



# Gangs and Maras in Central America

Results from self-report surveys

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*Confronting Crime and Violence in Latin America  
Crafting a Public Policy Agenda*

# outline

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- *the data*
- *overview: gangs & youth violence*
- *gangs & poverty*
- *joining the gang*
- *gangs & girls*
- *public policy issues*

# the data

## *IADB financed*

- *5 Self report surveys in Honduras (2), Nicaragua (2) & Panamá*
- *n > 8500. 61.4% students*
- *1st time (LA) “presence” “power” of gangs is measured*
- *one of few with control group*

- *Main restrictions*

*IABD has an agenda in terms of prevention programs.*

*Not a globally planned exercise. From police records to victimization surveys to self-*

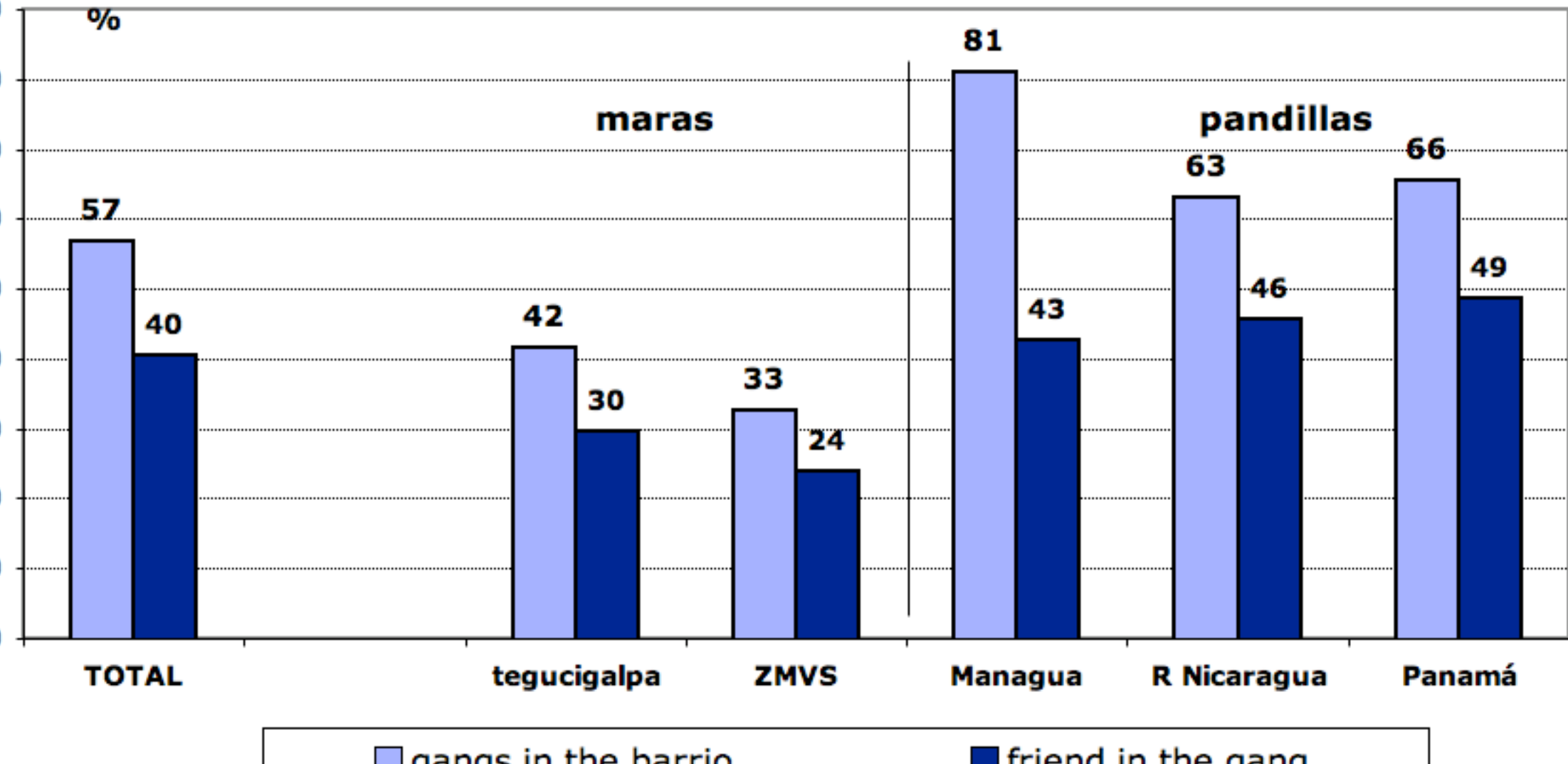
*Learning by doing. Trial & error vs comparability. Adapting to local situations*

## *Main (unsolvable) limitations*

- *“Remember if” is a risky simulation of studies*
- *Out of school sample is not random (probably due to anonymous questionnaire)*

# gang incidence

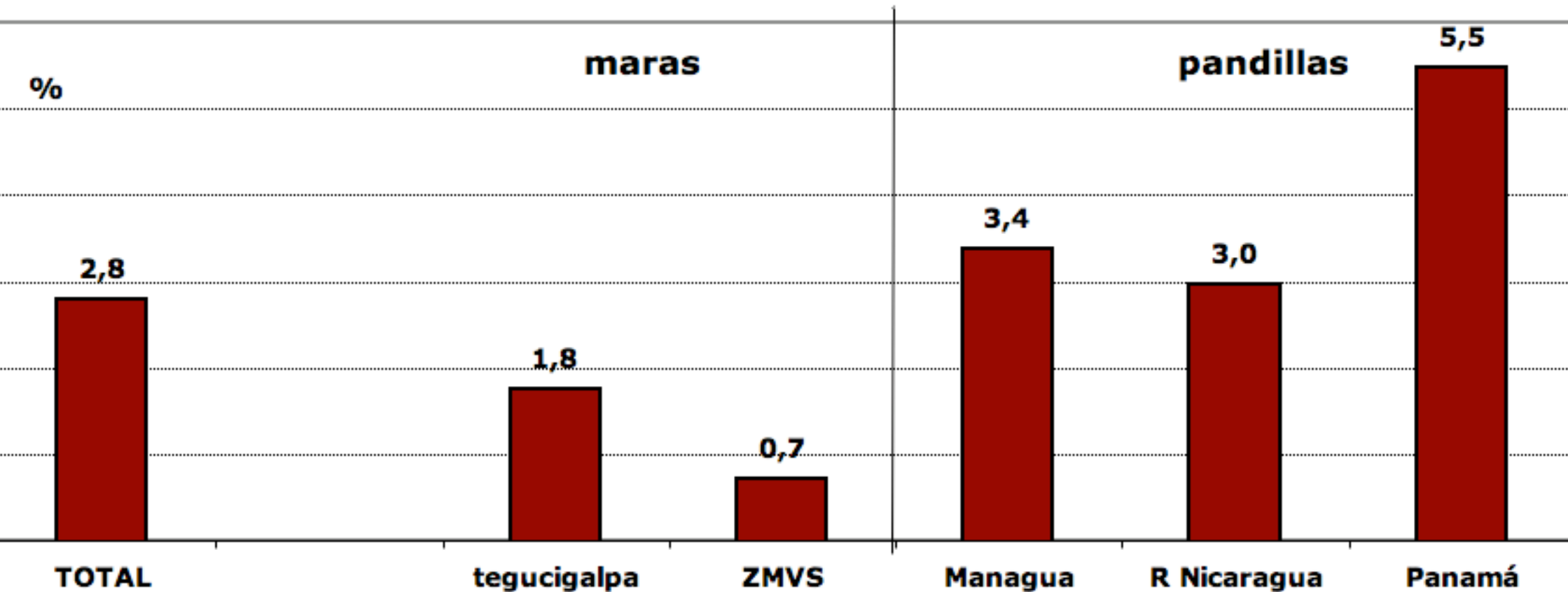
## GANGS IN THE BARRIO - FRIENDS IN THE GANG % OF YES AMONG STUDENTS



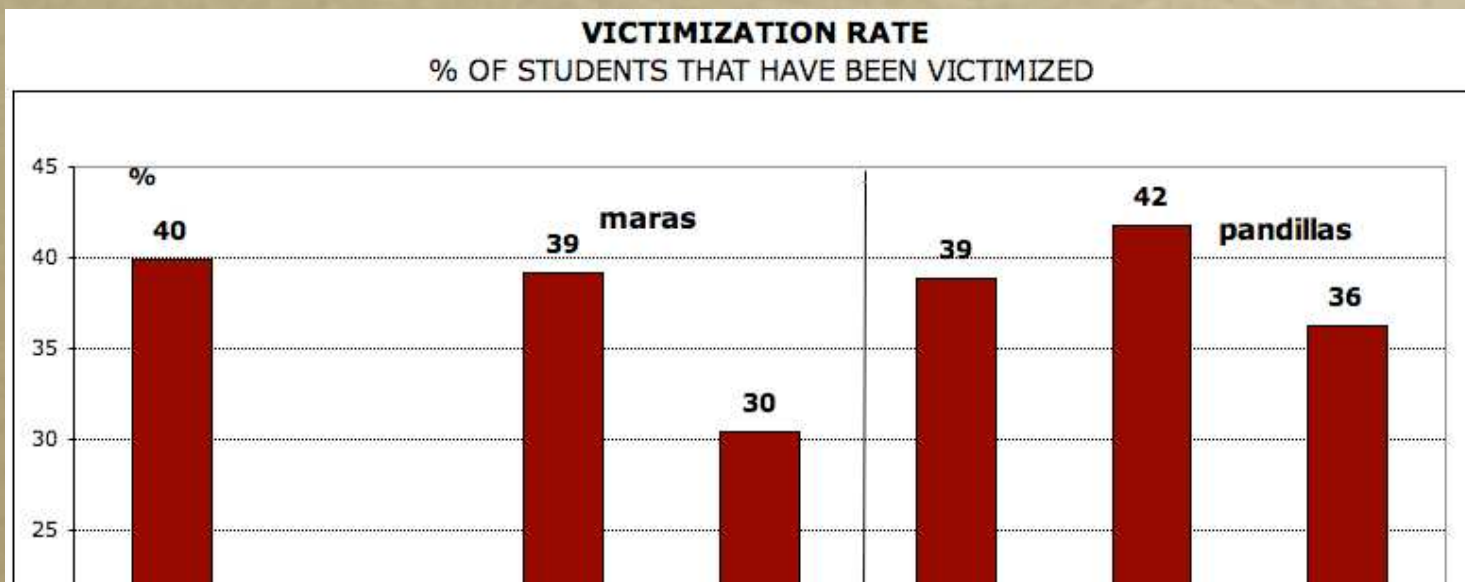
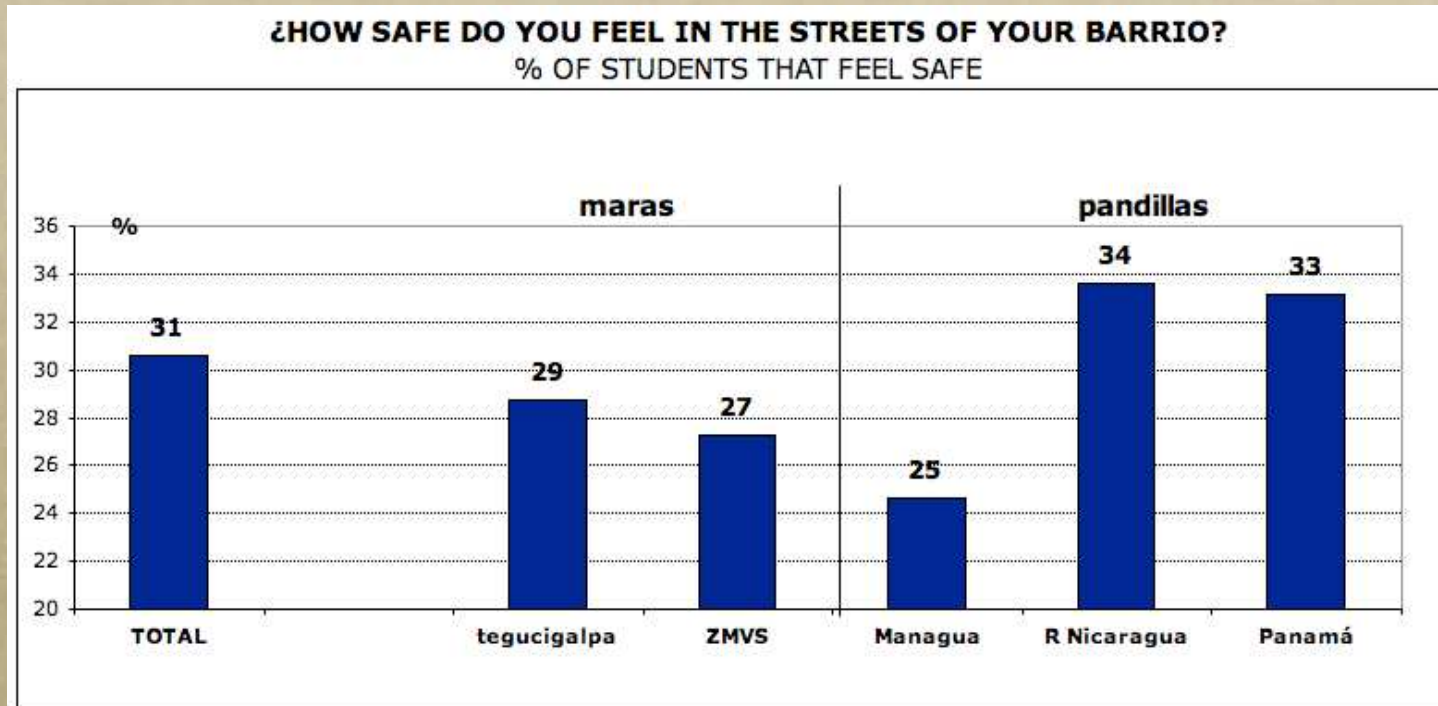
# gang incidence

¿HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A GANG MEMBER ?

