

Gang Homicide in the Caribbean

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“Setting the Research Agenda”

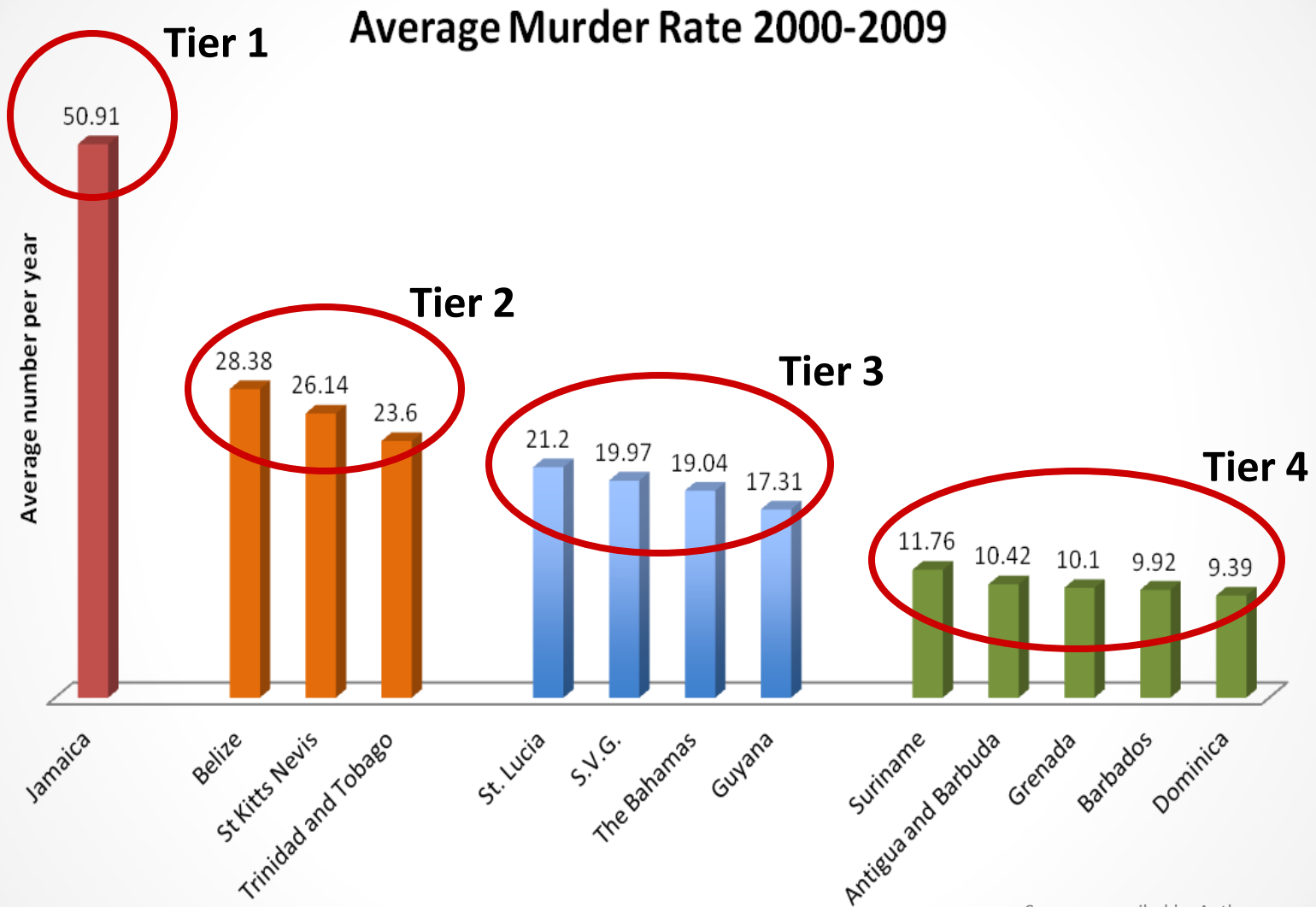
Symposium on Gangs and Gang Violence in the Caribbean
American University Washington D.C. February 17, 2012

Agenda

- Overview of Murder Statistics in the Caribbean (2000 -9)
- T&T – Murder Capital of the Caribbean?
- Cross national study on gang violence: JCA,T&T, BZ SKN
 - Definitions
 - Legislation
 - Gang-related murders, other crimes, responses & research
- Summary of Findings
- The Way Ahead

