic responses fall into five broad strategies, as follows: (1) suppression; (2) the provision of academic, economic and social opportunities; (3) social intervention; (4) community mobilization; and (5) organizational change and development. International responses tend to focus on treaties, inter-agency cooperation, and capacity-building. In the sections below, we discuss the responses that have been implemented in the Caribbean to address street gangs and organized crime, and we discuss the public's perceptions of these responses.

Box 3.4. When Responding to Gangs Makes the Problem Worse

Malcolm Klein (1995), an eminent gang scholar, notes that, in Los Angeles, gang sweeps by the police are not an effective means of generating gang arrests and do not appear to justify the US$150,000 a day that they cost the local police department. Klein claims that such tactics may actually have a negative impact on the community's gang problem. He argues that, because the majority of the people arrested were immediately released without having been charged, gang cohesiveness may have been strengthened, and the deterrent impact on gang members may have been reduced.

Suppression efforts in Central America have yielded similar results. Mano Dura, the gang-reform programme in El Salvador, criminalized gang membership, and, as a consequence, youth, even if they were only remotely associated with gangs, were arrested, incarcerated and then discriminated against upon their return to their communities from prison. The policy had the unintended impact of increasing gang cohesion and the proliferation of gangs.a

A number of researchers have evaluated the impact of other prevention and social intervention approaches on gang membership and gang crime. While a few studies report some positive impacts, most of the research examining these strategies finds that they are ineffective in reducing gang membership or gang crime.b Indeed, some of the research indicates that these programmes lead to an increase in gang membership and gang delinquency. Klein (1971) reports that the assignment of caseworkers increases the local reputation of particular gangs, which helps attract new members and leads to more gang activity in the areas employing detached caseworkers. Spergel (1995) reports similar findings in his examination of a programme that was designed to provide job training and job opportunities for gang members in Chicago. Project staff were primarily comprised of gang leaders from two of the largest gangs in Chicago. The analyses indicate that the project was a failure by almost all accounts. Job training and placement efforts were unsuccessful; gang structures became more sophisticated; and the number of gang-motivated homicides rose. As a consequence, many policy makers no longer believe that prevention and social intervention approaches represent a successful method to deal with gangs. This has led to a general decrease in intervention efforts conducted by youth-oriented agencies, which have since undertaken more general prevention initiatives aimed at younger at-risk youth.c

a. USAID (2006).
b. Short (1963); Spergel (1995).
c. Spergel (1986).

Suppression

Suppression is the main approach that is used by Caribbean nations to respond to street gangs and organized crime. The suppression strategies are typically reactive in nature and make use of criminal law to control behaviour. The objective of the strategies is not only to address immediate issues (to arrest individuals for criminal activity, for example), but also to deter youth and adults from joining gangs and organized crime groups and discourage gang members from engaging in future crime. Typical tactics involve arrest, prosecution, intermediate sanctions, and imprisonment by criminal justice officials.

While general law enforcement strategies have been used to respond reactively to crimes perpetrated by gangs, no nation, with the exception of Jamaica and of Trinidad and Tobago, have focused efforts on the gang members or gangs that are disproportionately involved in gang crime. Most of these nations lack sufficient intelligence services to identify accurately the members of gangs or the main groups involved in violence. The police response has generally lacked the adequate focus on persons and places that can lead to good results.

Operation Kingfish was launched in Jamaica in 2004 to restore community confidence and reduce the fear of crime by targeting dons and leaders of gangs and by breaking up organized crime groups. The operation task force reportedly made a major dent in organized crime, effected the arrest of some of Jamaica's most wanted men, smashed at least two gangs, and disrupted six others.[53] Jamaican police stepped up their efforts in 2011, targeting 47 groups, particularly those with more sophisticated ties to local political parties. The new strategy appears to be focused on local police commanders, who identify the three worst criminal groups in their jurisdictions and undertake suppression efforts.[54] Additionally, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, through an enhanced anti-gang strategy, has recently identified the dismantling of gang activities as a priority. It requires officers to (1) focus on streets and public spaces; (2) identify, profile and act to disrupt or completely demolish the gangs identified; and (3) open a Proceeds of Crime Act file on each person arrested or charged with a serious gang or drug-related crime.[55] Security officials report that this crime-fighting strategy has resulted in a 44 percent reduction in killings in the first quarter of 2011 compared with the same period in 2010.[56] Trinidad and Tobago was one of the first nations in the Caribbean to establish a specialized unit with trained personnel to respond to gangs. Trinidad and Tobago's Gang/Repeat Offender Task Force—since disbanded (see below)—was established in May 2006 and staffed with approximately 40 sworn officers.[57] The unit was trained by gang specialists (sworn officers) from the United States, and the staff included a coach (a former sworn officer from the United States) who was responsible for mentoring the unit's leadership. The unit was responsible for apprehending wanted persons, collecting gang intelligence, disseminating information to units across the police service, and conducting random patrols in areas with gang problems.