% OF YES AMONG STUDENTS

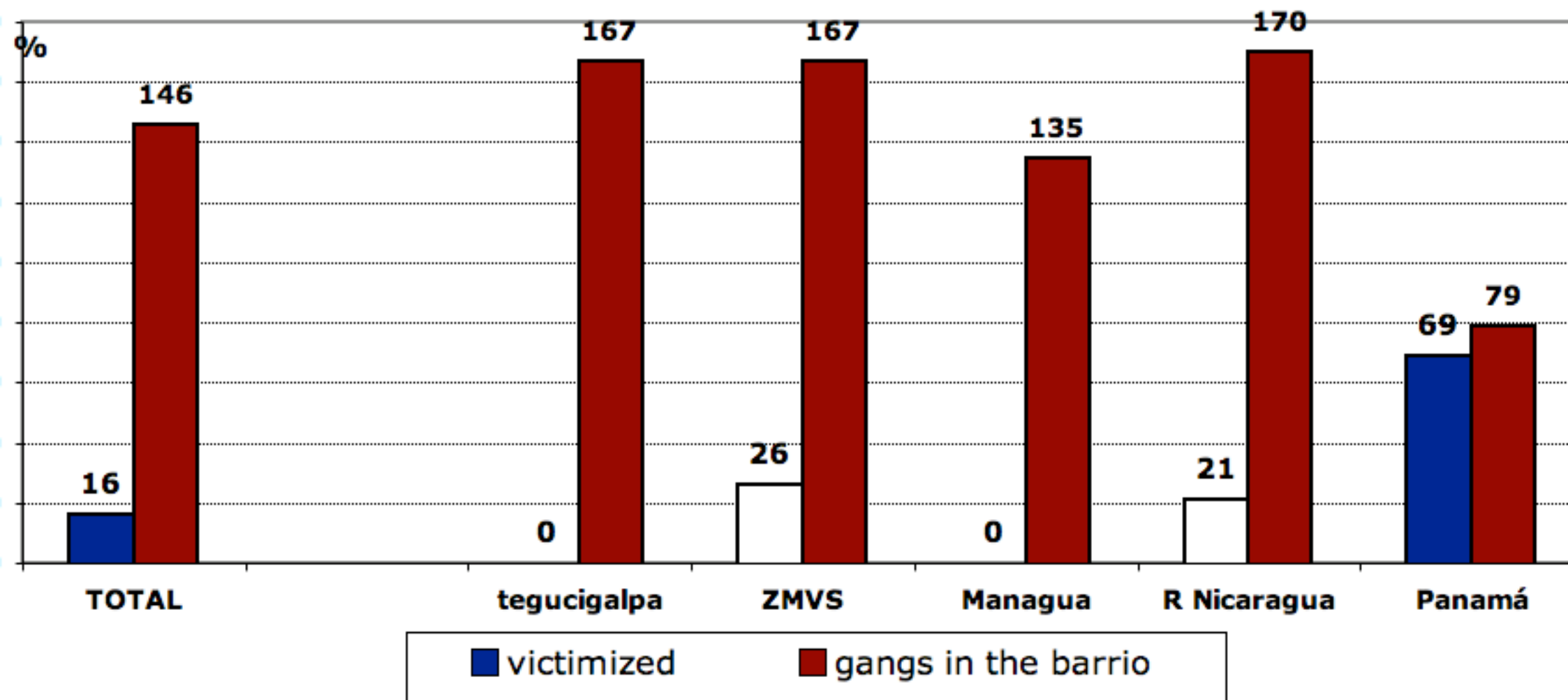


# feeling safe & victimization



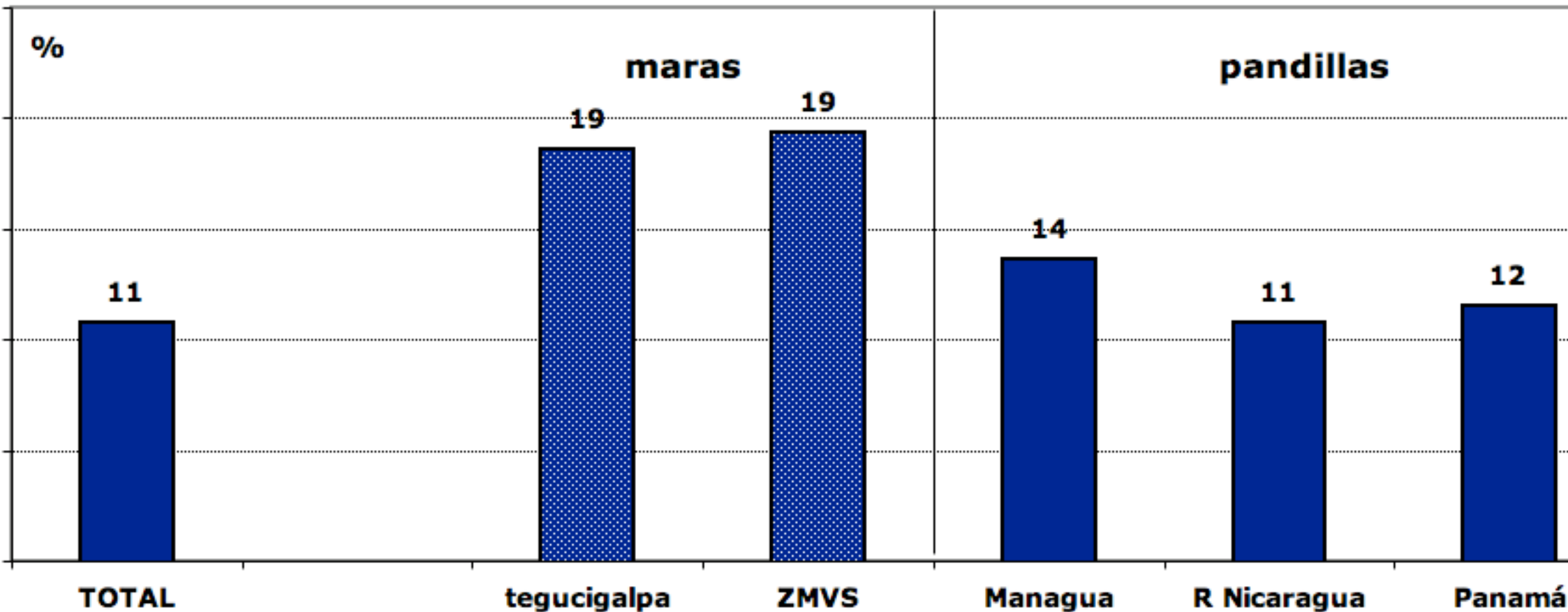
# feeling safe, victimization & gangs

CHANGE (%) IN THE CHANCE OF FEELING VERY UNSAFE  
IF VICTIMIZED OR GANGS IN THE BARRIO



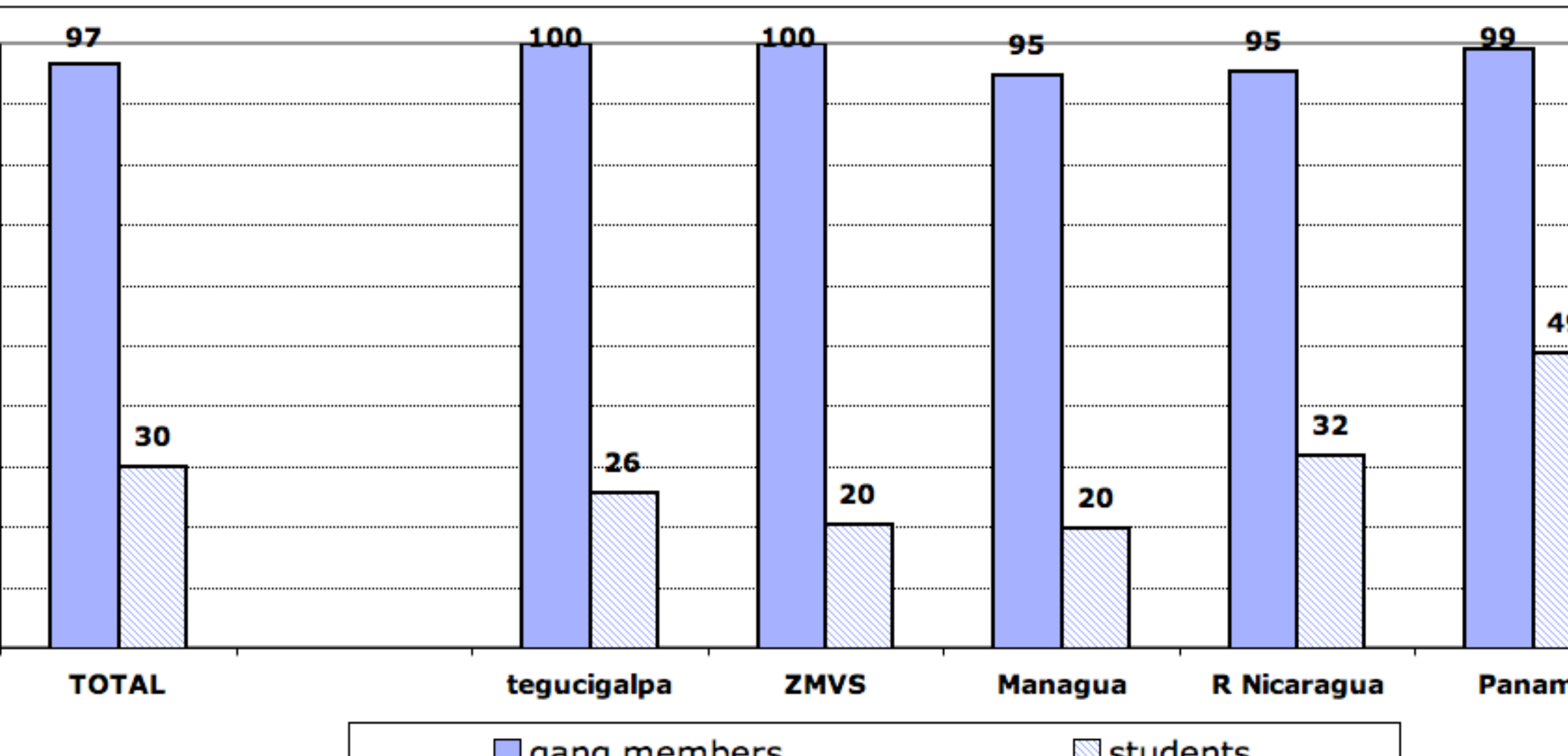
# gangs & power

## GANGS HOLD POLITICAL CONTROL OVER THE BARRIO % OF STUDENTS THAT AGREE



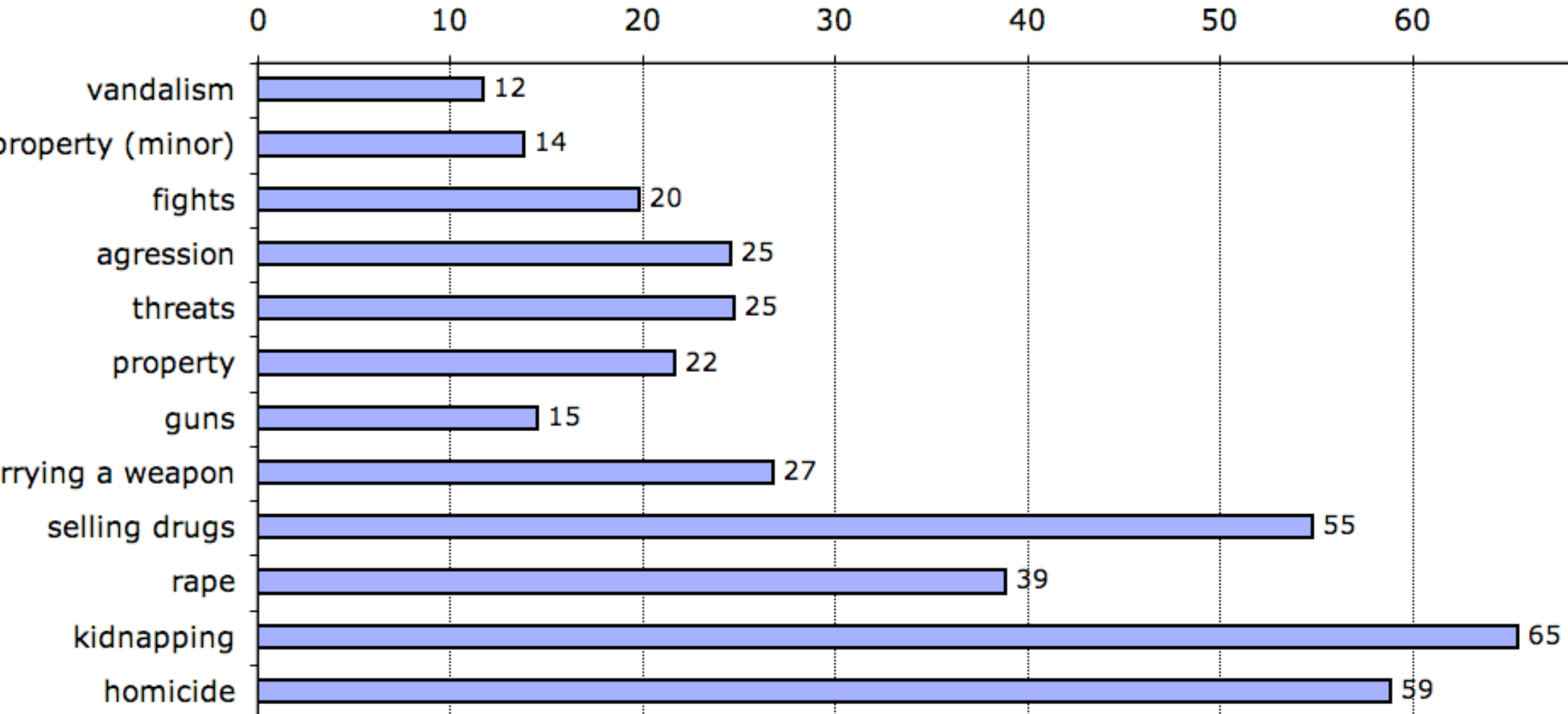
# gangs & offences

**SELF-REPORT OF OFFENCES - GANG MEMBERS AND STUDENTS**  
% THAT REPORTS AT LEAST ONE



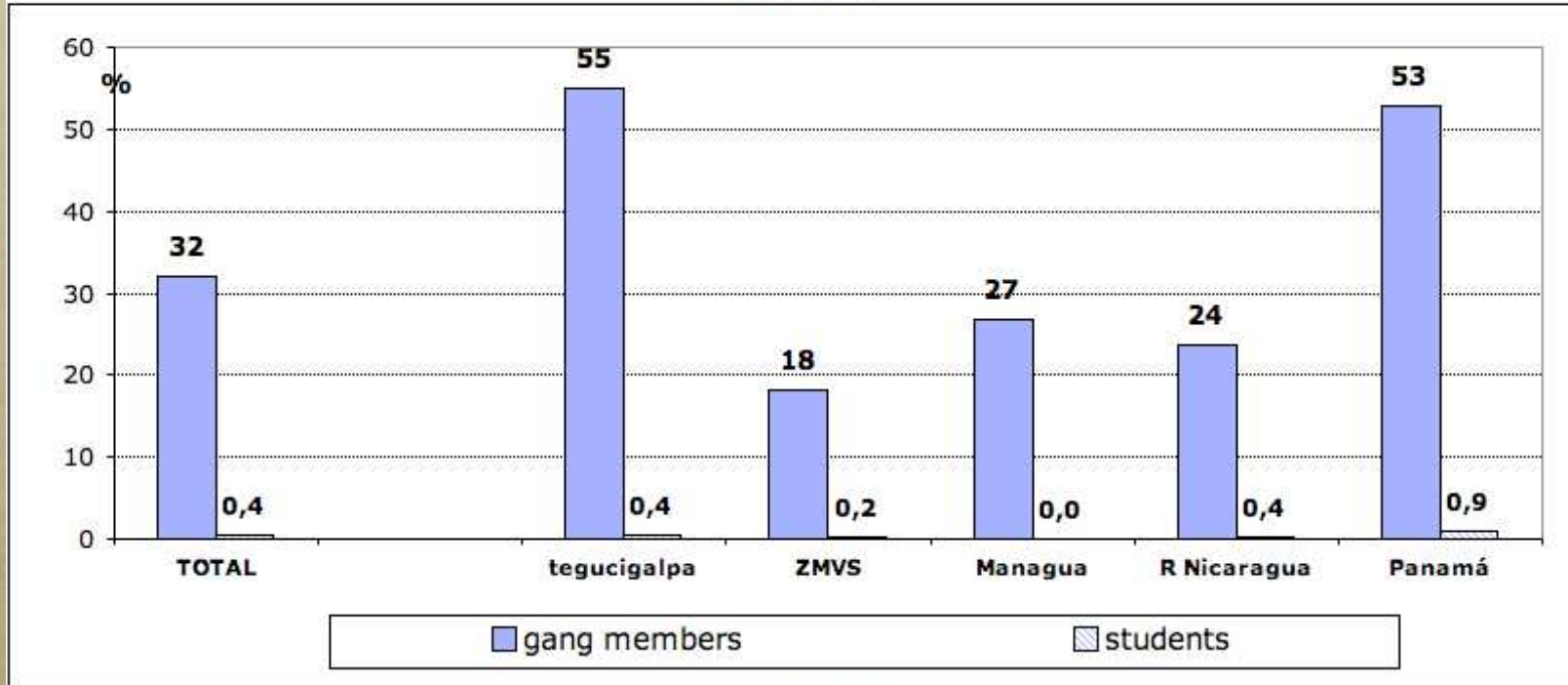
# gangs' share of offences

## % OF GANG MEMBERS AMONG OFFENDERS - STUDENTS

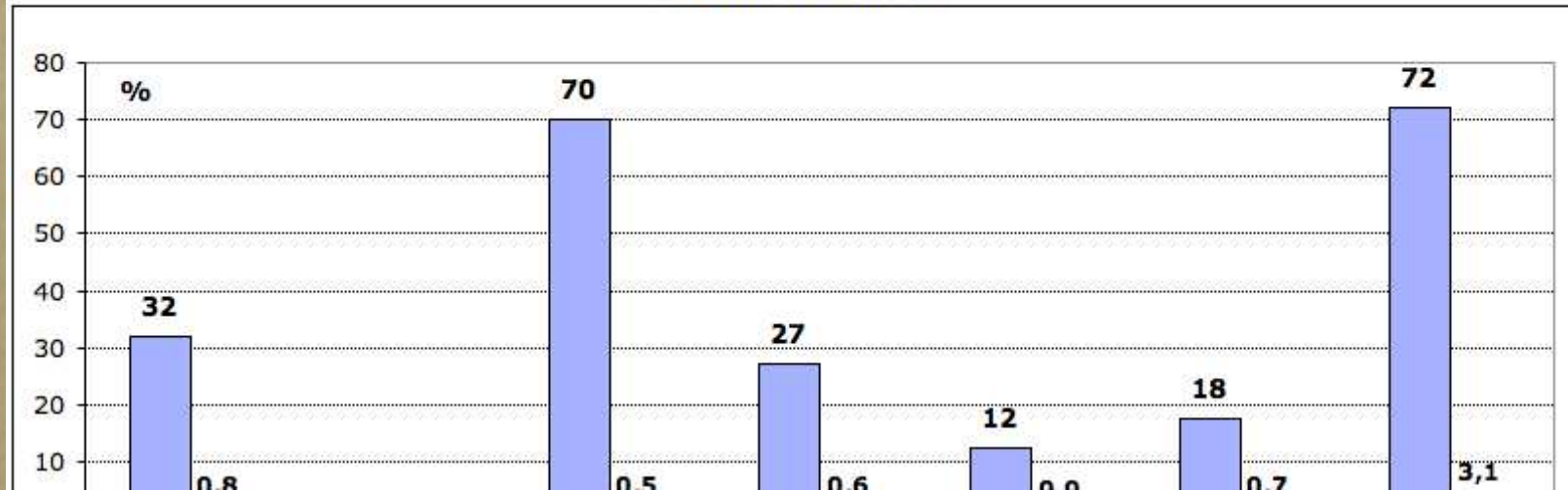


# gangs & crime

SELF-REPORT OF OFFENCES - GANG MEMBERS AND STUDENTS  
**HOMICIDE**



**SELLING DRUGS**

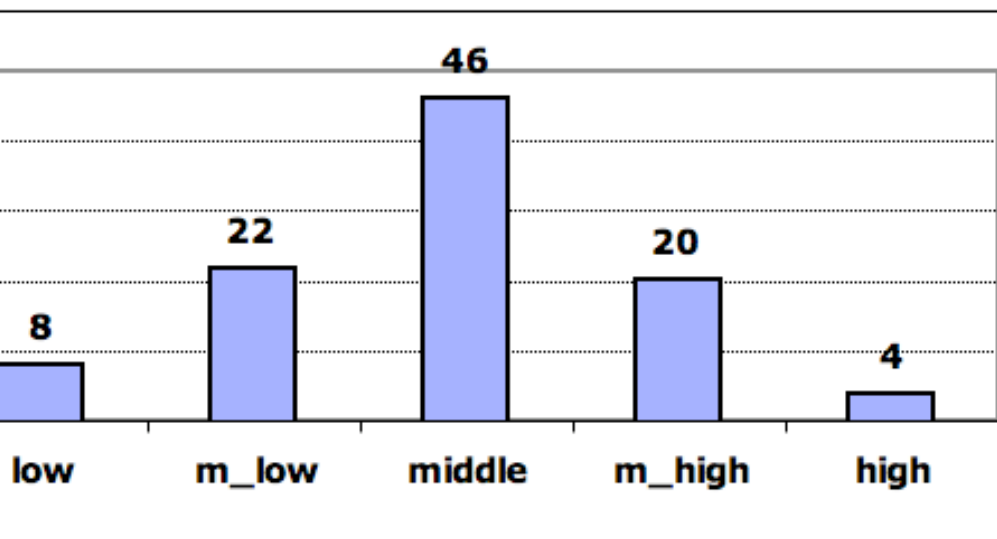


# socioeconomic status (SES) perception

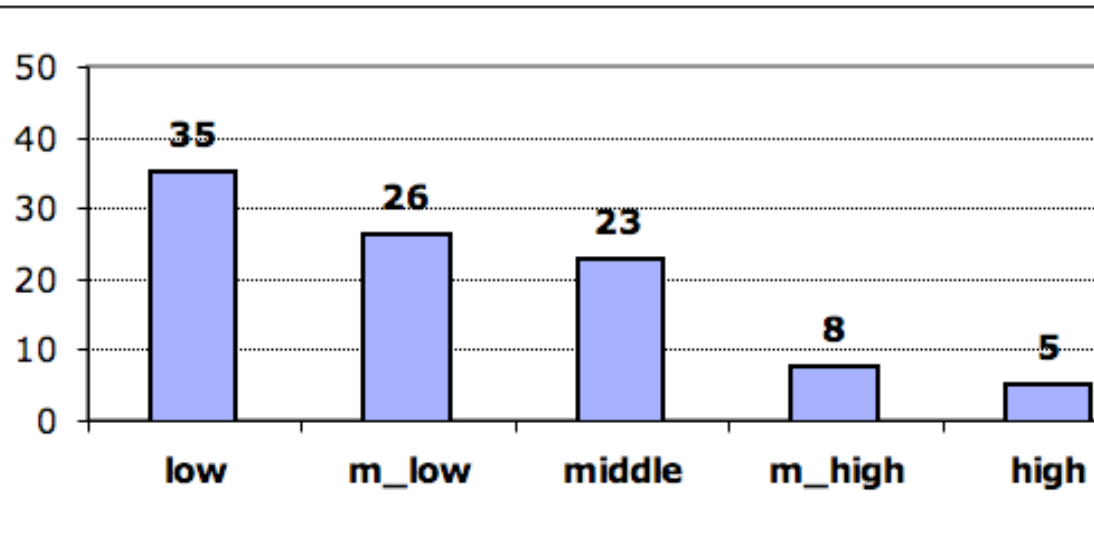
## SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (SES) DISTRIBUTION

% THAT REPORT BELONGING TO EACH CLASS

STUDENTS



OUT OF SCHOOL



*respondent's expenditure*

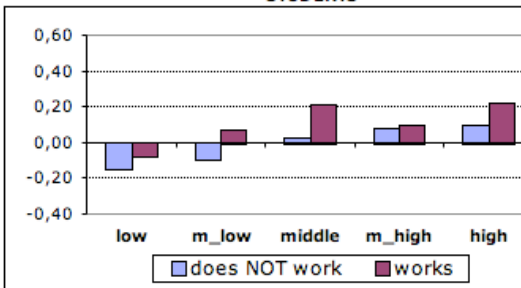
*SES index checked by*

*family income*

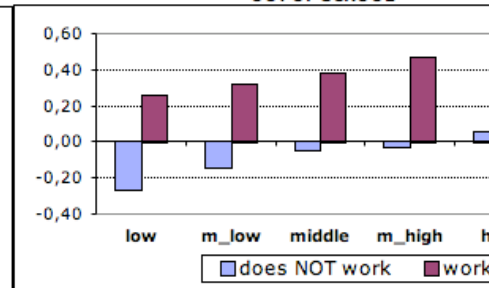
### EXPENDITURE BY SES, SCHOOLING & WORK

STANDARDIZED MONTHLY AVERAGE IN LOCAL CURRENCY \*

STUDENTS

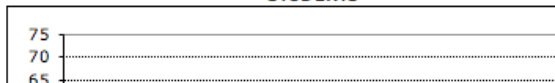


OUT OF SCHOOL

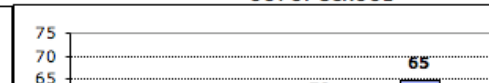


### FAMILY INCOME POTENTIAL INDEX \* AND SES

STUDENTS

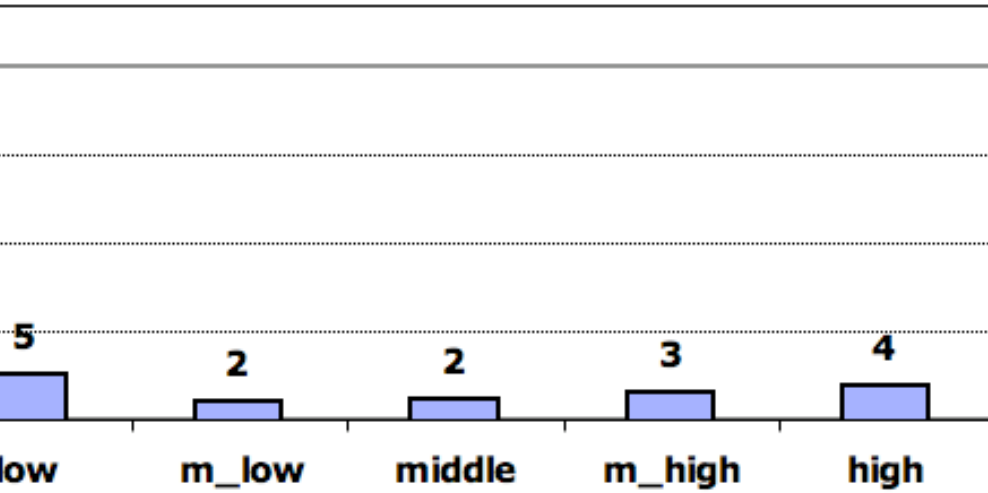


OUT OF SCHOOL

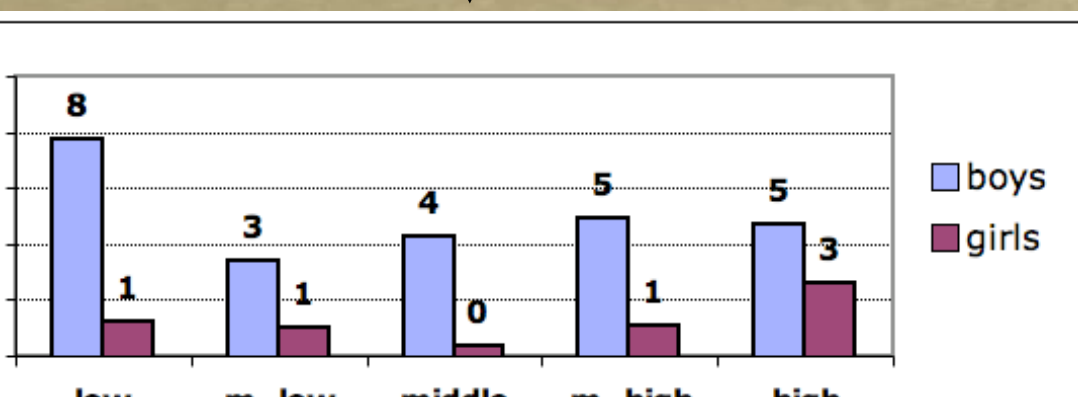
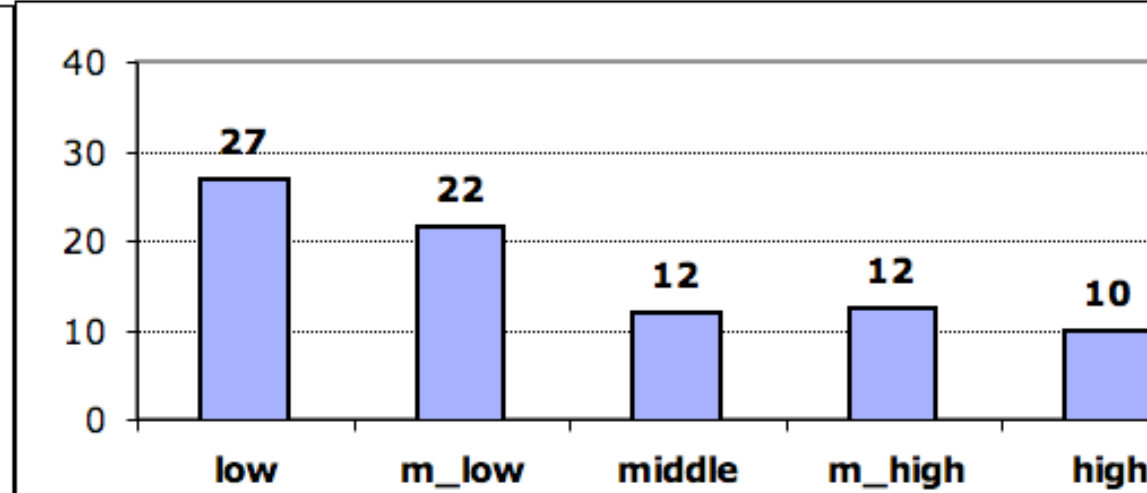


# gang membership by SES & schooling

**% OF RESPONDENTS THAT REPORT (EVER) BELONGING TO A GANG**  
STUDENTS

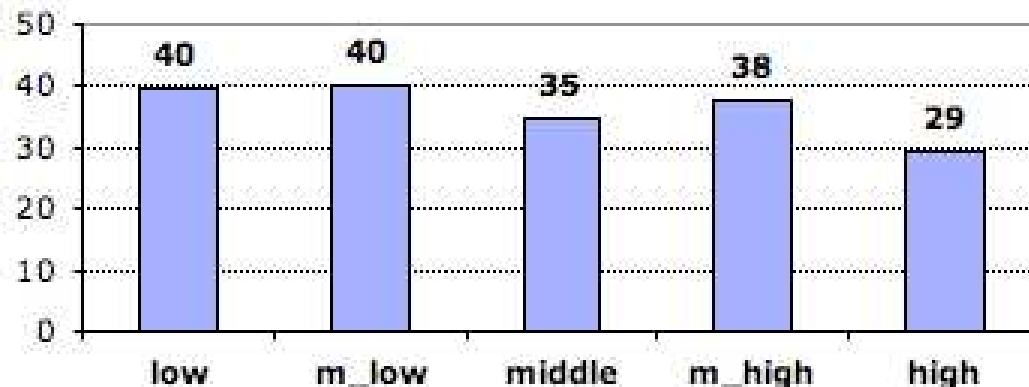
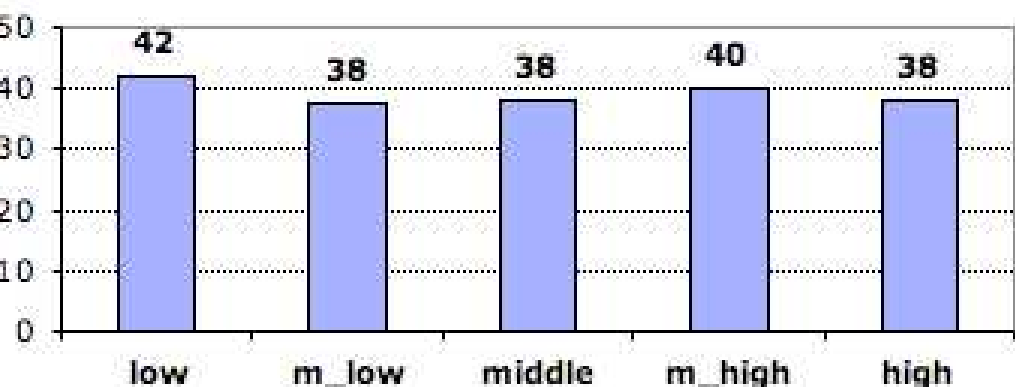


**OUT OF SCHOOL**

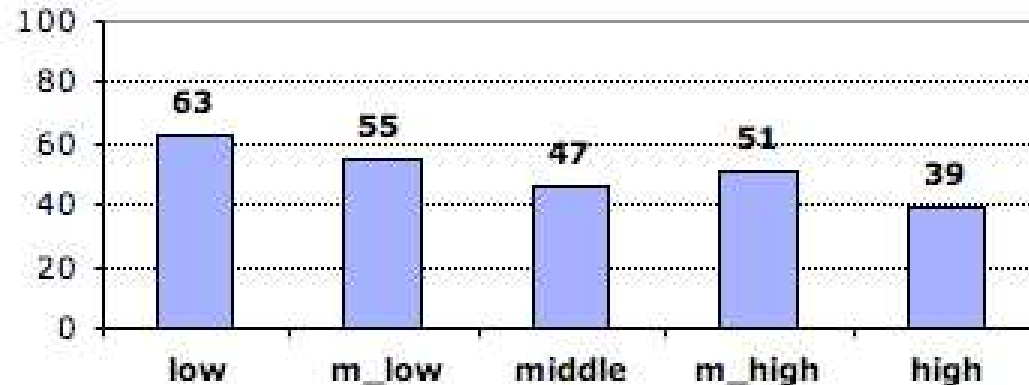
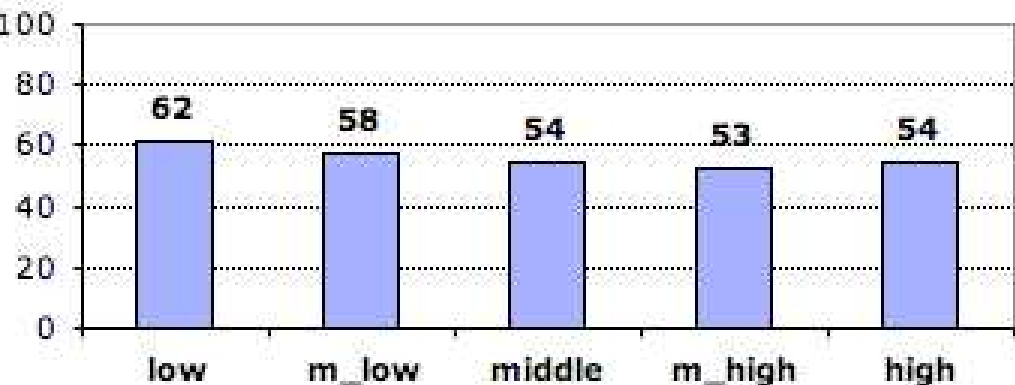