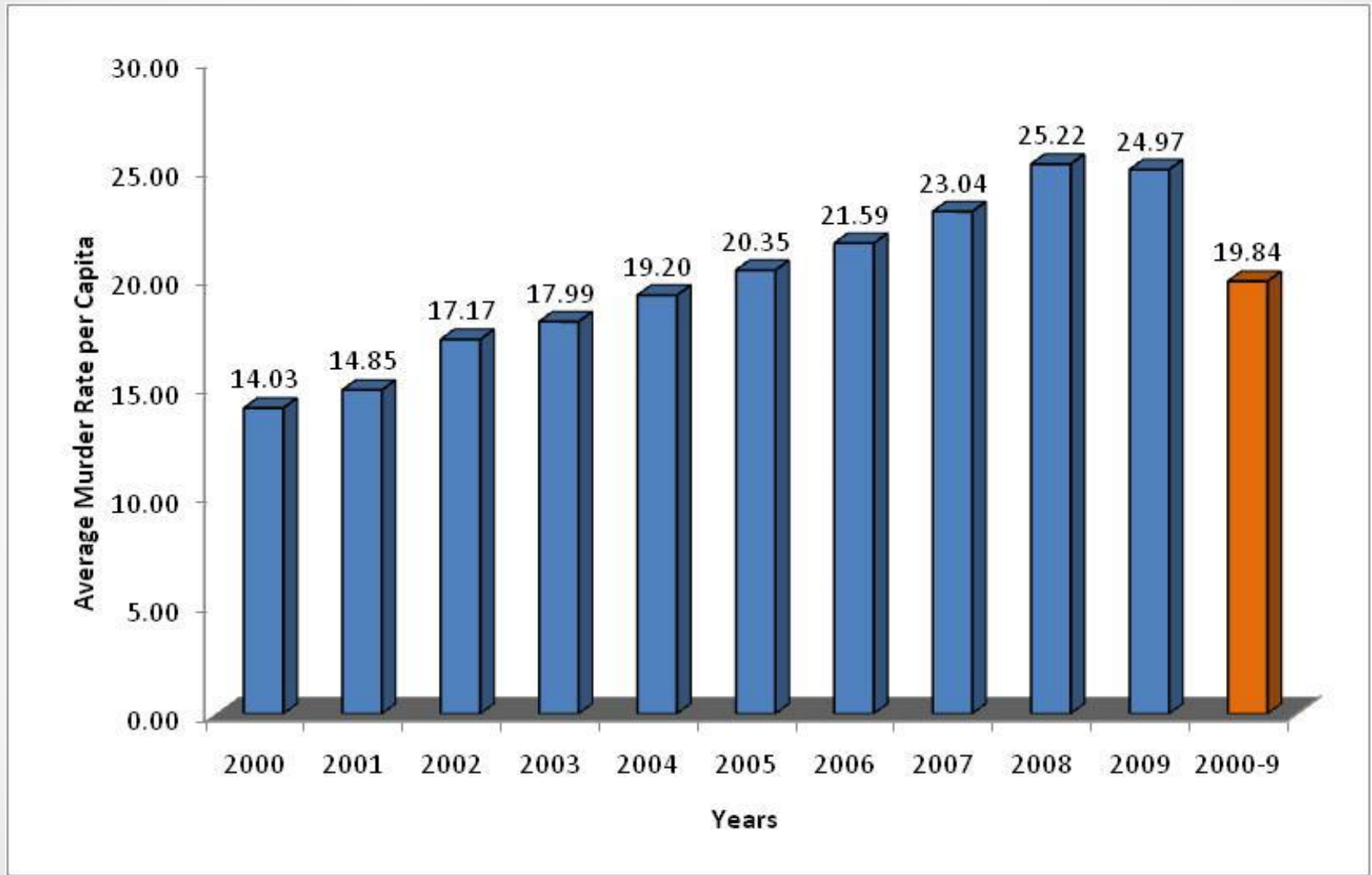
2000-9:Homicide Epidemic

- 2000 murder rate 14.03 per 100,000 people
- 2009 murder rate 24.97 per 100,000 people
- No Civil war benchmark
- Four-tiered region
- Suriname:68 to 24(00-09) the bright spot !!



Source: compiled by Author

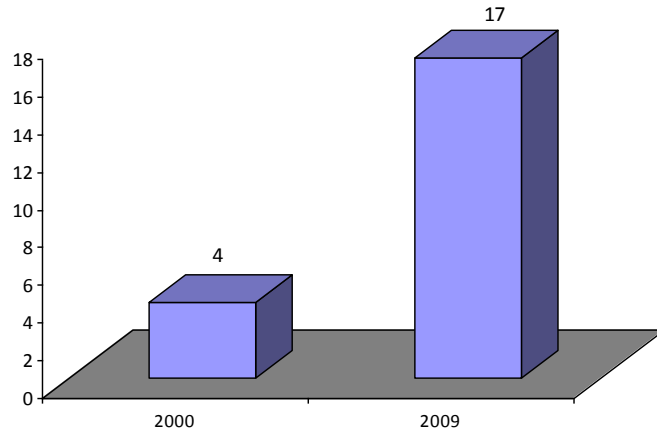
Annual Average Murder Rate



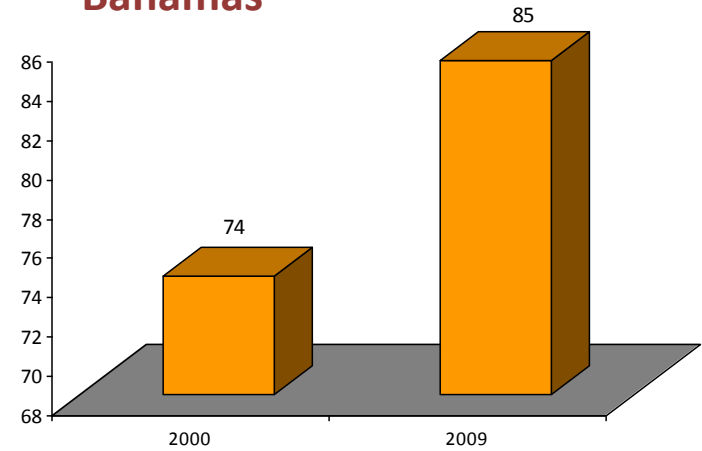
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Increasing Trend in Murders