Much of the response to organized crime in the Caribbean has come through the enactment of legislation and drug-related international treaties. These treaties support the operational work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and help secure membership in regional and international organizations that foster collaboration and cooperation to suppress drug-trafficking. However, in many ways, the legislation and treaties have served more as symbolic responses to the problem rather than as effective means to combat organized crime. Caribbean nations have not had the law enforcement capacity to implement many of the laws they have passed, and the result has been suppression strategies targeting end-users and street-level drug traffickers, rather than apprehending those who profit most from drug-trafficking. Some effort has been made to address other types of activity associated with organized crime such as money laundering, bribery and fraud; however, these efforts have been hampered by lack of financial resources and personnel with the relevant investigative skills.

Recently, the Global Commission on Drug Policy, a group comprised of current and past influential statesman from Brazil, Columbia, Greece, Mexico, Switzerland, the United States, and other nations, as well as influential leaders from the United Nations, proclaimed that, after 50 years of financing and repressive measures, the global war on drugs has failed. They argued that suppressive strategies aimed at traffickers and consumers have not taken into consideration that other traffickers too rapidly replace those who have been apprehended. The Global Commission on Drug Policy (2011, 2) also pointed out that these same suppressive efforts obstructed "public health measures to reduce HIV/AIDS, overdose fatalities and other harmful consequences of drug use" and that suppressive efforts aimed at violence related to drug markets (that is, gangs and organized crime groups fighting over turf) resulted in higher homicide rates and decreased overall public safety.
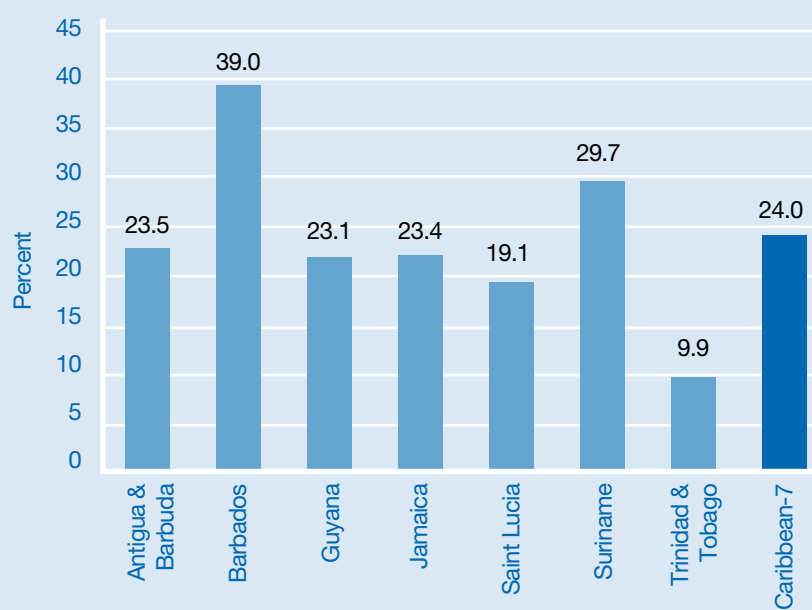
The Consequences and Limitations of Suppression