# gang connections by SES & schooling

**% OF NON GANG MEMBERS THAT HAVE A FRIEND IN A GANG**  
STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL



**% OF NON GANG MEMBERS THAT REPORT GANGS IN THEIR BARRIO**  
STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL

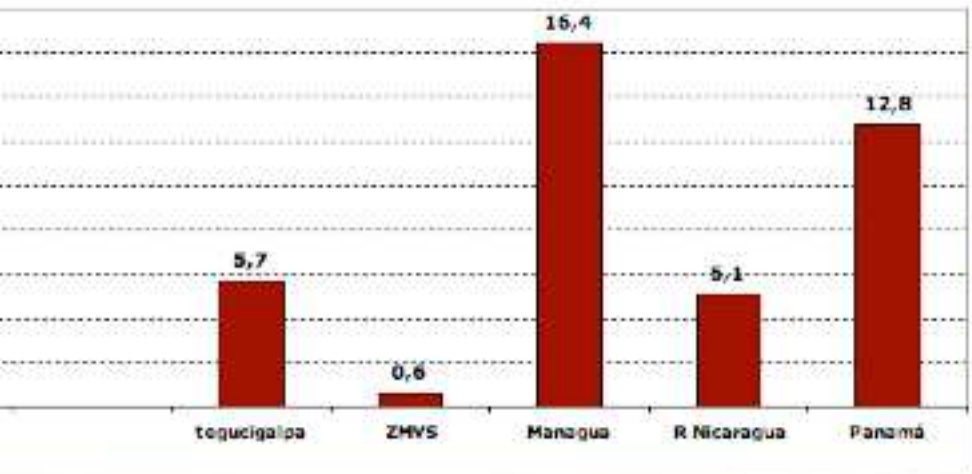




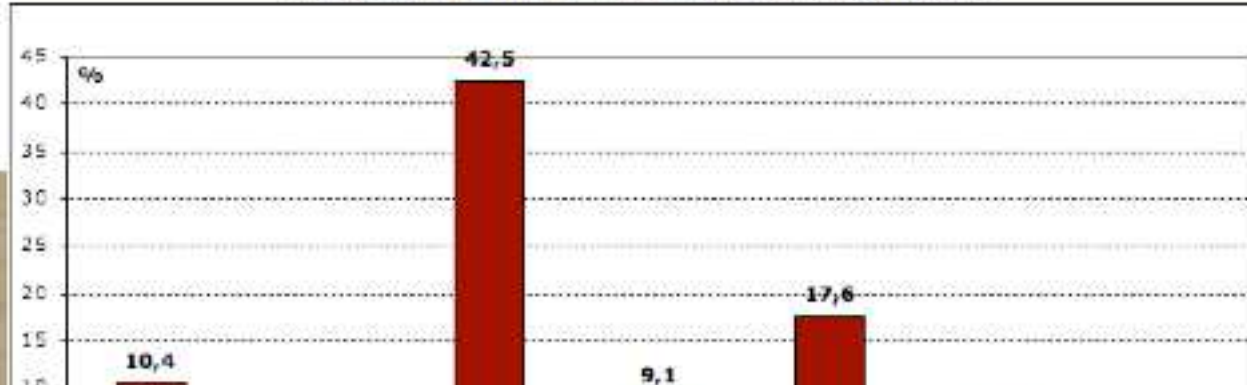
# high SES violence



SES RESPONDENTS THAT REPORT (EVER) BELONGING TO A GANG

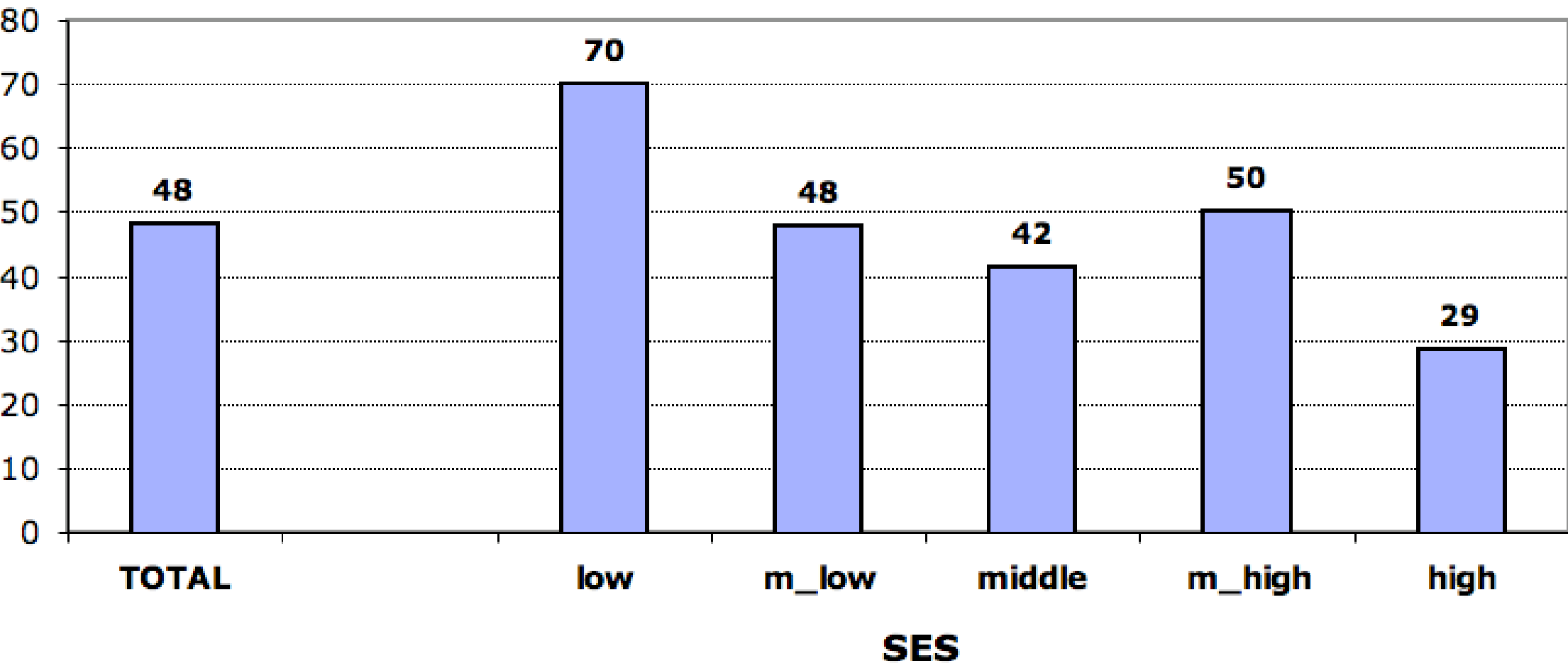


% GANG MEMBERS THAT REPORT HIGH SES



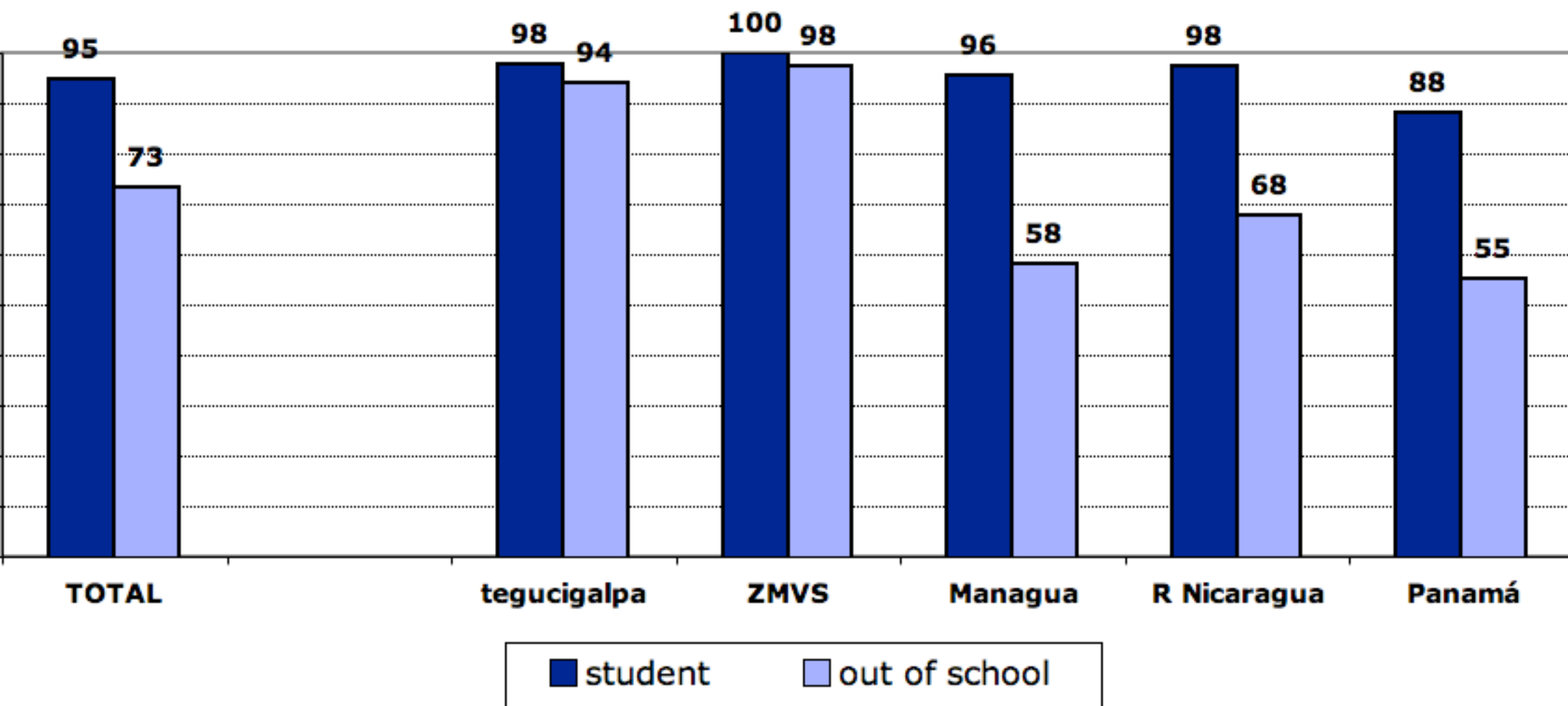
# SES & arrests - gang members

**% OF STUDENT GANG MEMBERS THAT REPORT AT LEAST ONE ARREST**



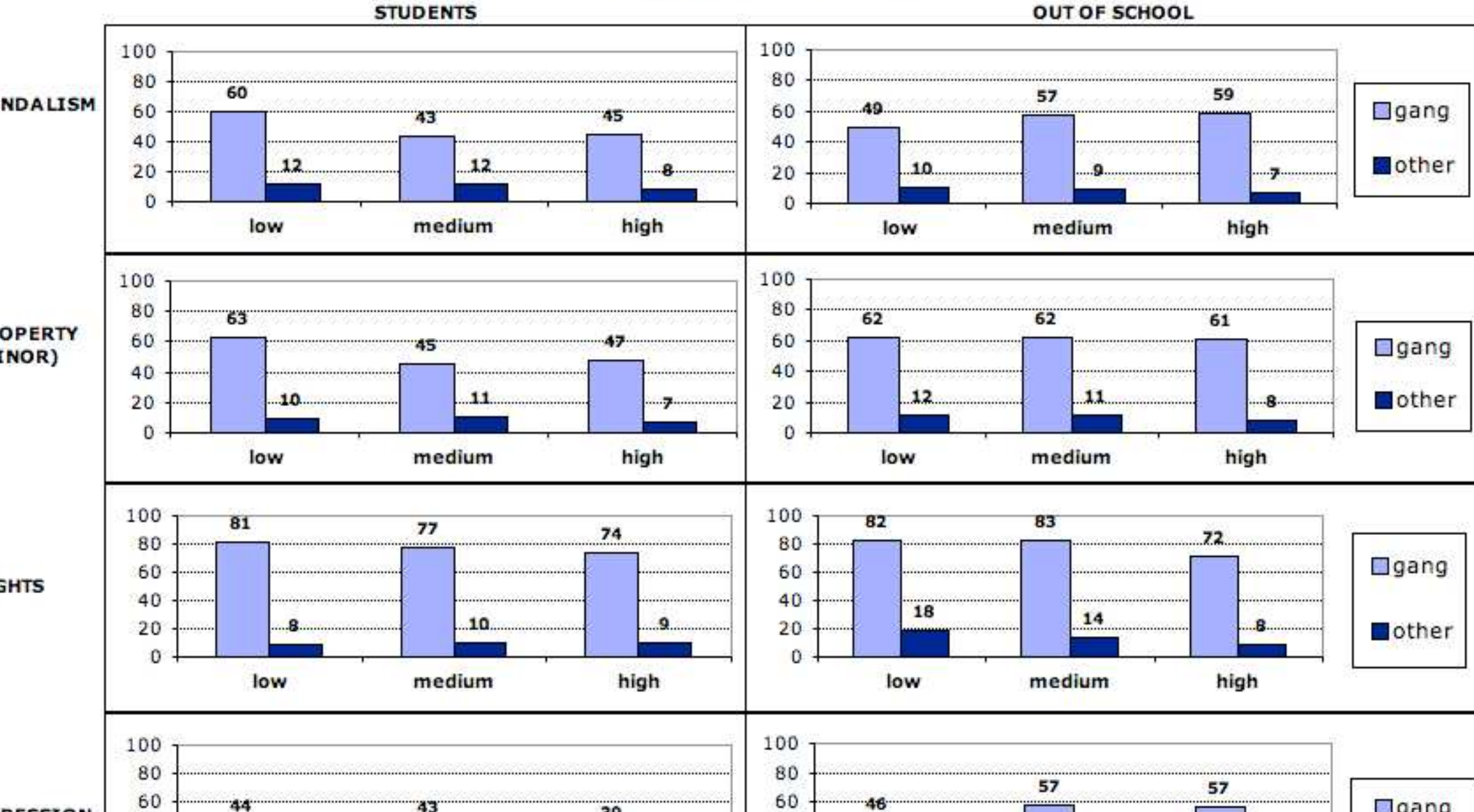
young, poor & out of the gang

**% OF LOW SES RESPONDENTS THAT WERE NEVER GANG MEMBERS**



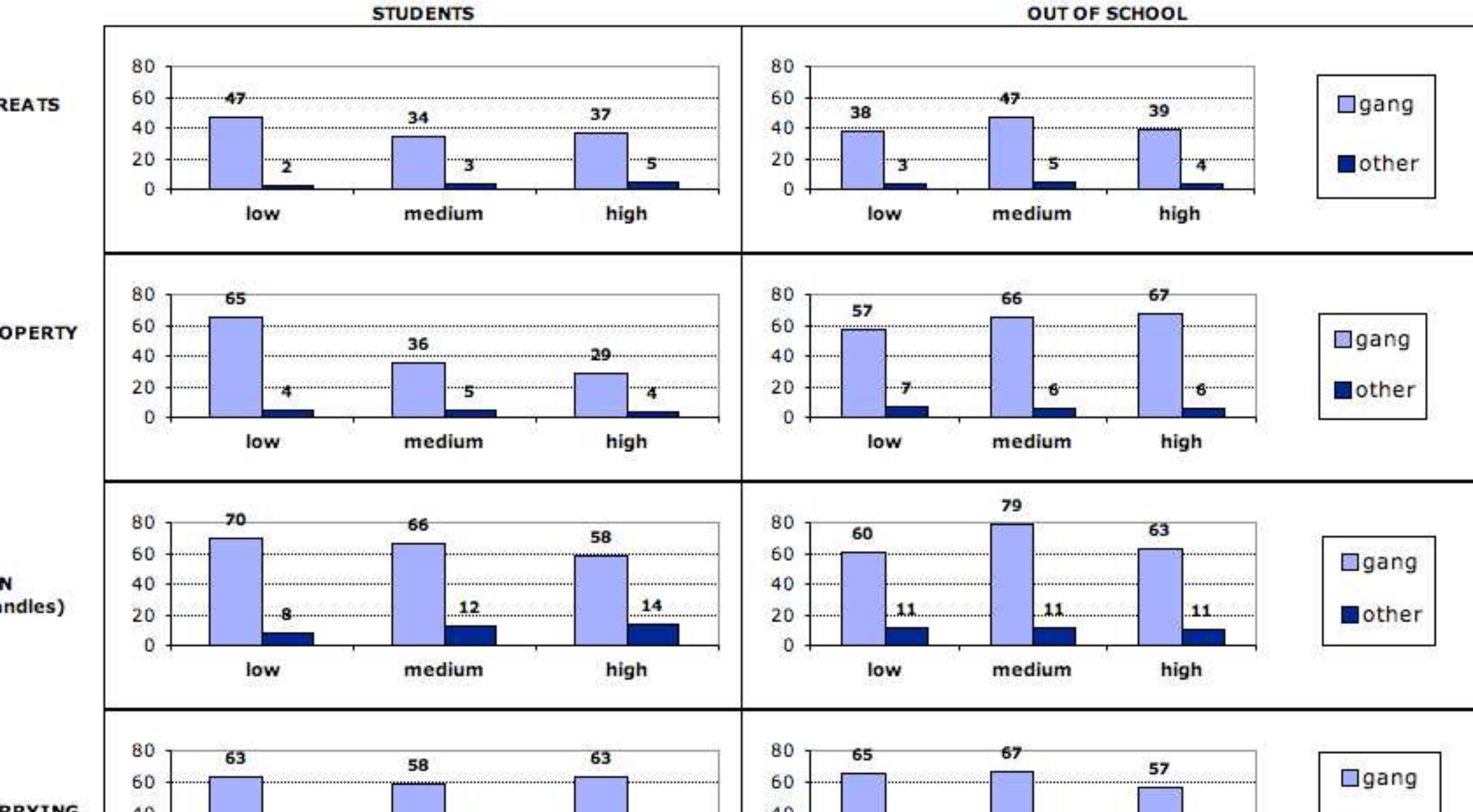
# SES, school, gangs & offenders - 1

**SELF - REPORT OF OFFENCES BY SES, SCHOOLING & GANG MEMBERSHIP**  
FOR EACH CATEGORY % OF OFFENDERS



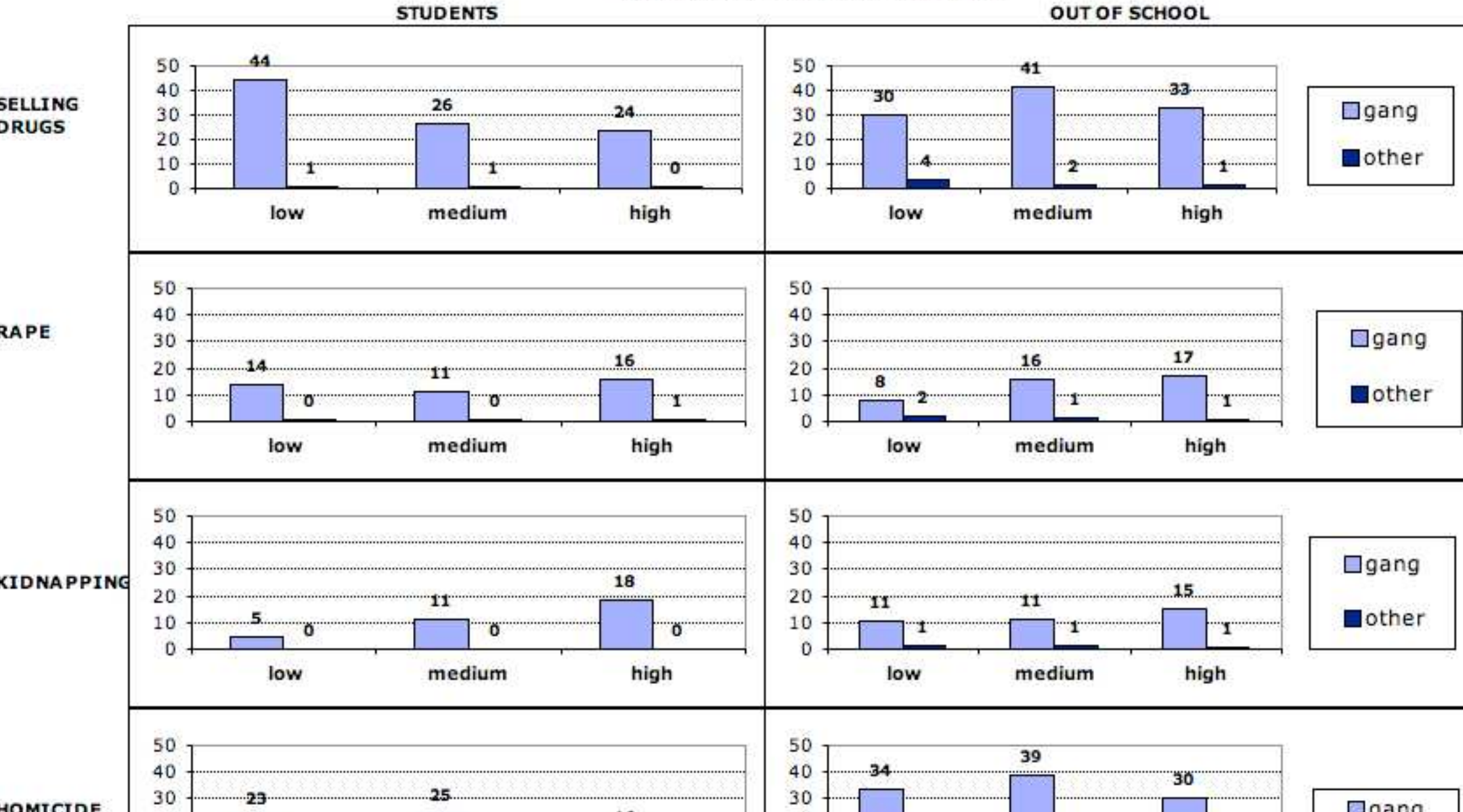
# SES, school, gangs & offenders - 2

**SELF - REPORT OF OFFENCES BY SES, SCHOOLING & GANG MEMBERSHIP**  
FOR EACH CATEGORY % OF OFFENDERS



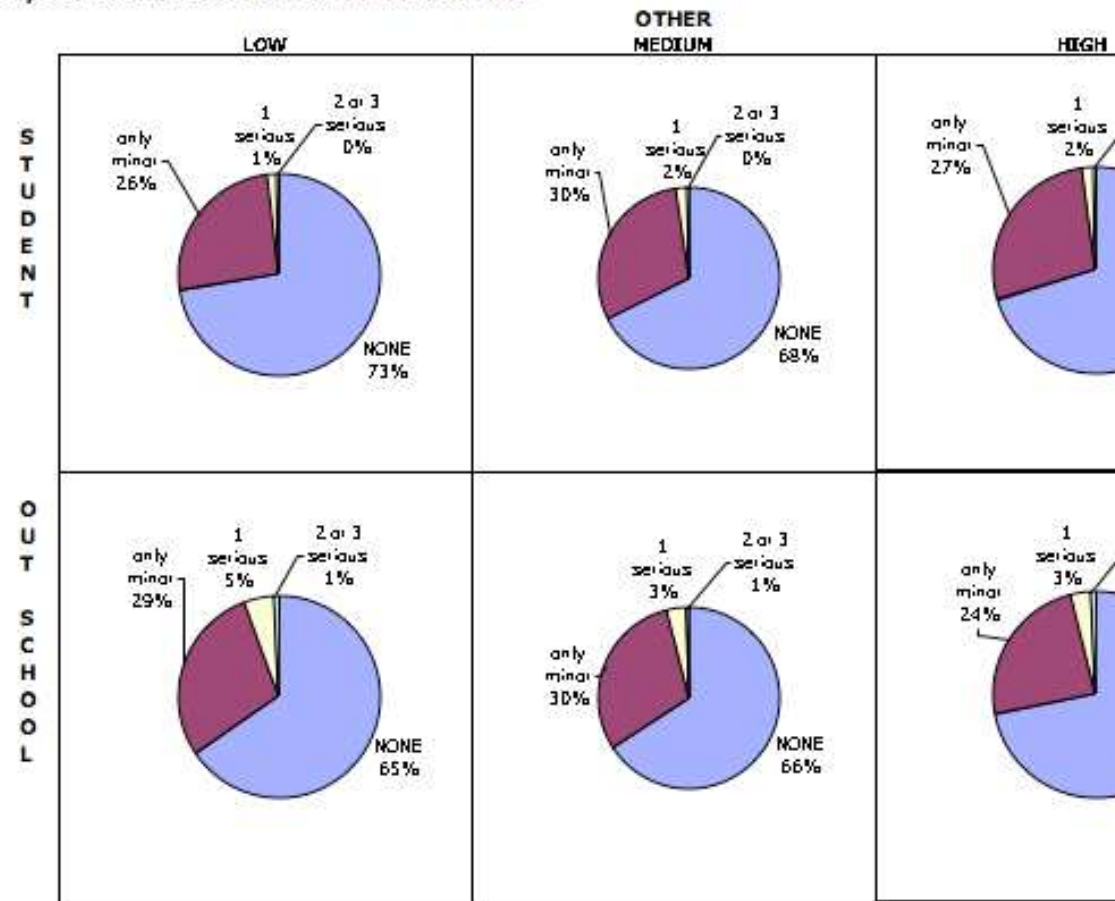
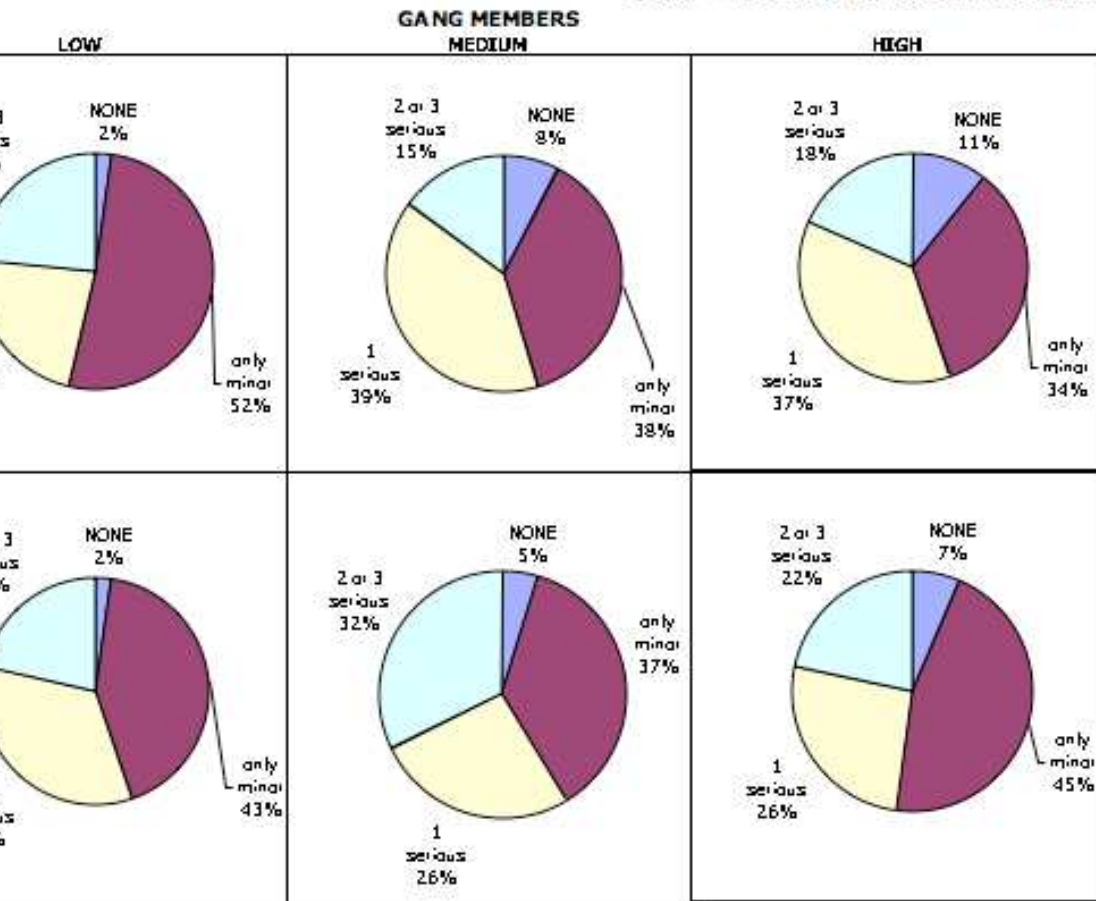
# SES, school, gangs & offenders - 3

**SELF - REPORT OF OFFENCES BY SES, SCHOOLING & GANG MEMBERSHIP**  
FOR EACH CATEGORY % OF OFFENDERS



# SES, school, gangs & offenders - 4

SELF - REPORT OF OFFENCES BY SES, SCHOOLING & GANG MEMBERSHIP



# risk factors - offenders

CHANGE (%) IN THE CHANCES OF REPORTING AND OFFENCE *								
VARIABLE	property m	property	vandalism	guns	carry weapon	fight	agresion	serious
<b>gang member</b>								
Tegucigalpa	1312	3213	4118	3346	1643	2663	5504	5037
ZMVS	1068	1370	1035	2331	1644	1737	804	1708
Managua		832	185	316	804	871	474	688
R Nicaragua	426	556	351	291	1067	1207	600	1290
Panamá	409	1258	159	901	801	695	578	1029
<b>running away</b>								