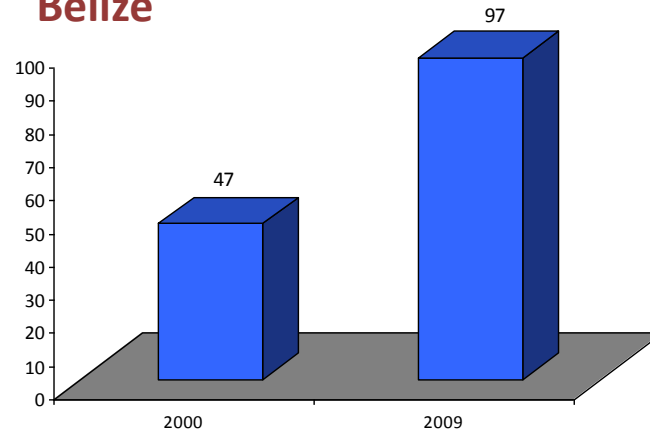
Antigua & Barbuda



Bahamas

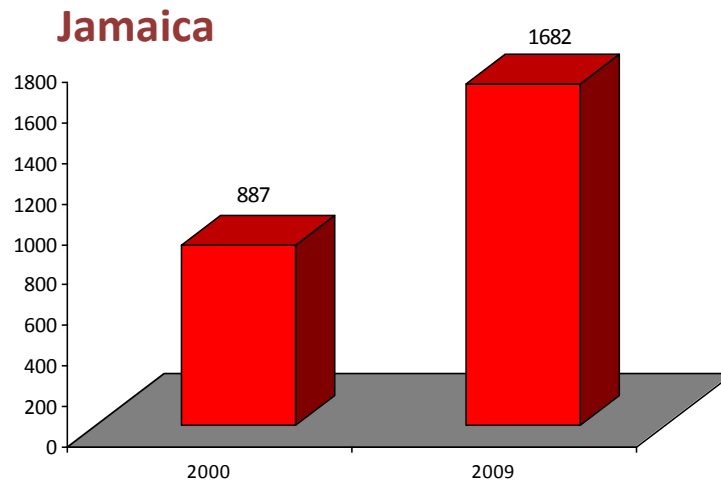
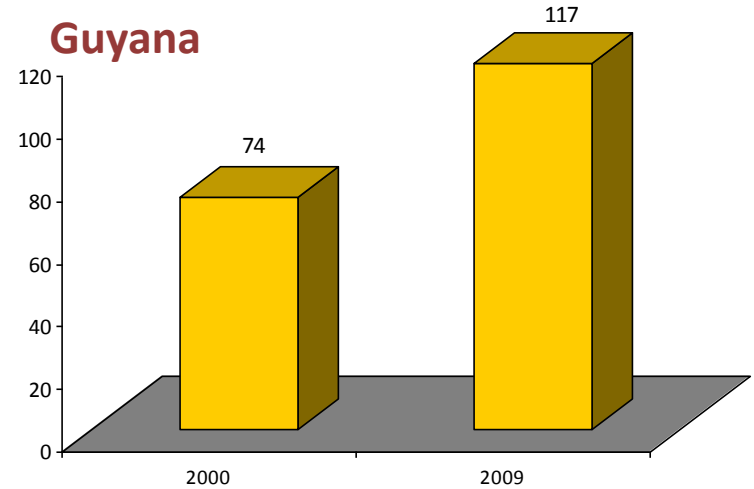
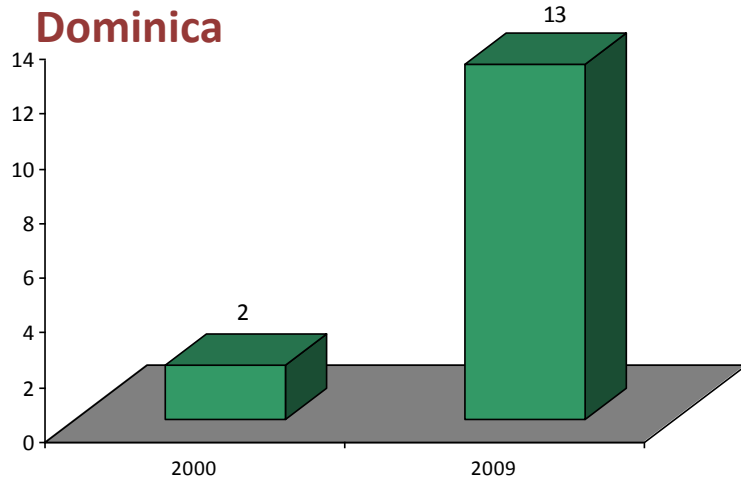


Belize



Source: compiled by Author

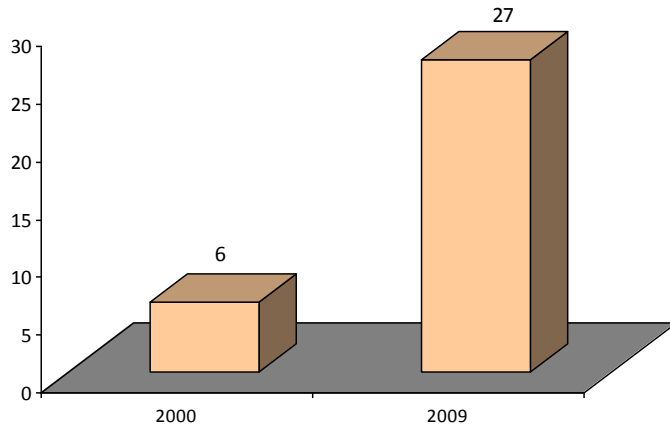
Increasing Trend in Murders



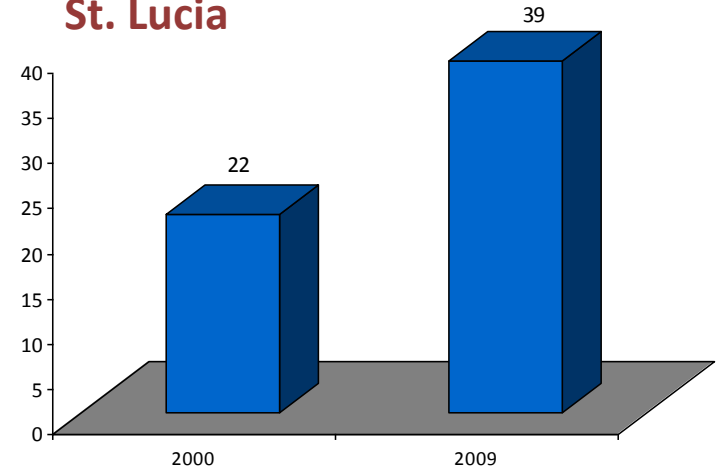
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Increasing Trend in Murders