In the Caribbean, similar to early efforts in developed nations, the police response to gangs has been limited and has experienced substantial setbacks.[58] First, while police policies that define the gang phenomenon have begun to emerge, the policies are not well known among the police services and are rarely followed. This has led to unreliable gang intelligence. Officers do not necessarily document individuals because of the behaviour of these individuals. Instead, they document individuals according to the ideas, beliefs and biases of the police. Second, specialized police units dedicated to responding to gangs are themselves frequently the target of suspicions about serious misconduct and human rights violations. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, the Gang/Repeat Offender Task Force had to be disbanded after it was accused of involvement in kidnappings, passing information to criminals about imminent police raids, providing illegal extra security at nightclubs, running ghost gangs to acquire public money fraudulently, and participation in numerous extrajudicial killings.[59] Similarly, over

the past few years, the Jamaican Constabulary Force has been accused of killing civilians in pursuit of gang members. One report indicated that, as part of its crackdown on gangs, 253 civilians were killed by police in 2009, and another 400 were killed in 2010. The increase in 2010 was, in large part, a consequence of police saturating Tivoli Gardens, a garrison neighbourhood controlled by gangs, to capture Christopher Coke, a drug lord.[60] Third, evaluations of the police response to gangs in the Caribbean have shown that suppressive efforts are generally ineffective. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, the Gang/Repeat Offender Task Force made 495 arrests from May 2006 through August 2007. Of those arrested, only 110 (22.2 percent) were charged; the rest were released or transferred. Moreover, the police capacity to collect, maintain and disseminate intelligence—a core function of the task force—was poor, unorganized and unreliable.[61]

Chart **3.5**	**Perceived Confidence in the Ability of the Police to Control Gang Violence, Caribbean-7, 2010**

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). Question: "Using a scale from 1 to 5, indicate how much confidence you have in the police to effectively control gang violence. Use '1' for a low level of confidence and '5' for a high level of confidence." The chart shows the percentage of respondents answering "High" and "Very high"..

Table 3.6. Confidence of Neighbourhood Residents in the Police, Caribbean-7, 2010

percent

Country	Murder		Gang violence		Drug-trafficking		Powerful criminals		Crime in general	
	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs	No gangs	Gangs
Antigua & Barbuda	29.2	19.4	28.2	20.4	23.1	20.4	9.0	2.7	10.7	3.2
Barbados	45.3	37.7	45.6	43.3	41.4	43.7	11.7	3.8	17.6	14.0
Guyana	23.9	17.8	17.9	9.6	17.8	10.1	5.8	3.4	6.9	3.4
Jamaica	22.7	21.4	22.8	22.0	20.5	17.9	9.1	5.8	11.7	6.9
Saint Lucia	20.2	21.1	19.8	23.3	18.5	19.9	6.2	9.1	7.2	6.6
Suriname	34.6	36.0	30.4	28.5	27.7	24.8	9.5	12.2	12.4	15.3
Trinidad & Tobago	9.5	4.1	11.4	4.5	10.6	4.5	3.5	1.8	3.7	0.9
Caribbean-7	26.7	21.3	25.4	20.5	23.0	19.2	7.9	5.7	10.2	6.8

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: all respondents (N = 11,155). Question: "How much confidence do you have in the police to effectively control the crime problem in your country?" The chart shows the percentage of respondents who answered "A great deal of confidence". 'Gangs' and 'No gangs' refer to the presence or absence of gangs in the neighbourhoods of respondents. *p<.05

According to analysis of the UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010, only 24 percent of respondents in the Caribbean-7 had confidence in the police to control gang violence (chart 3.5). In Trinidad and Tobago, fewer than 10 percent of respondents were confident that the police could perform this task. Respondents in Barbados showed the highest level of confidence, at only 39 percent.

In the Caribbean-7, survey respondents in neighbourhoods with gangs have even less confidence in the ability of the police to control gang crime (table 3.6). Relative to crimes in general, respondents expressed more confidence in the ability of the police to solve crimes involving homicide, gang violence and drug-trafficking. A few other findings are also of particular interest. First, in Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname, confidence in the crime-fighting ability of the police did not significantly vary even in neighbourhoods with gangs. Second, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago were outliers in our measures. Specifically, resident confidence in the police to control crime was relatively high in Barbados, but, in Trinidad and Tobago, few residents stated they had high confidence in the police. Third, residents in all Caribbean-7 nations had little confidence in the ability of the police to control crime in general or the criminal activity of powerful criminals. The public appears to believe that the police and, potentially, the judicial system are heavily influenced by organized crime and that the response of the police to crimes of a less serious nature, but experienced more frequently by residents is rarely effective.