Tegucigalpa	363	443	271	201	276	190	301	320
ZMVS	196	484	185	137	562	485	444	161
Managua	389	223	544	79		168	291	
R Nicaragua	195	226	212	166	155	190	187	227
Panamá	272	332		164	153	178	312	204
<b>friend in the gang</b>								
Tegucigalpa	134	169	263	153	145	258	320	131
ZMVS	244		249	75		135	103	154
Managua	210	155	133	93		70		
R Nicaragua	140	170	143	155	234	161	155	173
Panamá	534	1245	308	332	471	162	230	647
<b>dropping out of school</b>								
Tegucigalpa	-44	97		-49		-42		
ZMVS								
Managua		220		166	235	155	462	427
R Nicaragua			-47			149		
Panamá	101	97			143	66		
<b>Low SES</b>								
Tegucigalpa				-44		62		
ZMVS								
Managua							-52	
R Nicaragua				-40		-33		
Panamá		104				-42		
<b>Male</b>								
Tegucigalpa	69	96		213	343	96	109	437
ZMVS	61			318	155	86		

# risk factors - gang membership

## VARIABLES THAT HELP DISCRIMINATE

### **GANG MEMBERS**

#### FROM OTHER RESPONDENTS

	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua		Panama
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.
	<b>11,7</b>	<b>3,2</b>	7,4	1,9	<b>8,6</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>6,3</b>	<b>4,9</b>
	0,8	-1,6	1,0	0,2	1,1	1,7	1,1	1,9	<b>1,3</b>
ng away	<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>2,6</b>	<b>3,0</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>3,7</b>
ng out of school	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,1</b>	1,8	1,1	<b>8,2</b>	<b>6,1</b>	<b>7,1</b>	<b>8,8</b>	<b>2,4</b>
ex	<b>2,6</b>	<b>2,2</b>	1,8	1,0	1,9	1,9	<b>2,2</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>2,1</b>
consumption	<b>8,8</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>20,2</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>8,0</b>	<b>11,4</b>	<b>5,5</b>
in the barrio	<b>4,4</b>	<b>3,0</b>	2,0	1,3	<b>8,6</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>6,7</b>	<b>6,7</b>
		0,38		0,41		0,46		0,46	
		1150		1624		701		2949	