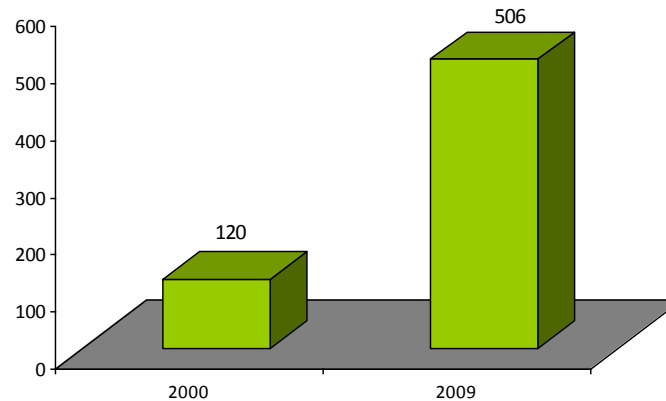
St. Kitts and Nevis



St. Lucia



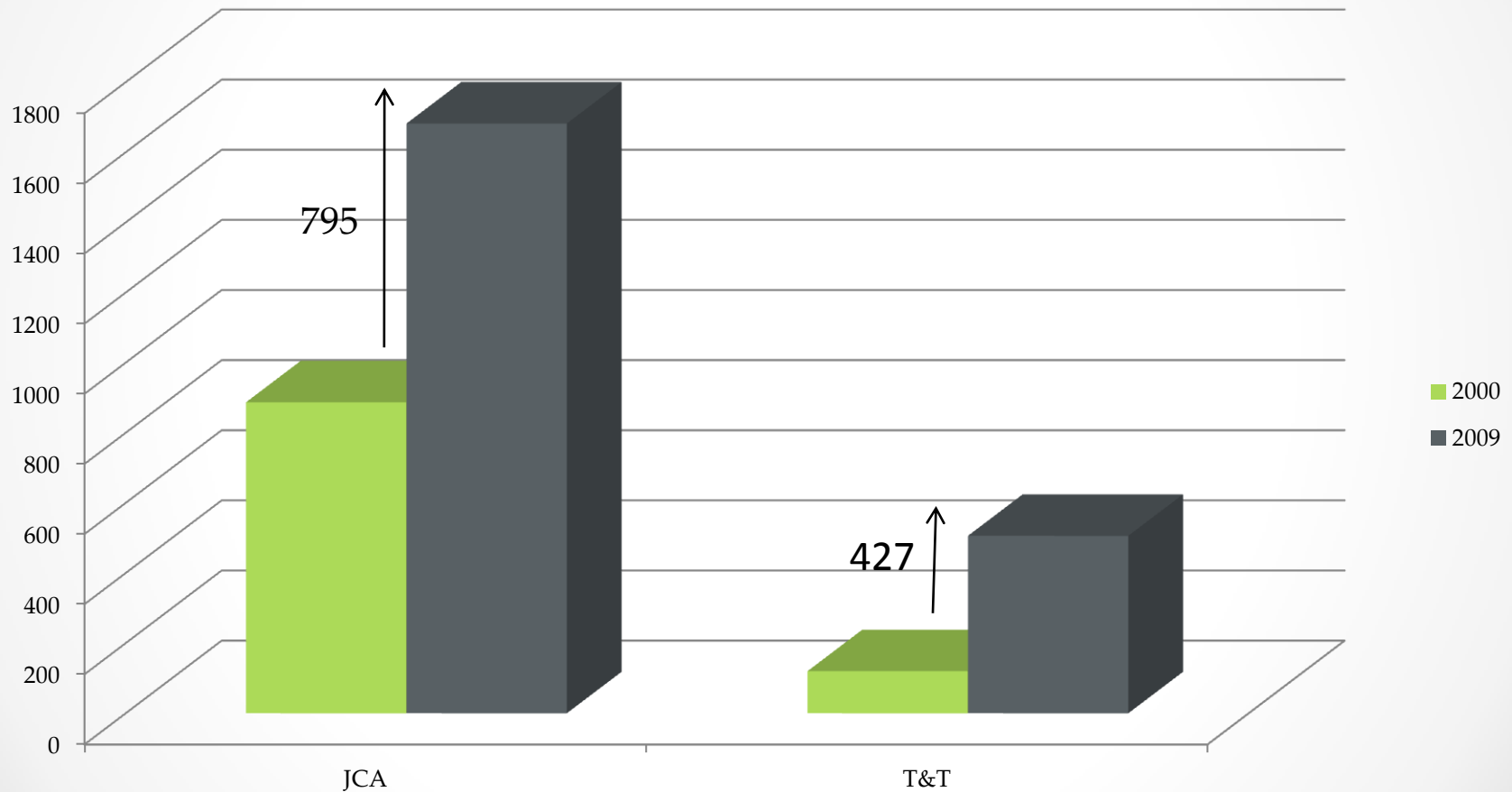
Trinidad & Tobago



Source: compiled by Author

T&T: The Pseudo Murder Capital of the Caribbean

