



World **homicide** survey
Enquête mondiale sur l'**homicide**
Homicidio encuesta mundial



World Homicide Survey's mission is to collect and disseminate new data and analyses on homicides across the world by using unexploited and original sources of information. The WHS investigates the characteristics of victims and perpetrators, the various types of homicides and methods to reduce this grave crime. The WHS applies a novel methodology to examine homicides in cities, countries, and regions worldwide. WHS aims to decrease violence in the world by providing reliable data and generating knowledge on homicides, its causes and prevention.

1. Homicide as an indicator of violence

Homicide is recognized as a reliable indicator of the level of violence within a society. This serious crime causes irreparable harms not only to the victims, but also to their families and communities. **Half a million homicides are committed annually worldwide** (estimates vary by sources), but the prevalence of this crime varies widely across cities and countries. High rates of homicides have numerous adverse consequences on the quality of social life, including the weakening of social bonds, diffusion of suspicion and fear and the instilment of a sense of insecurity in communities.

The World Health Organization and United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime publish data on homicide rates for nearly 200 countries. This information has identified distinct patterns and concentrations of

violence globally, for example, several countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America are confronted with very high homicide rates, while many countries in the North have low homicide rates. Many researchers around the world analyze these patterns, but face poor quality data. To contribute to our understanding of homicides, the World Homicide Survey will not only look at demographic, economic and social policy variables associated with the prevalence of homicides, but will also **describe various types of homicides, and scrutinize the strengths and limitations of municipal and national criminal justice systems, including their law enforcement, judicial and correctional institutions.** In light of these analyses, **WHS will also offer recommendations for reducing homicide rates.**

2. Homicide as an issue for community development

The proliferation of homicides and the associated collateral violence (rapes, kidnappings, armed robberies) can only partially be explained by conventional factors, such as poverty and inequality. We argue that it also results from a lack of prevention, and decaying policing, judicial,

and correctional institutions in some countries. In addition, violence itself becomes a cause of poverty, often driving out middle class families, investors, and entrepreneurs. These effects of violence demonstrate why **security is a prerequisite for the economic development of communities.**

3. The need to distinguish between different types of homicides

Different types of homicides have unique dynamics and risk factors. Given that the motivational factors of perpetrators are often distinct, factors that explain the variations of one type of homicide are not necessarily the same ones for another type of homicide. Therefore, the **World Homicide Survey will provide data to account for the**

diverse types of homicides, distinguishing whether the victims were men, women or children. In addition, WHS will differentiate between homicides committed in different contexts, for example between intimate partner homicides, massacres, and murders linked to organized crime or kidnappings.

4. Specific objectives of the World Homicide Survey

1. Collect and disseminate reliable data on:
 - a) the frequency of various **types of homicides** from a large sample of countries and major cities,
 - b) **the governance of security**, including prevention, law enforcement, judicial, and correctional institutions, and
 - c) **the social, economic, and political variables** hypothesized to have an impact on homicide rates. This information will be circulated among international organizations, research centers, and any actors interested in security.
2. Conduct **research** on homicides and its reduction by:
 - a) quantitative **cross-national studies**,
 - b) **case studies** for specific countries and major cities, and
 - c) a comprehensive and systematic **review of the efficacy of programs designed to reduce homicides** and violent crime.
3. **Disseminate our research results** through our website, books, reports, and by organizing international conferences.
4. Develop an **international network** connecting a large number of researchers and stakeholders concerned with security issues and reducing violence.

5. Policy impacts of the World Homicide Survey

These impacts may be general or targeted to a particular country.

The World Homicide Survey will inform its correspondents on **the best practices for reducing homicides**. These recommendations will be drawn from cross-cultural studies of homicides, from case studies of countries with little homicides, and from systematic reviews of program evaluations to reduce violence.