# SES, family background & gang membership

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL BACKGROUND										
IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES										
IF INCLUDED IN GANG MEMBERS LOGIT EQUATION										
	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua		Panamá	
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z
	1,2	1,2	0,9	-0,5	0,9	-0,4	1,1	0,5	0,9	-0,9
	0,9	-0,3	1,1	0,2	1,3	1,0	1,2	1,0	1,2	0,5
	<b>2,2</b>	<b>2,0</b>	0,4	-1,1	1,6	1,3	1,6	1,7	1,1	0,2
ntils)							0,9	-1,1		
	0,8	-1,8	1,0	0,1	1,0	-0,3	1,0	-0,1	1,1	1,2
her	0,7	-1,6	-0,6	-1,2	0,9	-0,8	1,0	0,1	<b>0,7</b>	<b>-2,4</b>
	<b>3,1</b>	<b>2,6</b>	1,9	1,1	1,7	1,3	1,0	-0,2	<b>3,4</b>	<b>2,1</b>
	0,6	-1,4	0,7	-0,8	1,0	-0,2	1,1	0,4	1,8	1,9
	0,6	-0,9	0,7	-0,6	0,8	-0,7	1,1	0,5	<b>0,5</b>	<b>-2,5</b>
	1,1	0,2	0,9	-0,1	1,1	0,3	0,9	-0,3	0,9	-0,2

FAMILY BACKGROUND								
IMPACT OF FAMILY VARIABLES								
IF INCLUDED IN GANG MEMBERS LOGIT EQUATION								
	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua	
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z
<b>Brothers</b>								
Number:			<b>1,2</b>	<b>2,0</b>	1,0	0,1	1,0	0,1
# younger brothers							1,1	0,9
<b>Age of the mother</b>	1,0	1,1	1,0	0,2	1,0	-0,5	1,0	-1,9
<b>Respondent lives with</b>								
father & mother	1,4	0,9	1,1	0,2	0,6	-1,8	1,2	0,8
mother	0,7	-0,6	3,0	1,9	1,4	1,1	1,1	0,3
mother & other	1,3	0,4	1,8	-1,5	1,5	1,0	0,7	-0,9
other	0,7	-0,6	0,7	-0,6	1,0	0,1	1,1	0,3
<b>Religion</b>								
Catholic					0,9	-0,5	0,9	-0,4
Protestant					3,0	1,6	0,8	-0,3
Evangelic					1,1	0,3	1,2	1,1
Other:					0,4	-1,0	1,2	0,4
None	1,1	0,2	1,0	-0,1	1,0	-0,1	0,8	-1,0
<b>Relative abroad</b>	1,2	0,4	0,4	-1,7	<b>0,5</b>	<b>-2,5</b>	0,9	-0,5
<b>Supervision</b>								
WITH	0,8	-0,5	1,1	0,2	0,8	-0,7	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-3,3</b>
WHERE	1,3	0,5	0,5	0,2	0,6	-1,9	<b>0,4</b>	<b>-4,5</b>
<b>Conflicts at home</b>								
Frequent fights	1,4	0,6	2,1	1,1	1,4	1,0	<b>2,1</b>	<b>3,0</b>

# running away from home

## VARIABLES THAT HELP EXPLAIN

### RUNNING AWAY

	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua		Pana
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.
	1,1	1,9	<b>1,1</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>1,1</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>1,2</b>
	1,6	1,8	<b>1,9</b>	<b>3,0</b>	0,7	-1,1	<b>1,5</b>	<b>2,9</b>	0,8
with both parents	0,8	-1,3	<b>0,7</b>	<b>-2,1</b>	0,7	-1,6	<b>-0,6</b>	<b>-4,9</b>	0,8
vision	<b>0,4</b>	<b>-3,0</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-2,3</b>	1,3	0,8	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-3,6</b>	<b>0,6</b>
r's education	<b>0,8</b>	<b>-2,0</b>	0,9	-1,5	1,2	1,4	<b>0,8</b>	<b>-3,0</b>	0,9
<b>l abuse</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>3,7</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>1,9</b>
nt fights at home	0,9	-0,5	<b>1,9</b>	<b>2,4</b>	0,9	-0,2	<b>1,7</b>	<b>2,6</b>	1,6
retention	<b>1,6</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>2,8</b>	1,3	1,0	<b>1,6</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>1,8</b>
<b>in gang</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>2,6</b>	<b>5,4</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>2,6</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>5,7</b>	<b>3,8</b>
<b>nts going out</b>	<b>1,1</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>1,1</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>7,3</b>	<b>1,2</b>
	<b>2,9</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>5,1</b>	<b>6,8</b>	<b>5,3</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>4,1</b>
		0,20		0,23		0,22		0,23	
		1095		1557		692		2873	

# making friends in the gang

VARIABLES THAT HELP DISCRIMINATE  
**FRIENDS OF GANG MEMBERS**  
 FROM OTHER RESPONDENTS

	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua		Panama
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.
moving away	<b>1,9</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>1,9</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>4,4</b>	<b>3,4</b>
division	1,0	0,2	0,7	-1,7	<b>0,5</b>	<b>-2,7</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-4,1</b>	<b>0,5</b>
	<b>2,2</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>5,0</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>8,3</b>	1,1
	<b>1,5</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>1,7</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>8,8</b>	<b>2,3</b>
consumption	<b>2,4</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>1,7</b>	<b>2,2</b>	<b>5,0</b>	<b>8,0</b>	<b>2,2</b>
in the barrio	<b>4,0</b>	<b>9,6</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>10,7</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>6,4</b>	<b>3,3</b>	<b>13,0</b>	<b>15,8</b>
		0,15		0,14		0,14		0,17	

# dropping out of school

## VARIABLES THAT HELP EXPLAIN

### GIRLS' DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua		Panamá	
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z
Low SES	1,5	1,9	<b>2,6</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>4,8</b>	<b>22,6</b>	<b>12,9</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,0</b>
Running away	1,8	1,5	1,1	0,3	<b>9,6</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>2,3</b>
Grade retention	<b>2,9</b>	<b>5,1</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>7,9</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>11,4</b>	<b>6,9</b>
Pregnancy	<b>16,8</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>86,1</b>	<b>4,4</b>	**		<b>73,6</b>	<b>9,3</b>	<b>3,3</b>	<b>2,9</b>
Migrative abroad	<b>0,7</b>	<b>-2,1</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-2,8</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>-2,9</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>-6,0</b>	0,7	-1,2
		0,11		0,18		0,23		0,43		0,34
		530		738		248		1250		341

### BOYS' DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

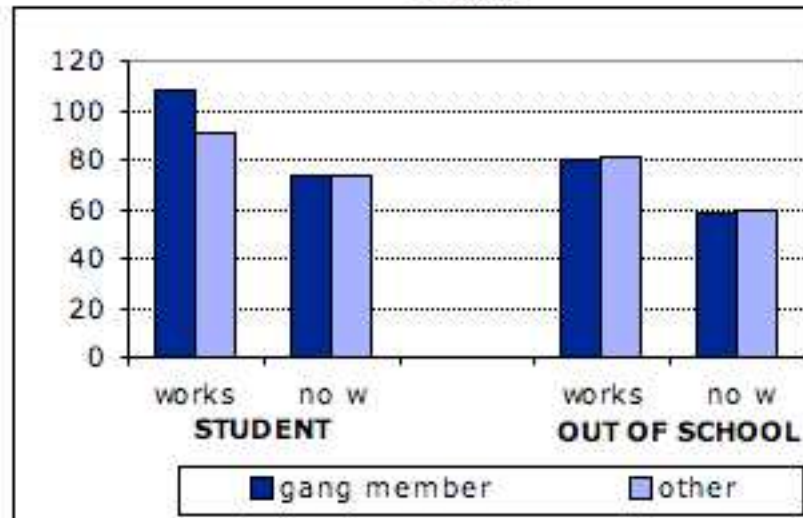
	Tegucigalpa		ZMVS		Managua		R Nicaragua		Panamá	
	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z
Low SES	1,4	1,9	<b>3,0</b>	<b>6,9</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>4,7</b>	<b>22,0</b>	<b>19,4</b>	1,7	1,8
Running away	1,0	0,2	<b>2,0</b>	<b>3,3</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>3,8</b>	<b>7,9</b>	<b>4,4</b>	<b>5,8</b>
Grade retention	<b>1,5</b>	<b>2,6</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>1,9</b>	<b>3,0</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>7,0</b>	<b>8,0</b>
Pregnancy	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,3</b>	2,0	1,7	<b>26,3</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>6,9</b>	<b>5,6</b>	1,1	0,4
Migrative abroad	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-2,8</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>-3,4</b>	<b>0,7</b>	<b>-2,0</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>-5,4</b>	1,0	-0,2
		0,03		0,10		0,13		0,38		0,27
		668		870		443		1693		426

# labor or mating strategy?

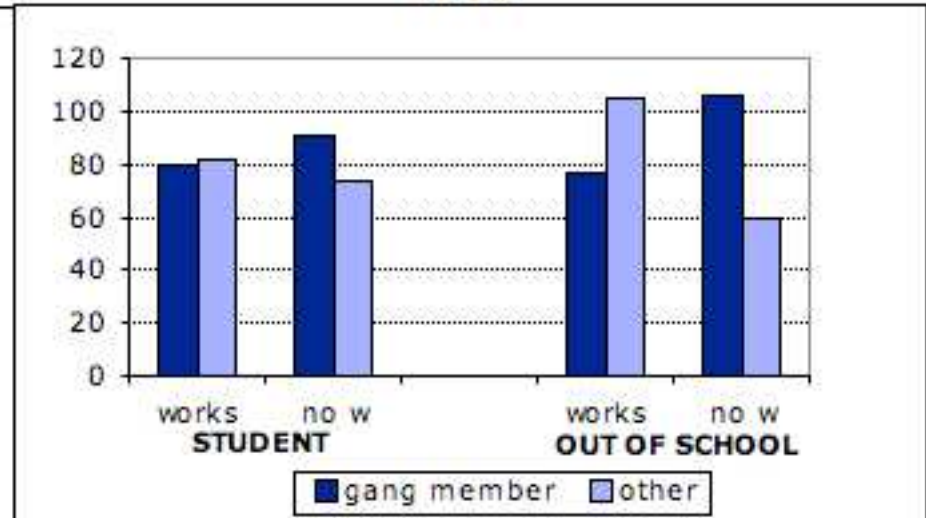
## SCHOOL, WORK, GANGS AND ... ... CURRENT EXPENDITURE

MONTHLY EXPENDITURE - AVERAGE INDEX \*

### GIRLS



### BOYS

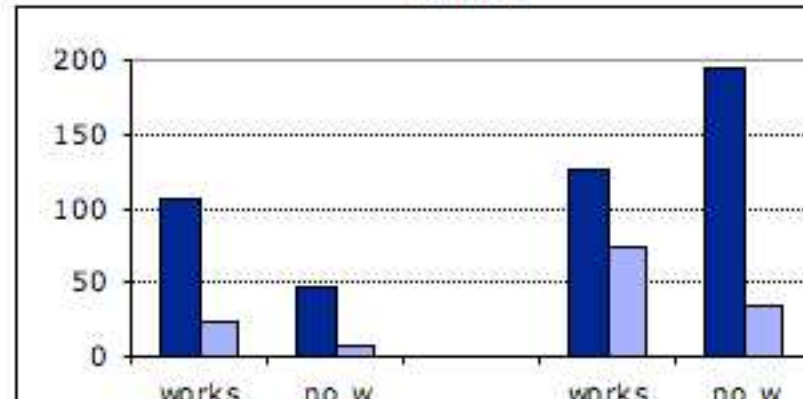


\* Monthly expenditure in local currency is standardized for each country  
Index = 100 for the average monthly expenditure of out of school workers that are not gang members

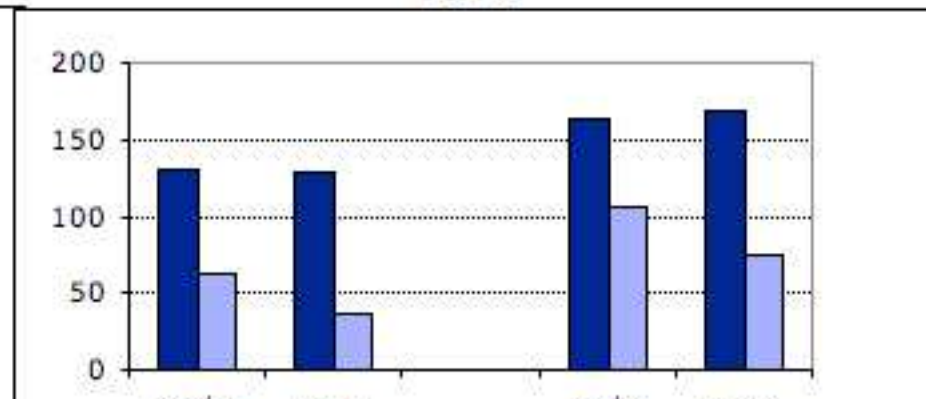
## ... SEXUAL ACTIVITY

NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS - AVERAGE INDEX \*

### GIRLS



### BOYS



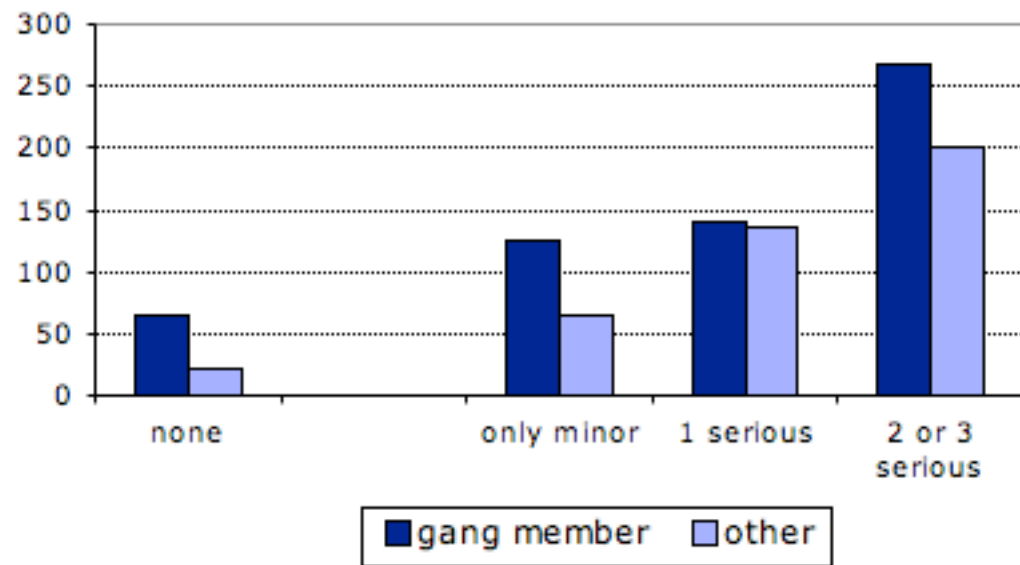
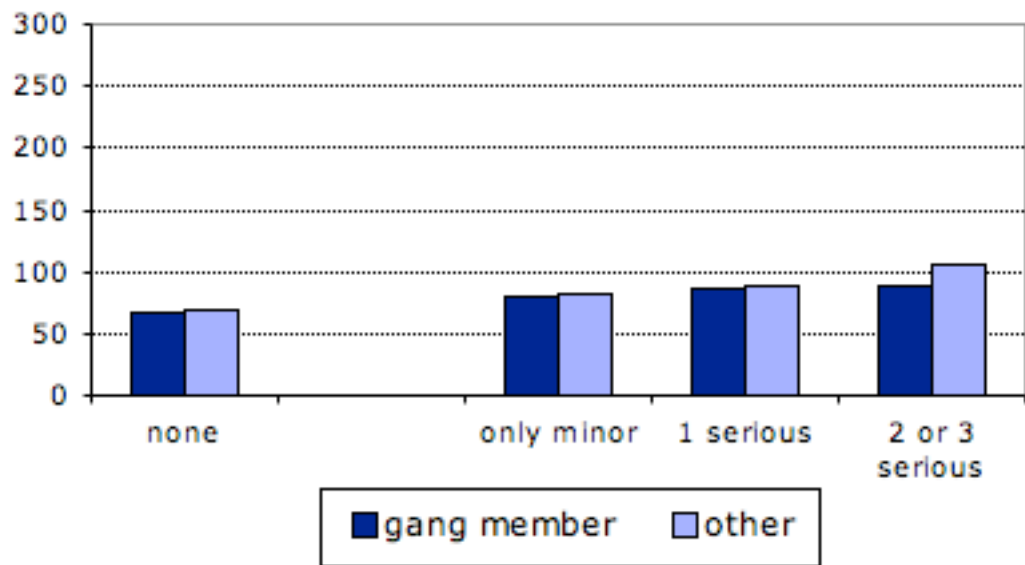
# labor or mating strategy?