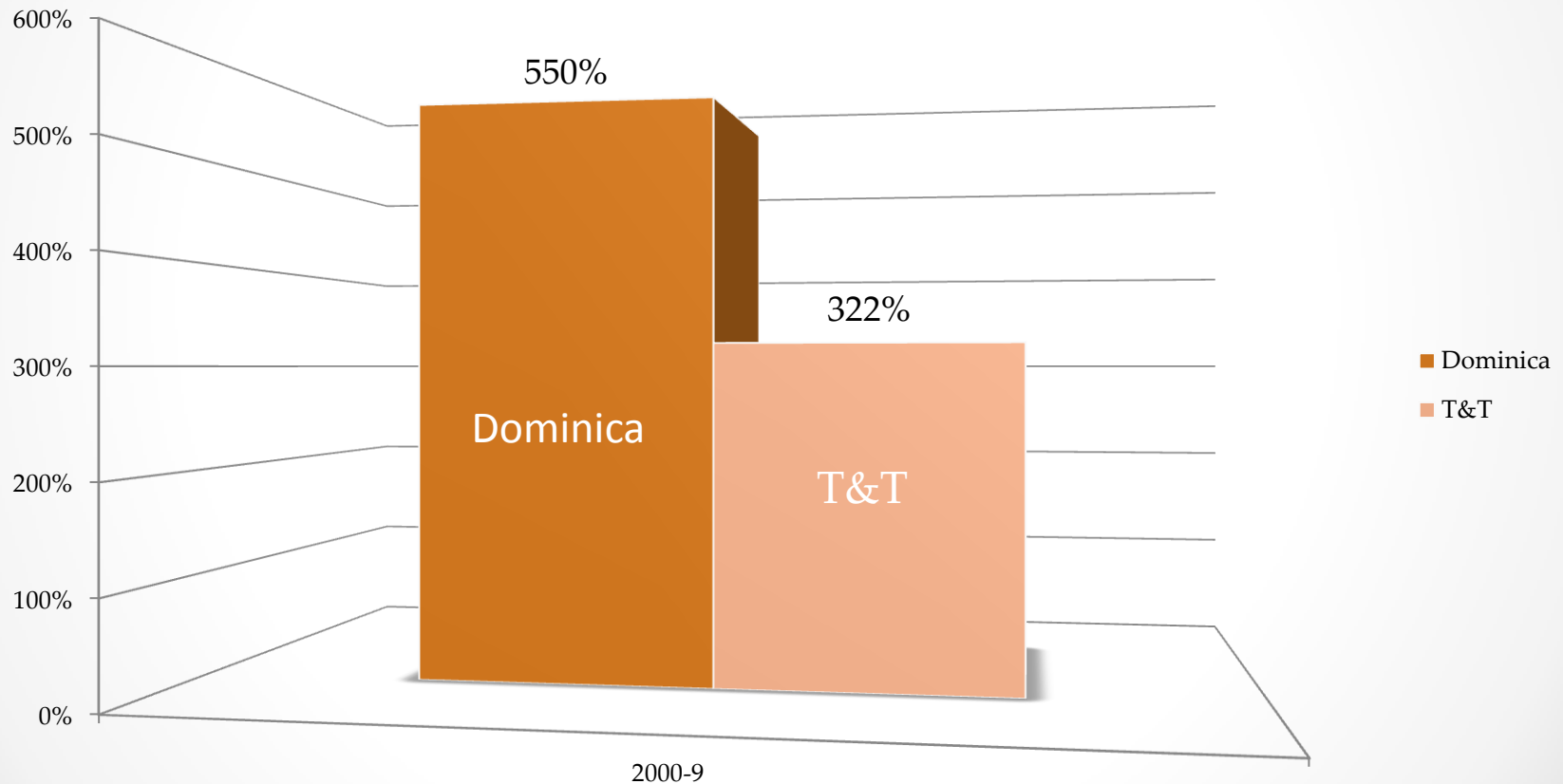
By Total Number ???



Source: compiled by Author

T&T: The Pseudo Murder Capital of the Caribbean

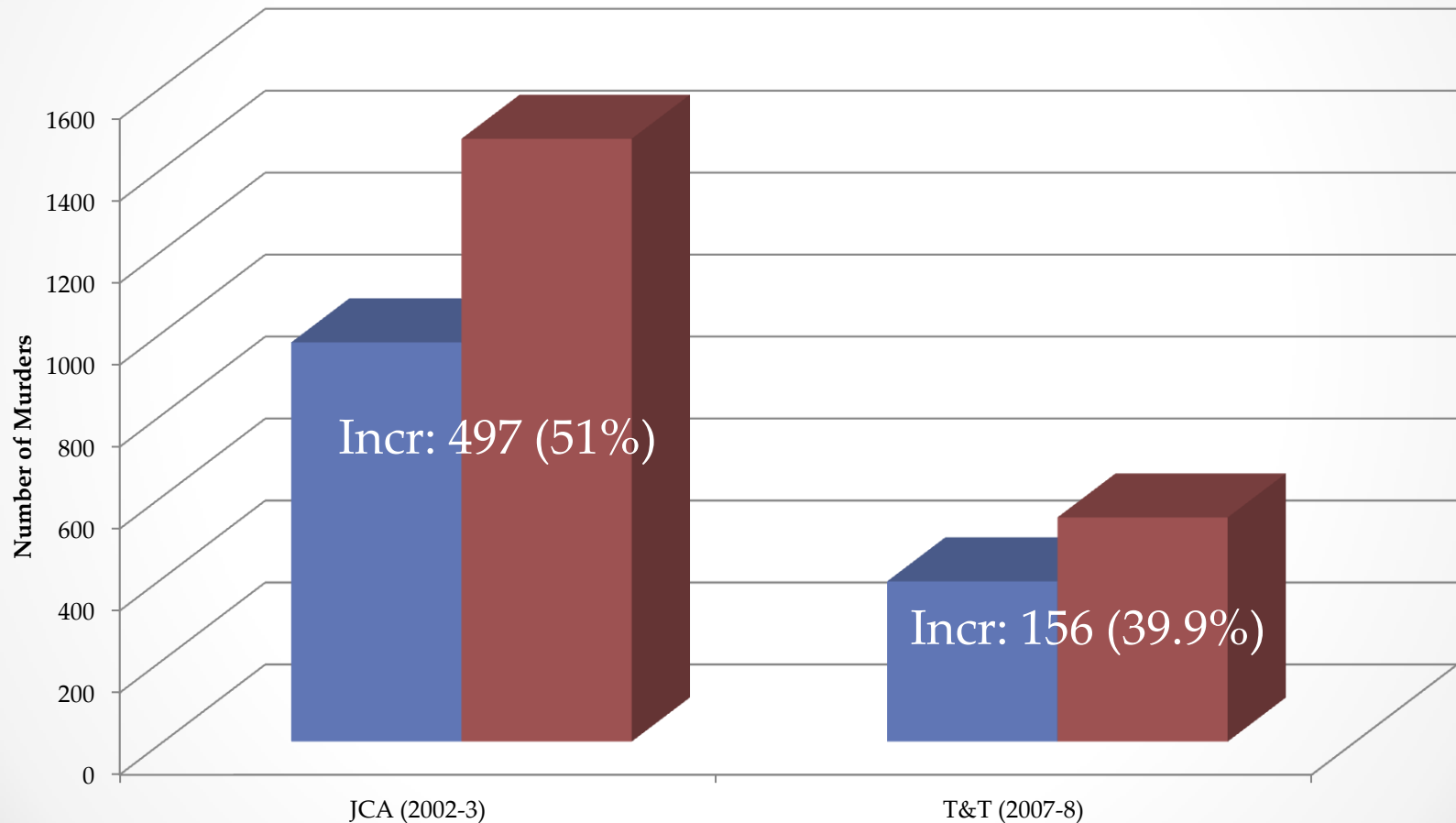
By Percentage Increase over the decade???