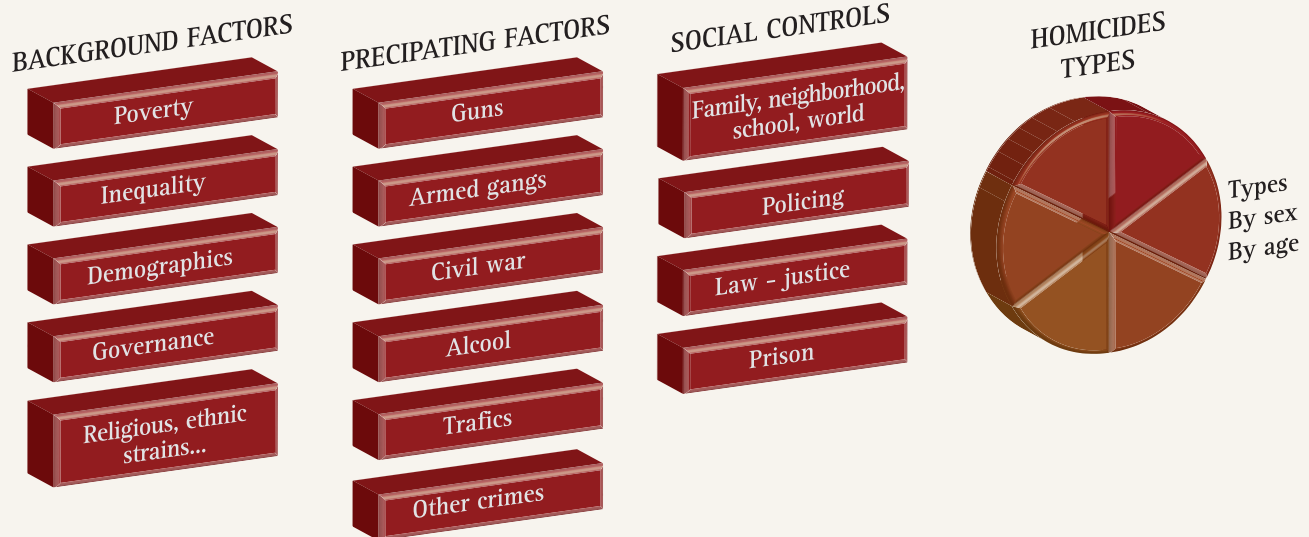
The World Homicide Survey will also make **recommendations targeted to individual countries or big cities**. Thus, based on a case study of one country, or city, the World Homicide Survey will analyze its specific problems and put forward possible solutions. These studies that focus on a particular country will be conducted in collaboration with both local partners who are well informed of the situation in their country and researchers affiliated with the World Homicide Survey.

6. Innovative research methods

The WHS will not rely exclusively on data provided by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the World Bank, but will also gather new information by using three innovative data collection methods.

1. The systematic study of **newspapers** in a country, over a one year period, provides a method to obtain valid estimates of both the characteristics and factors that motivate different types of homicides in a country. After collection, this data will be compared to local law enforcement data on homicides.
2. We have also established relationships with **local experts** who have first-hand knowledge and are familiar with the crime problems in their respective countries. These foreign correspondents will provide us with information on homicides in their country, the functioning of the justice system, police and corrections, the political system, conflicts, etc.
3. In several countries, we will also acquire **published literature** on national crime, violence, and homicides. This literature will be consulted and applied to the current study. All the data obtained from these collection methods will be subjected to rigorous criticism. To begin with, all the data sources will be compared and **contrasted with each other to determine the most reliable and established estimates**. An analysis of the retained data will start with a critique of the data, its sources, classifications, and descriptions of various types of homicides. Following this we will link data on homicides with relevant variables, including social, political, economic, policing, judicial, and correctional factors. After the examination and interpretation of our results, we will put forward recommendations.

7. Conceptual framework



8. Communication and dissemination

Our results will be disseminated through a [website](#), providing access to the statistical data, quantitative analyses, and individual case studies of specific countries. This website will also include a virtual platform for exchange and collaboration with partners of the World Homicide Survey. In addition this study will be the subject of numerous publications and an international conference organized for 2015.

Our publications will not only present global analyses of homicides in the world, but also specific studies. We will publish studies on homicides against children and adolescents, women and men, and individual case studies of cities and countries. Furthermore, we will publish meta-analyses on effective methods to reduce homicides.

9. Work in progress by the World Homicide Survey

The two directors of the World Homicide Survey have already published on the subject and have extensive knowledge of theories and research that examines criminal violence. Their most recent publications include the following:

- Ouimet, M. 2011. Un monde d'homicides. *Champ pénal*.
- Ouimet, M. 2012. A world of homicides: The effect of economic development, income inequality and excess infant mortality on the homicide rate for 165 countries in 2010. *Homicide Studies*.
- Cusson, M; Rossi, C.; Beaulieu, N., Cusson, F. (2010). Les Homicides, In Le Blanc, M.; Cusson, M. (eds). *La criminologie empirique au Québec*, Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Cusson, M.; Guay, S.; Proulx, J.; Cortoni, F. (eds.) (2012). *Traité des violences criminelles*. Montréal : Hurtubise. (This book have 36 chapters, including 7 dealing specifically on homicides.)

WHS is an extension of these works. It will benefit from the expertise of the two directors of the team.

We are currently working on articles to be published in 2012 for a special issue of the *Revue internationale de criminologie et de police technique et scientifique*. The reader will find in this issue articles on the following topics:

- An overview of **homicides in the world**
- The analysis of factors explaining the variation in homicide rates across **European countries**
- Homicides and social control in **Morocco**
- Why **Japan** has one of the lowest homicide rates in the world
- Homicides in the **Ivory Coast**
- The evolution of homicides in **Venezuela**
- The homicide problem in **Colombia**

10. The status of the World Homicide Survey

The World Homicide Survey is a research laboratory affiliated with the International Centre for Comparative Criminology at the University of Montreal. Currently it is in the

process of negotiating an affiliation with the International Society of Criminology. The WHS operates as a non-profit organization.

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