## SELF REPORT OF OFFENCES, EXPENDITURE AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY

FOR EACH LEVEL AVERAGE VALUE OF INDEX \*

### MONTHLY EXPENDITURE

### NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS



\* Index = 100 for the average, out of school workers that are not gang members

hints:

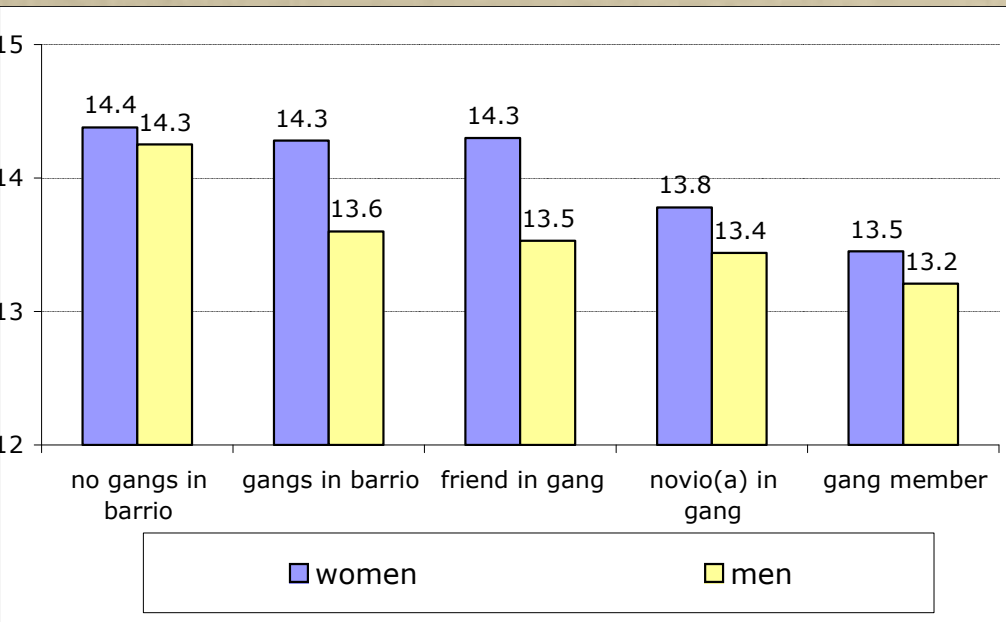
- "primitive wars" between gangs
- tatoos



# gangs & sex

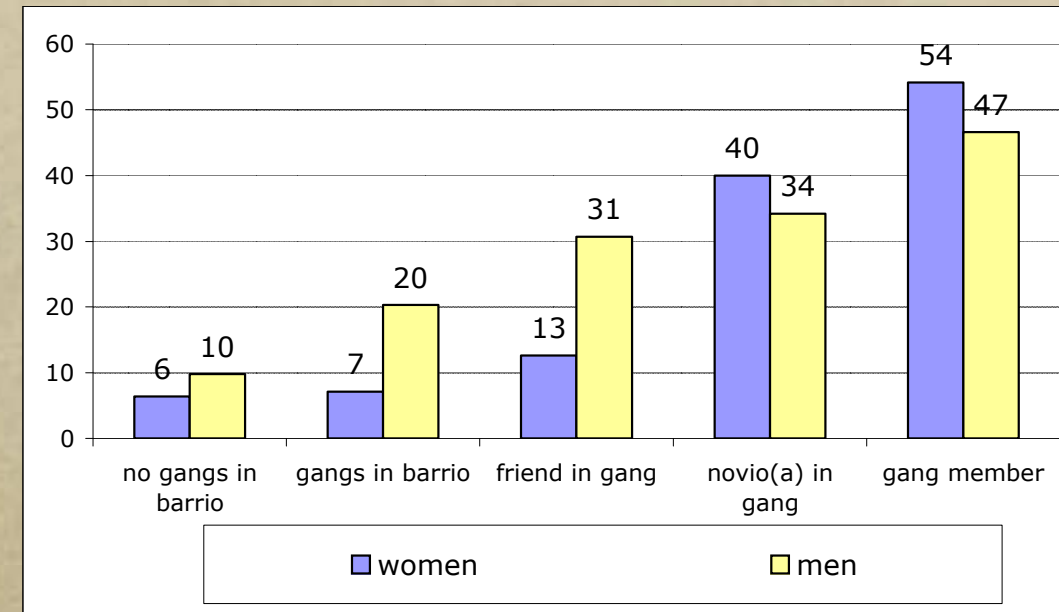
## GANGS AND AGE OF SEXUAL INITIATION

FOR EACH STEP AVERAGE AGE OF FIRST SEXUAL RELATION



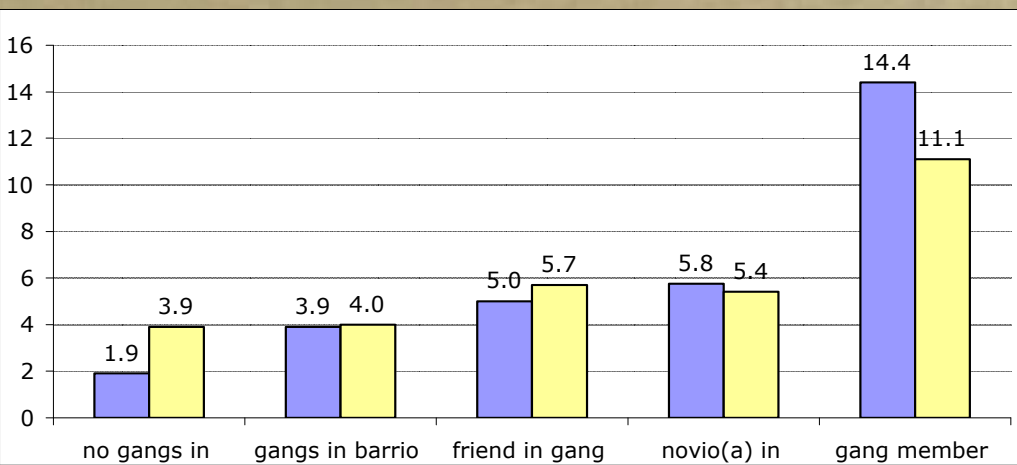
## GANGS AND EARLY SEXUAL ACTIVITY

% THAT IN EACH STEP REPORT SEX BEFORE 13



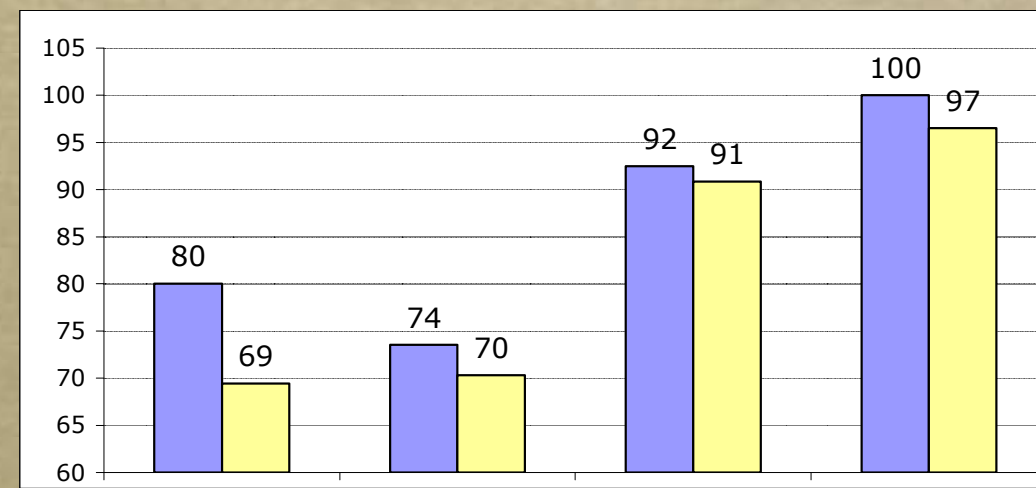
## GANGS AND SEXUAL TURNOVER

FOR EACH STEP AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS IN LIFETIME \*



## GANGS AND ROMANCE

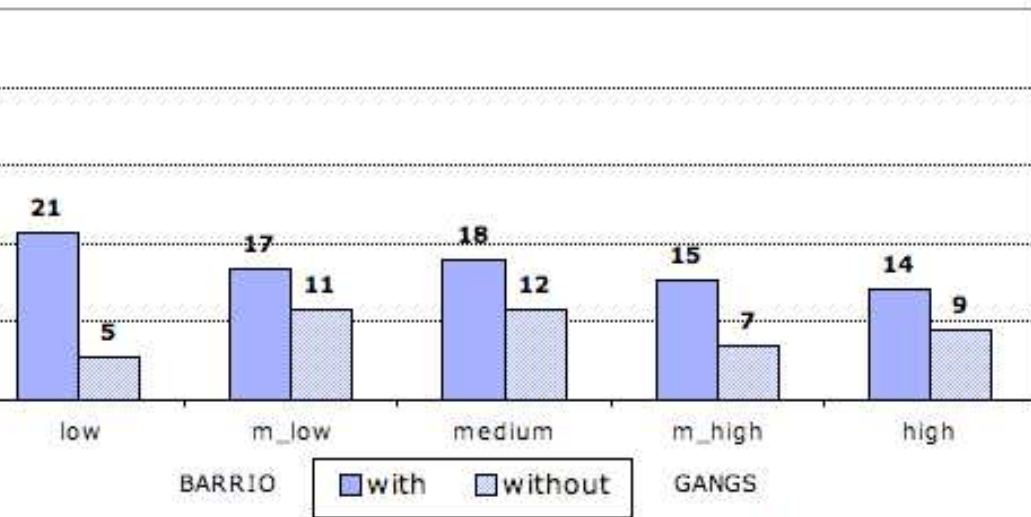
% THAT IN EACH STEP REPORT BOY OR GIRL FRIEND



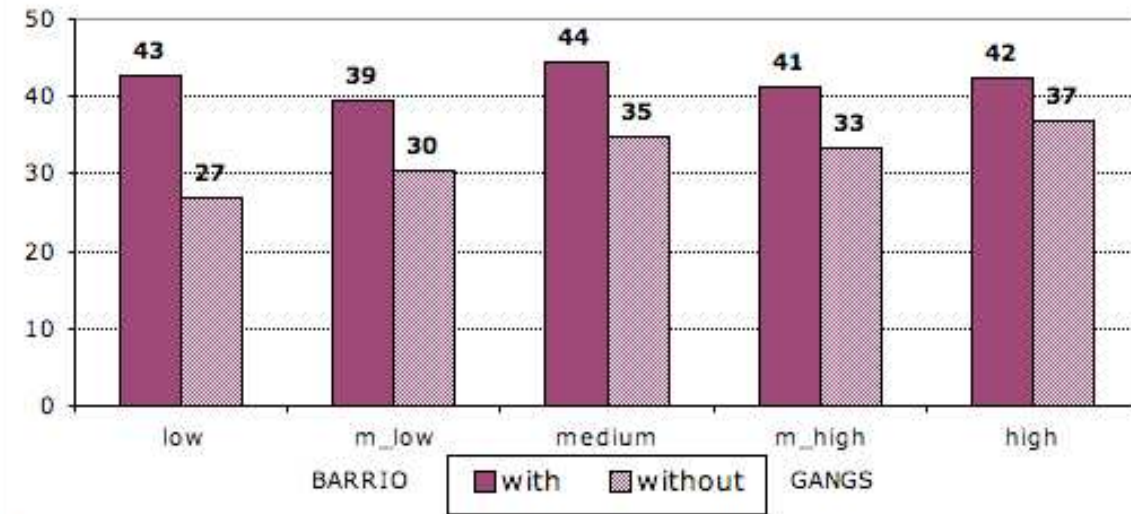
# gangs & sex (out of the gang)