Source: compiled by Author

T&T: The Pseudo Murder Capital of the Caribbean

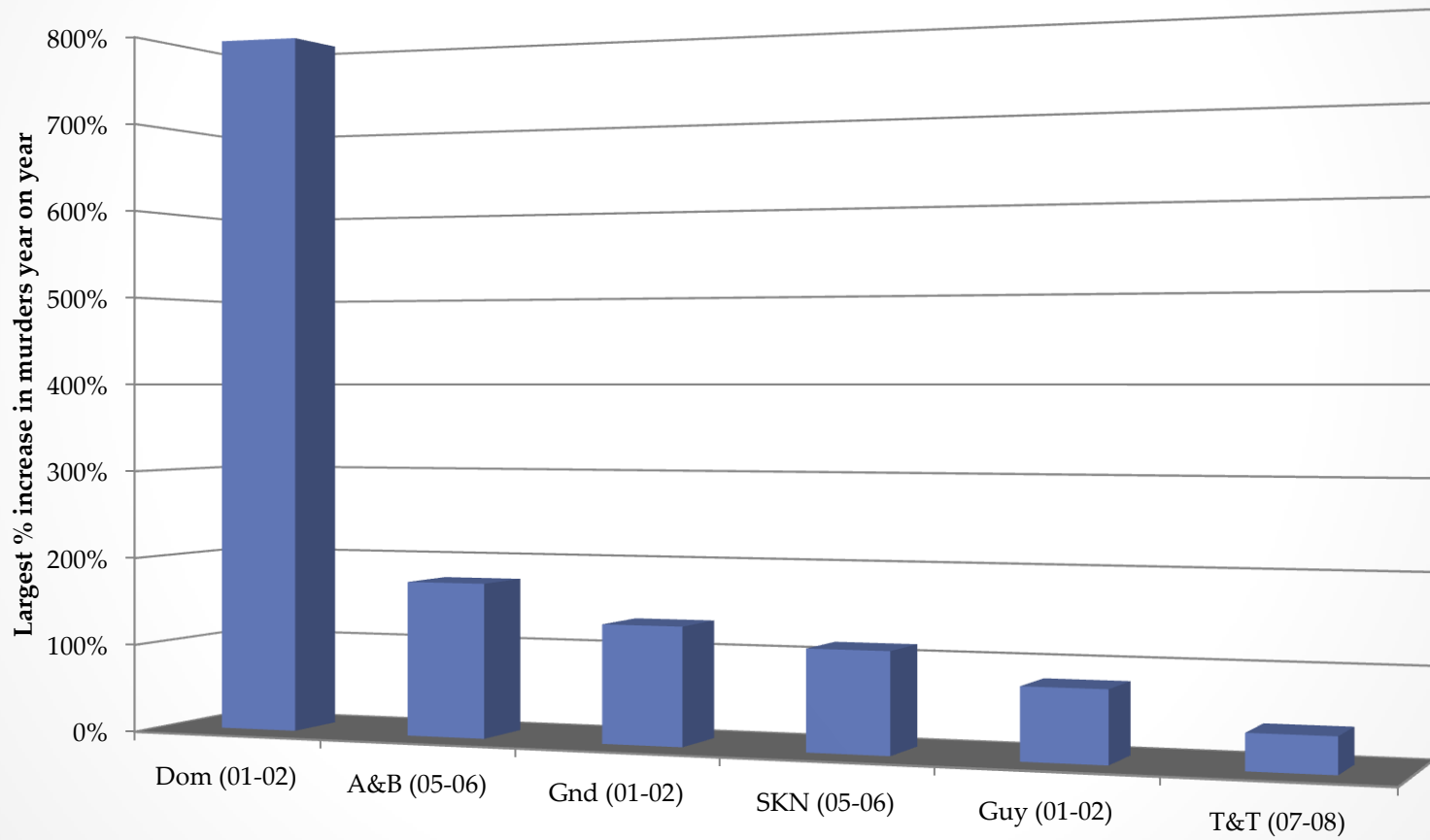
Largest year on year increase (Total number)???



Source: compiled by Author

T&T: The Pseudo Murder Capital of the Caribbean

Largest year on year increase (%)???



Source: Compiled by the author

Intensity of Gang Violence in the Caribbean

HIGH

- JAMAICA
- TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
- ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
- BELIZE

MEDIUM

- ST LUCIA
- GRENADA
- GUYANA
- BAHAMAS

LOW

- ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
- BARBADOS
- DOMINICA
- ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

Definitions

- No internationally accepted definition
- Thrasher (1927) Klein (1971) Katz & Webb 2006) have defined gangs.
- **Gangs (pre-legislation)**
 - T&T: 3 or more persons, criminal activity
 - SKN: Group of person, criminal activity, (signs, colors, clothing-not compulsory)
 - Jca: 3 or more, criminal activity with compulsory, signs, colors, turf, leader,
- **Gang related murder (pre-legislation)**
 - Jca: surrounding circumstances, previous info, witness statement (Very Flexible)
 - T&T: at least one gang member, in furtherance of some act (Flexible)
 - Bz & SKN Gang on Gang-both parties must be gang members (Very Restrictive)