The problem, however, is more complicated than residents simply having little confidence in the police and believing that judges and the justice system are corrupt. Because they believe criminals are too powerful, sur-

Table 3.7. Residents Who Do Nothing about Crime Because Criminals Are Too Powerful, Caribbean-7, 2010

percent

Country	No gangs	Gangs	Overall
Antigua & Barbuda	4.2	2.8	4.0
Barbados	0.8	4.5	1.3
Guyana	9.4	8.4	8.9
Jamaica	8.3	21.8	10.4
Saint Lucia	4.2	12.1	6.5
Suriname	3.2	7.8	3.6
Trinidad & Tobago	5.4	11.9	6.6
Caribbean-7	4.8	10.4	5.7

Source: UNDP Citizen Security Survey 2010.
Note: Base: respondents who answered that there was no neighbourhood response to crime (N = 4391). Questions: "What has been done about crimes in your neighbourhood?" "If nothing, why?" The chart shows the percentage of respondents who answered "The people who are involved in the violence/crimes are too powerful". 'Gangs' and 'No gangs' refer to the presence or absence of gangs in the neighbourhoods of respondents. *p<.05

vey respondents also do nothing about crime (table 3.7). This finding was particularly pronounced in neighbourhoods with gangs. About 4.5 percent of respondents in Barbados, 12.0 percent in Saint Lucia and in Trinidad and Tobago, and 22.0 percent in Jamaica reported that they did not respond to crime because criminals were too powerful.

While it is difficult to assess what respondents mean by 'too powerful', prior research in Trinidad and Tobago suggests that this answer may be related to the perceived inability of the police to do something about the problem and the perceived belief that gang members will seek retribution. For example, through a community survey in the neighbourhood of Gonzales in Trinidad and Tobago, Johnson (2006a, 2006b) found that more than 85 percent of residents had heard gun-shots in the previous 30 days, but only 7 percent had reported the gun-shots to police. At the same time, 86 percent of the respondents stated they believed gangs would retaliate against people who reported gang-related crimes to police.

The Need for Intervention and Prevention
If implemented properly, suppression can be an important strategy in addressing street gangs and organized crime, but it is only part of the solution. Suppression strategies typically address problems that already exist; they do little to prevent individuals from joining gangs or organized crime groups, and they do not address the social conditions that give rise to these gangs and groups. Caribbean governments have been slow to adopt such intervention and prevention strategies (box 3.5).

It is necessary for Caribbean nations to implement mobilization tactics that focus on the development of community coalitions involving schools, churches and public health and criminal justice agencies for the purpose of coordinating services and developing collaborative responses to gangs and organized crime. Collaborative efforts that have been undertaken are often not focused solely on gang issues. Likewise, Caribbean nations should implement opportunity provision strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of gangs and organized crime. This approach assumes that

Box 3.5. On the Horizon: Caribbean Anti-Gang Legislation

As of late 2011, no Caribbean nation had enacted legislation that defines gangs, gang membership, or gang crime. Gang legislation can supply an opportunity for public discourse on the scope and nature of the problem and can offer policy makers an opportunity to define concepts. Well-developed legislation provides guidelines and supports the police in documenting gangs and gang membership. It can also represent an opportunity for citizens to review gang-related police records, the success or failure of anti-gang initiatives, and decisions related to the identification of gang status.

Two nations have begun the process of enacting gang legislation: Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Both nations are seeking to criminalize gang membership and individuals who assist gang members. The legislation provides the police in both nations with greater authority to search and seize individuals involved in gangs. Thus, the proposed legislation in Trinidad and Tobago—Act No. 10 of 2011—would allow the police, without a warrant, to enter and search any location where they believe gang members may be found. Furthermore, gang members would be sentenced to 10 years in prison for a first conviction and 20 years for

a second conviction. Likewise, individuals who aid gang members may be imprisoned for up to 25 years.