**% OF STUDENTS THAT ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE**

**GIRLS**

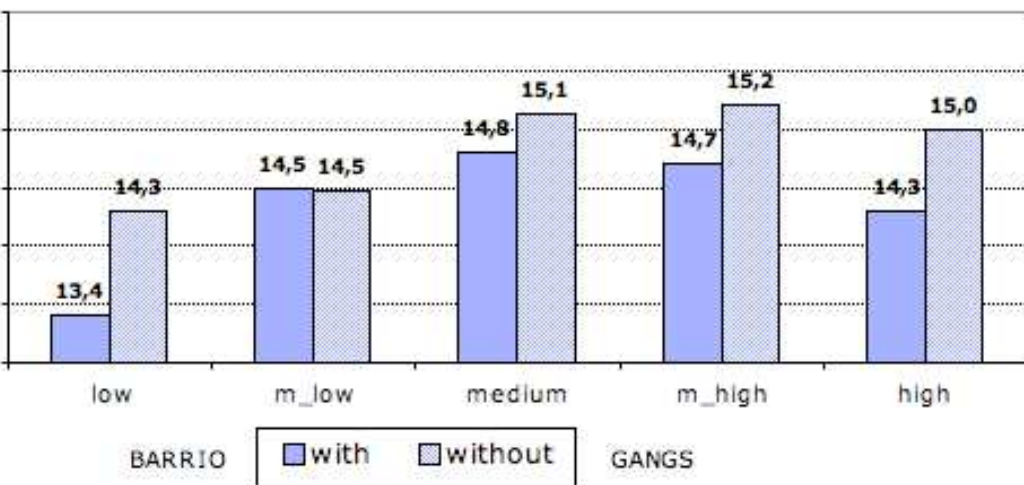


**BOYS**

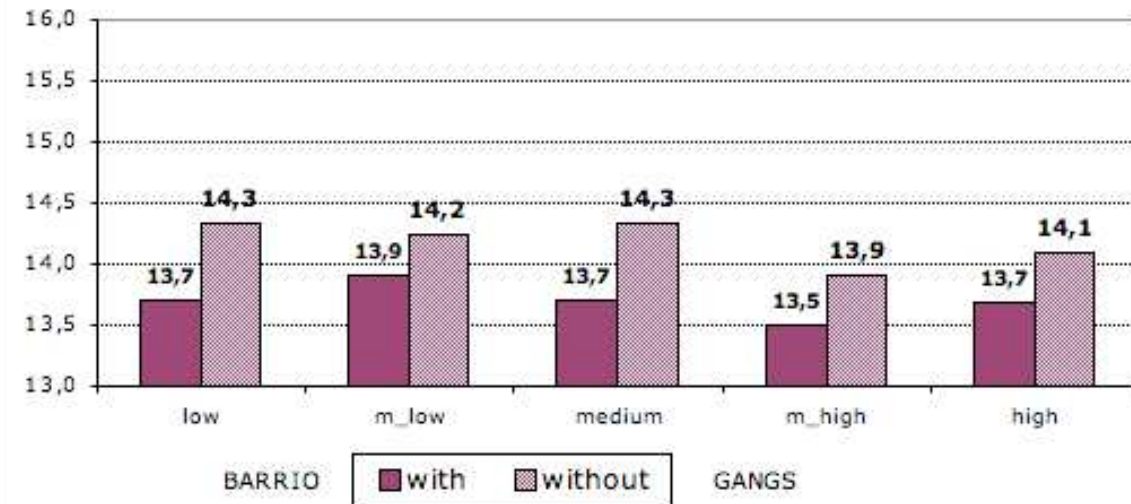


**AGE FIRST SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP FOR STUDENTS**

**GIRLS**



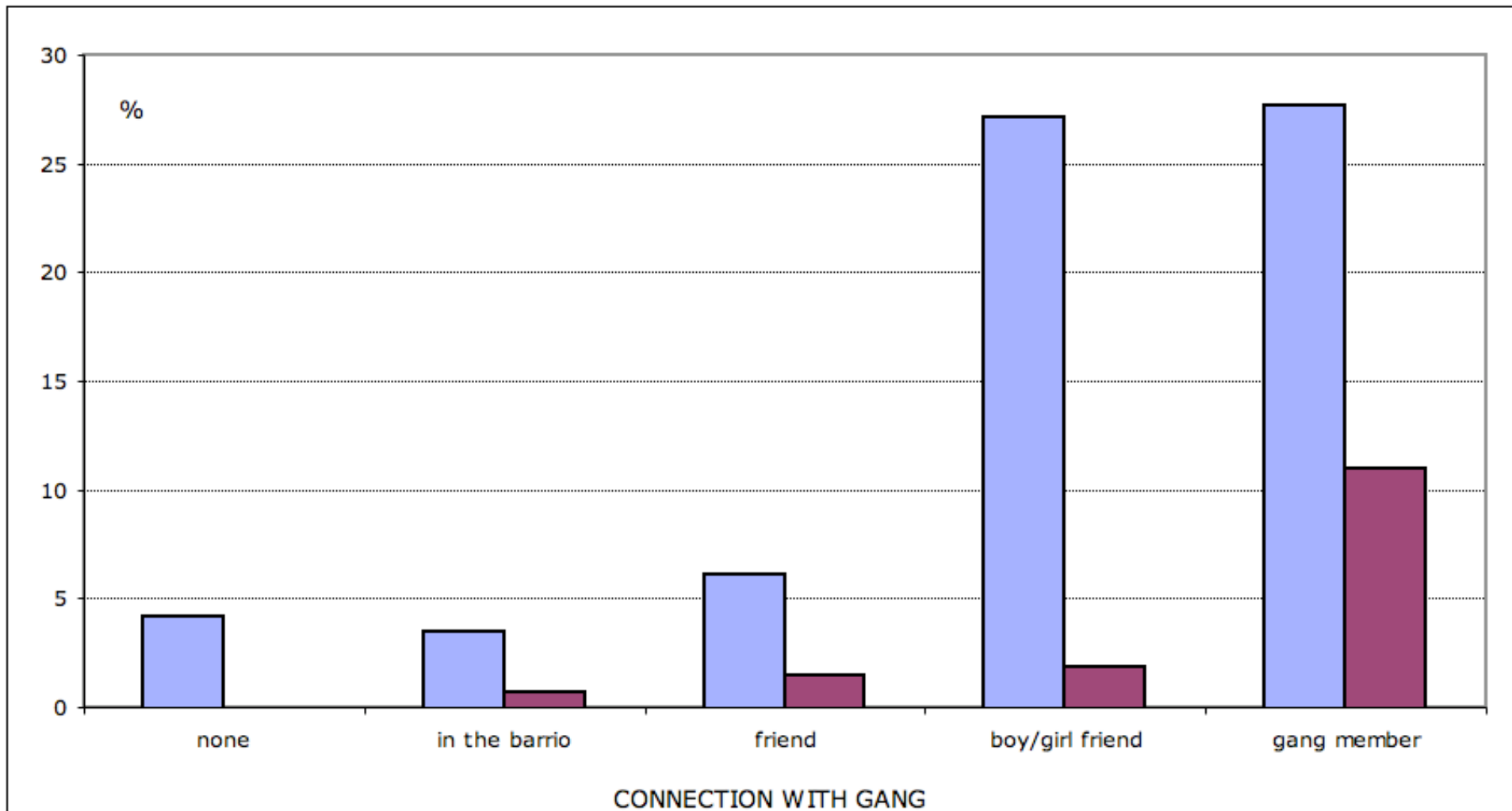
**BOYS**



# gangs & gender violence

## CONNECTION WITH GANGS AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

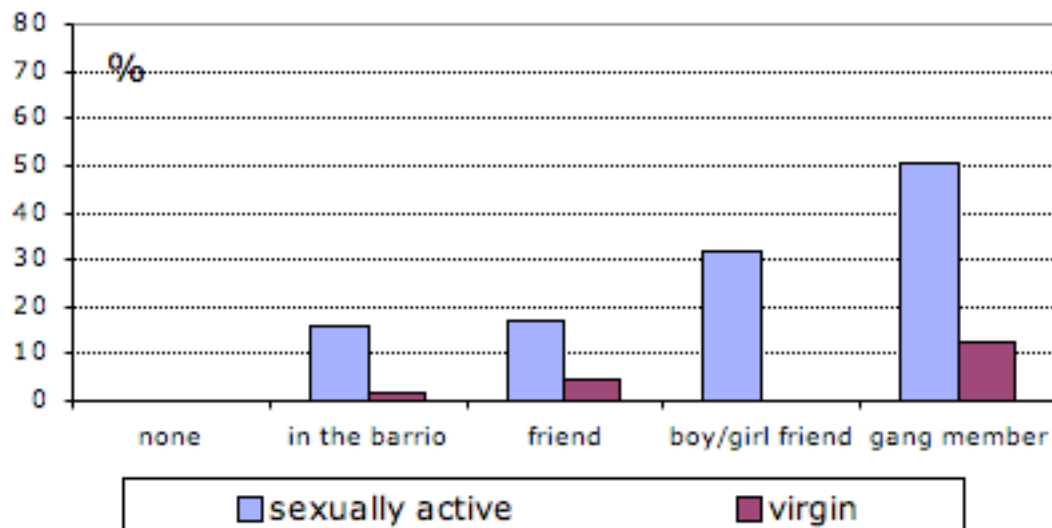
% OF RESPONDENTS THAT REPORT RAPE  
GIRLS AS VICTIMS AND BOYS AS RAPISTS



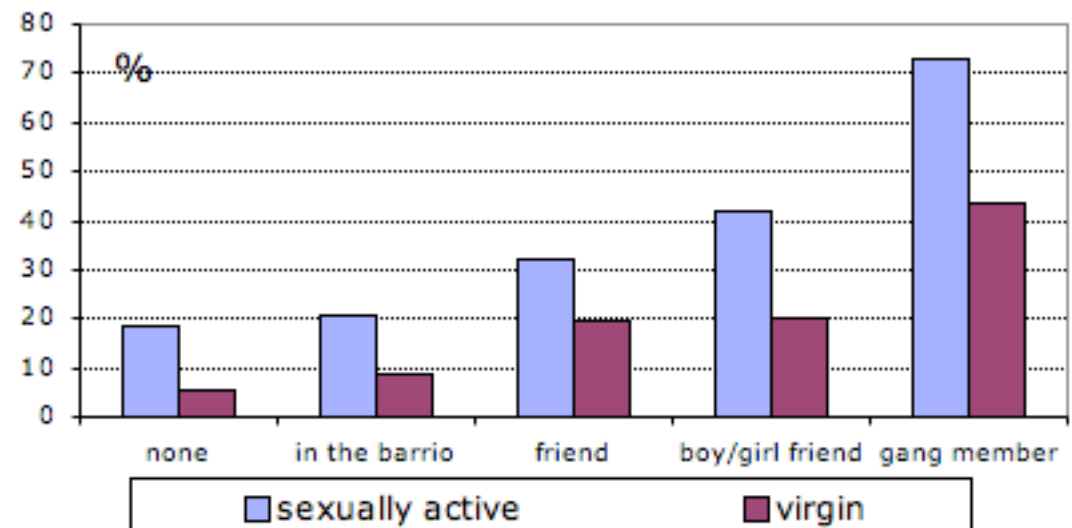
# gangs & gender violence

**CONNECTION WITH GANGS, SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS**  
% OF GIRLS

**BEATEN BY BOY FRIEND**



**VICTIMS OF AGRSSION**



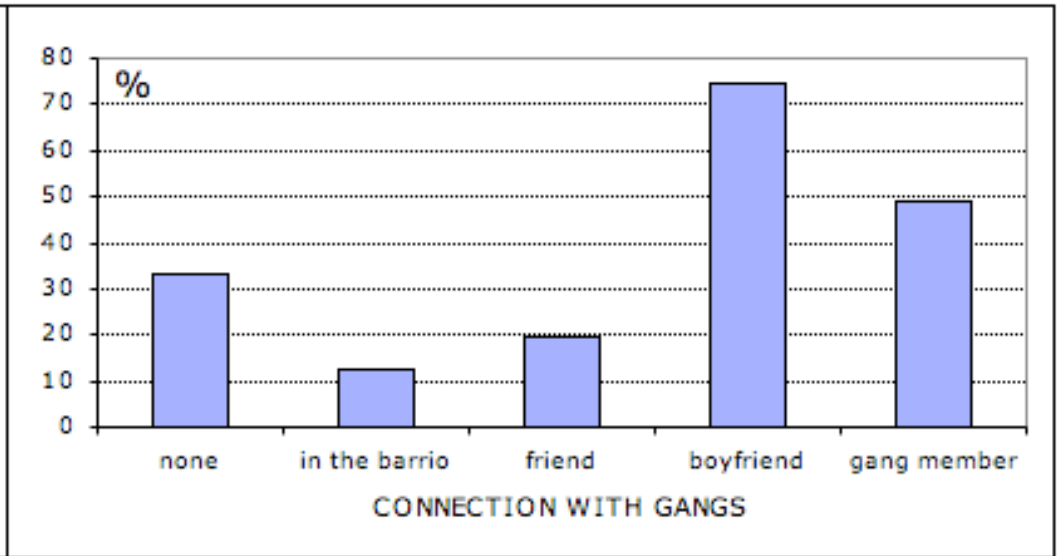
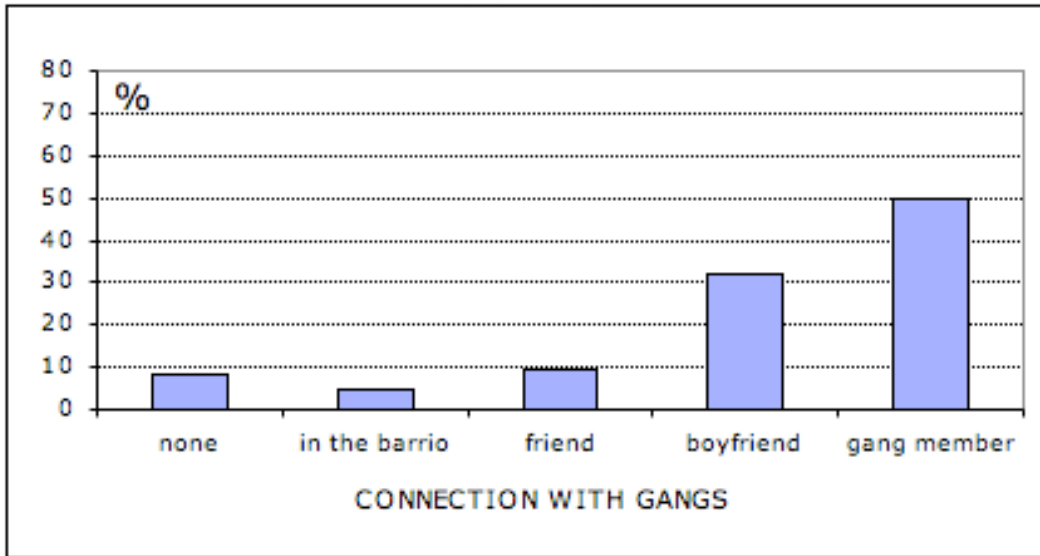
# gangs & prostitution

## CONNECTION WITH GANGS AND GIRLS' PROSTITUTION

% OF SEXUALLY ACTIVE GIRLS THAT REPORT SELLING OF SEX

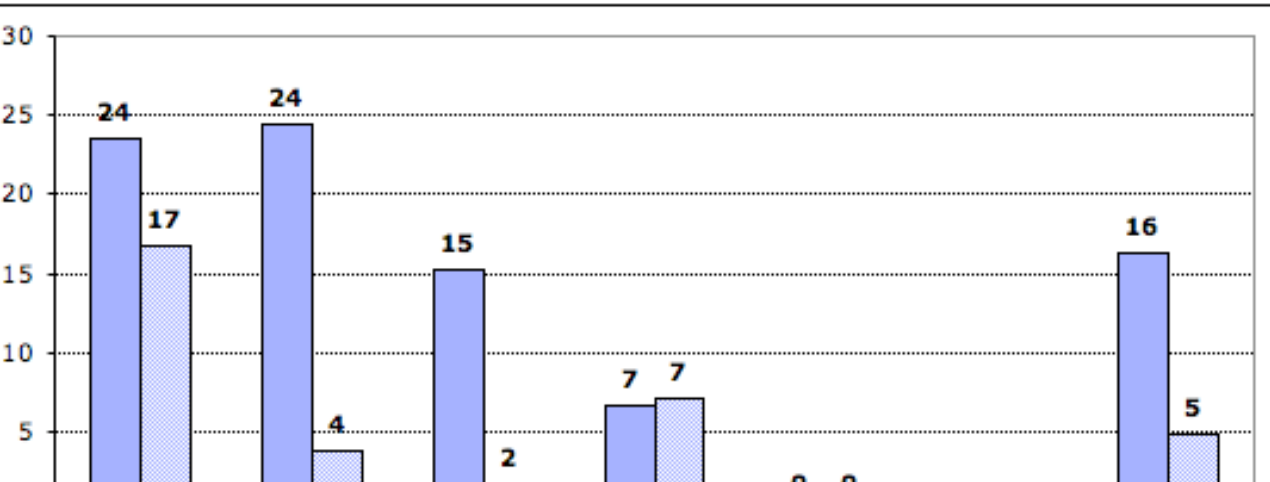
STUDENTS

OUT OF SCHOOL



## GIRLS' PROSTITUTION BY SES AND GANG MEMBER FRIENDSHIP

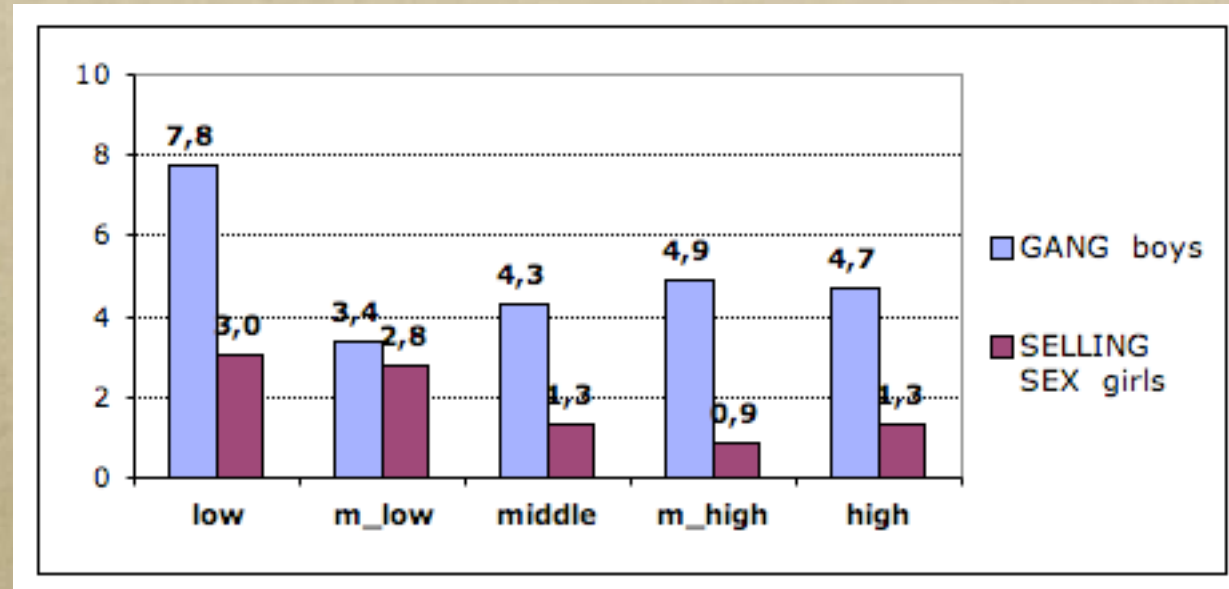
% OF SEXUALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS OUT OF A GANG THAT REPORT SELLING SEX



many testimonies of "pimp gang"  
- "el trencito"

# gangs & prostitution

*similar incidence  
(students)*



*other similarities*

*both boys in gangs & girls in prostitution*

*high victimization*

*high drug use*

*high self-report of offences*

*share risk factors (sexual abuse, running away, dropping out)*

# public policy issues

- *who is the relevant policy maker?*
  - *global phenomena (gangs, drugs, migration)*
  - *LA: local problem & national institutions*
  - *coordinating NGOs and agencies (with a strong political agenda)*
- *diagnostic must be local*
  - *with common data gathering methodologies*
- *programs should be independently evaluated*
- *poverty & violence is still the theory behind most prevention programs*
  - *not always fits the data*
  - *perverse incentives (hot barrios get more resources)*
  - *biased against girls*