Legislative Interventions

- T&T Anti Gang Act 2011/SKN Community Protection Act 2011(Mirrors each other)

Gang	Gang Member	Gang-related activity	Gang leader	Harboring a gang member	School	Recruiting members	Child	Firearm
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

● - defined in T&T Anti Gang Act 2011

◆ - defined in SKN Community Protection Act 2011

Impact of Laws

- Gang: 2 persons not 3 people(broader definition)
- New offences: gang member, leader, recruiting, harboring a gang member,

- Gang-related activity now broader (more flexible)
- Possible increase of gang-related homicide as SKN&T&T

- Challenges to application: T&T and other regions
- Earlier warning by Moncrieffe in Jamaica

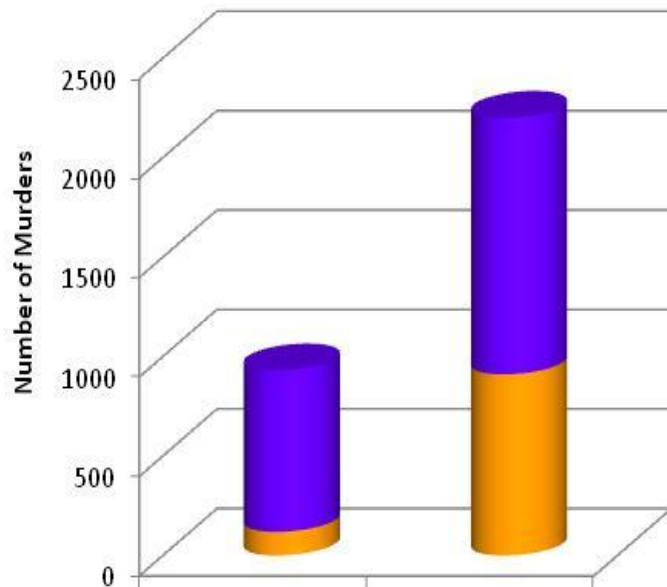
Effect of Gang Violence on Murders

- S.K.N 41% of murders between 00-09 gang-related
- T&T: 33.5% of all murders gang-related
- Jamaica: 29% of all murders gang-related
- Belize: negligible impact. However classification factor (Gale)
- * SLU: 26% of all murders (06-10) were gang-related

Gang Related Murders

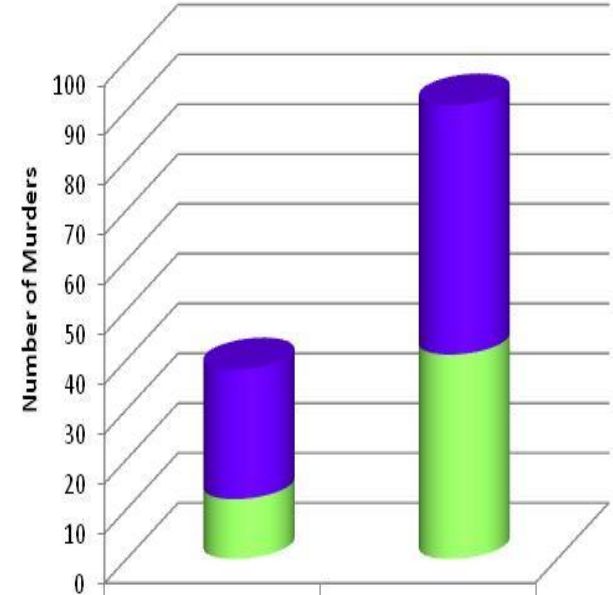
2000-4 vs. 2005-9

Trinidad and Tobago



Non gang related murders	812	1290
Gang related murders	119	911

Saint Kitts and Nevis



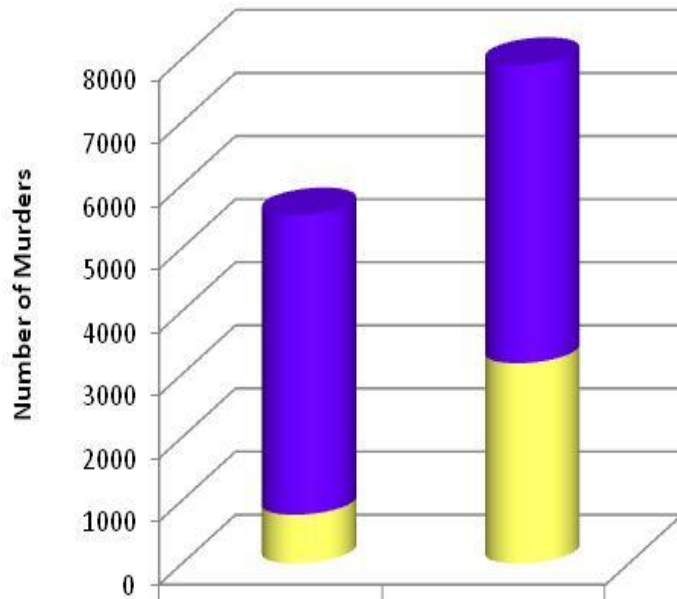
Non-gang related murders	26	50
Gang related murders	12	41

Source: compiled by Author

Gang Related Murders

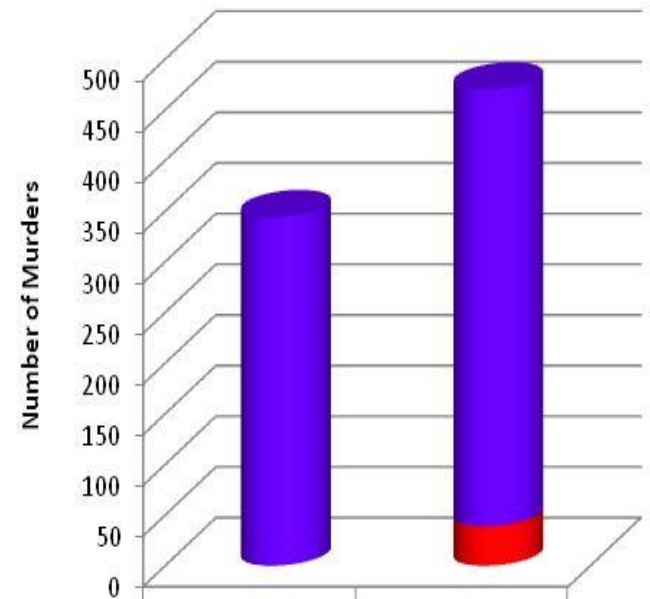
2000-4 vs. 2005-9

Jamaica



	2000-4	2005-9
■ Non gang related murders	4747	4725
■ Gang related murders	770	3172