There are a number of troublesome aspects to these legislative initiatives. First, they do not define a gang or gang membership, nor do they place a check—a quality-control review, for example—on the discretion of the police or the courts in labelling a group as a gang or a person as a gang member. Second, the proposed legislation would have only limited impact in suppressing gang membership, gangs, or gang activity. Both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have low clearance and detection rates in gang-related crime. For example, Katz and Maguire (2006) report that, in 53 homicide investigations associated with gang activity in one Trinidadian community, there were only three arrests and no convictions. While the legislation may have a modest effect on arrest rates, it would likely have no impact on the conversion of arrests to convictions. Instead, the legislation may have the undesirable effect of increasing the probability that gang members will threaten witnesses because of the severity of the potential sentences if they are convicted

many individuals become involved in criminal groups to obtain goals and resources because they do not have access to legitimate opportunities. These strategies focus on improving the academic, economic and social opportunities of disadvantaged youth. They often rely on job training and job placement, educational initiatives and the development of problem-solving skills. The use of social intervention strategies is also lacking. Social intervention strategies often rely on outreach workers to supply immediate services to gang members in moments of need. For example, following a violent incident, an outreach worker may provide counselling, crisis intervention, or temporary shelter. Outreach workers also undertake inter-gang mediation, group counselling and conflict resolution among gangs.[62]

Primary prevention programmes are also needed for youth in the Caribbean. The goal of such programmes is to change life trajectories among youth by offering encouragements for them to avoid gang membership

and involvement with criminal groups. The programmes focus on the supply of services to an entire population or to populations in high-risk communities. Primary prevention services can be provided to youth, families, or communities by schools, NGOs, government agencies and faith-based groups. Examples of such programmes include school-based instruction, individual- and family-based life skills training and public service opportunities.[63] There are few formal prevention efforts aimed at dissuading youth in the Caribbean from becoming involved in street gangs or organized crime groups.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that street gangs and organized crime contribute significantly to the levels of criminal violence and other forms of crime and undermine the rule of law in the region. Street gangs and organized crime should therefore be among the most impor-

tant concerns for Caribbean policy makers in their goal of improving human development in the region. A key first step is to understand the scope and nature of the problem, the causes of the problem, and contemporary responses to the problem if we are to address street gangs and organized crime in the Caribbean effectively. This chapter highlights several major findings with respect to these issues. These major findings are summarized below.

The scope and character of the problem vary across nations in the Caribbean. Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Suriname appear to have street gang problems, but the extent and nature of these problems are unclear because of the lack of available information. Data do suggest, however, that Guyana is experiencing problems with organized crime. The problems are sufficiently substantial to influence the national economy and have been associated with significant corruption. The research findings indicate that street gangs and organized crime are a serious major issue in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago.

Despite the variations in scope, our findings suggest that there is some consistency in the characteristics of street gangs and organized crime groups across the Caribbean. For example, these gangs and groups are largely comprised of poor young men (or young men from poor backgrounds). While young women are also involved in these groups, their involvement in violence and other crimes is substantially less than that of the young men. Street gangs often lack formal leadership and structure and are frequently bound together by symbols and turf; organized crime groups are more sophisticated with respect to structure and leadership.

The incidence of homicide and other forms of violence has risen sharply as a consequence of street gangs and organized crime. The association between street gangs and higher rates of neighbourhood homicide is significant, and, in neighbourhoods in which street gangs are located, residents report much higher rates of victimization through violence and property crimes. Organized crime groups are associated with violence, high-level drug-

trafficking and fraud. While less visible than street gangs, but perhaps more consequential, organized crime has infiltrated state institutions in many Caribbean nations to the extent that the public believes the rule of law has been substantially compromised.

An examination of the causes and correlates of criminal groups in the Caribbean reveals that informal social control, community cohesion and social cohesion are generally lower in communities with street gangs. Additionally, there is evidence that youth who have parents with antisocial attitudes, who live in communities in which guns are available, who have engaged in antisocial behaviour at an early age, and who have peers who have engaged in delinquency and drug use are more likely to be involved with street gangs. Finally, Caribbean nations lack the infrastructure and capacity to respond effectively to street gangs and organized crime. This is illustrated by the fact that crimes associated with street gangs and organized crime groups rarely lead to arrests and even more rarely lead to convictions. This is also illustrated by the fact that, in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago, where street gangs and organized crime groups appear to be more well developed, the formal social control mechanisms in some neighbourhoods have broken down to the point that criminal groups are now providing many vital social services—such as policing, welfare services and even education—that state institutions can no longer adequately provide.