Belize




	2000-4	2005-9
■ Non gang related murders	344	431
■ Gang related murders		39

Source: compiled by Author

Juxtaposing the definitions

Increasing Flexibility



- Jca \longrightarrow T&T (less flexible): Decrease
- Jca \longrightarrow SKN&BZ (Restrictive): Large decrease
- T&T \longrightarrow SKN&BZ (Restrictive): Decrease
- T&T \longrightarrow Jca (Very Flexible): Increase
- SKN&BZ \longrightarrow T&T (Flexible): Increase
- SKN&BZ \longrightarrow Jca (Very Flexible): Large Increase

Other Crimes

- Jamaica: 80% of all Crime (Leslie 2010)
- Belize: 68% agree number 1 problem affecting (Gale, 2010)
- T&T: more violent than US (Katz 2010, 2011)
- S.K.N: Significant impact on crime and violence
- **Gang violence: approaching level of illegal drug trade**

The Responses

Police

- ❖ Implemented anti gang Units (ALL)
- ❖ T&T instituted a repeat offenders program

State

- ❖ Legislation introduced in SKN and T&T. Proposed legislation in JCA since 2008
- ❖ Occasional curfews & states of emergency in Jamaica
Similar measure in T&T in 2011
- ❖ Studies commissioned in Jca, T&T and Belize
- ❖ Programs for youths “At risk” in Belize and SKN

The Responses

- **SUB-REGIONAL - CARICOM ??**
 - Draft strategy on youth violence CARICOM/UNDOC
- **REGIONAL - OAS/CHS/DPS**
 - CHS Working group
 - A&B assessment (Katz, et al 2008)
- **INTERNATIONAL - UNODC/CARICOM**
- **NO APPARENT POLICY**

What Research tells us about Gangs

- SKN: No research despite acute problem
- Belize: One Anthropological study with reference to gangs
- Jca : Flood of literature but one systematic study (Moncrieffe)
- T&T :Katz et al provide significant data on gangs and reason why people join gangs
- Most studies not supported by empirical data

What we know



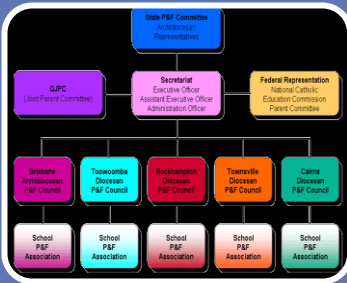
History

- 1960s(JLP/PNP) political rivalries - Jamaica
- 1980s deportation-Belize
- 1990 attempted coup and explosion 2000s-T&T
- 1995-6 Deportation exodus-SKN



Criminal Activities

- Murder, Political rivalry, turfs, drugs, gun-running extortion (Jca)
- Murder, Drug Tr. Ext, firearms, robberies, (Belize)
- Murder, Drugs Tr, firearms (T&T)
- Murder, theft, assaults, fights , graffitti (SKN)



Size and Organizational Structure

- 260/70 in Jamaica
- 95 gangs, 1269 members
- 30 gangs 500 members Belize
- 10 gangs SKN

What we know



Areas of Concentration

- Kingston & environs
- POS & environs
- Belize City and peri-urban areas
- Basseterre



Political Affiliations

- Jca: links with PNP/JLP but has weakened
- Bz: weak links
- T&T: affiliation at election time & blind eye to URP corruption
- SKN: No political links

Popular Gangs

Jamaica

- Tivoli garden
- Spanglas
- Shower posse
- Clansman
- Stone Crusher
- One Order



Belize

- Crips & Bloods
- MS 13
- 18th Street

T&T

- Gambinos
- Hell Yard
- Nelson Street
- Trou Macacque
- Sea Lots
- Sandy

S.K.N

- Crips & Bloods

Face of Gang Member



- Young
- Low socio-economic background
- Generally from Urban (violent) areas
- Motivated by various reasons to join
- Only Katz & Moncrieffe provides reasons for Gang Membership
- Changing perspectives on females (Wallace)

What we don't know

- Magnitude of the Problem (Katz on A & B)
- Risk factors/ profiles vs. Reasons
- Age and gender component (Katz on T&T)
- Types of criminal activity (Moncrieffe on Jamaica/drug)
- Number of gangs members ??

Summary of Findings

- Gang violence=No.1 factor in the murders (Jca. SKN,T&T)
- Surge in G.R murders 05-09 in Jca, T&T, SKN, Belize.
- Gang violence is challenging the status of drugs
- National gang policies not focused
- Lack of research/Gap/methodology=challenges in comparison

Summary of Findings

- Police lack specialized training on gang issues, (Katz, 2010)
BPD requests
- Lack of concrete policies:
 - INTERNATIONAL
 - OAS
 - CARICOM
- Lack of political will in some instances
- Weak data collection & analysis capacity

The Way Ahead

- **Increased role for CARICOM:** strategy, regional unit, definitions
- Preliminary assessments of all countries needed with emphasis on the Jamaica, Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, Katz on T&T
- Government strategies need to be well informed
- Research: Role for UWI (age, gender, reasons, criminal activities, gang/drug)
- Improve Police training on gangs.
- OAS needs to formulate policy.
- Careful study/objective of Legislation.



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