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Violence Research in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Literature Review

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Violence Research in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Literature Review

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Violence Research in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Literature Review

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Latin America has long been a violence-prone continent. No other region of the world knows higher homicide rates nor has such a variety of violence. Political violence, guerilla movements and civil wars, bloody revolutions, brutal dictatorships, domestic violence, criminal violence, and youth violence are all well known throughout history. This article gives an overview of the historical development of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, examining its specificities and changes. The focus is on the recent explosion of violence and crime since the 1980s. As a literature review, it summarizes the main findings of academic research on violence in the different Latin American countries, thus providing additional insights into the major topics and research interests of Latin American and international institutions. After a short introduction and some remarks on the historical development of violence, the main part of the article deals with the recent rise of violence in the region. A special focus is on youth violence. At the end, the causes, costs, and consequences of violence for the Latin American societies are addressed.

Latin America has long been a violence-prone continent. No other region in the world shows higher homicide rates, no other region shows such a variety of different types and forms of violence. A high incidence of crime, the proliferation of violent youth gangs, the prevalence of domestic violence, violence related to drug trafficking or money laundering as the burning issues of the day come on top of more historical forms of violence in the form of persistent civil wars, guerilla movements and death squads, state terrorism and dictatorships, social uprisings and violent revolutions (Bodemer, Kurtenbach, and Meschkat 2001; Briceño-León 2001, 2007; Cueva Perus 2006; Davis 2006; Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza 2001; Fischer and Krennerich 2000; Frühling and Tulchin 2003, 2005; Munck 2008; PAHO 1996; Pécaut 1997; Petrisans Aguilar 2005; Romano 2005; Visión Mundial 2003; Rotker 2002; Salama 2008; Stanley 2009).

The distressing thing about this violence is not just its myriad manifestations, but also its nature and extent. Violence is a persistent feature of Latin American history and in many places is now so widespread that it cannot be ignored. Hence the need for some explanation of its specific causes and background and why certain types of violence are prevalent in particular regions or countries.

Although Latin Americans might be broadly accustomed to violence and crime, the particular configuration of violence that the different countries have experienced since the 1980s has given rise to major concern among citizens and governments. According to World Bank data, the homicide rate in Latin America has increased by 50 percent since the 1980s, and most of the victims of violence are young people between the ages of 15 and 25 (World Bank 2010a; Morrison 2007; Waiselfisz 2008). This development exacerbates

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already high rates of homicide within the different countries. Data on homicides drawn from the WHO *World Report on Violence and Health* (2002), for instance, indicate that Latin American youth is the group most targeted for violence in the world. About 29 percent of homicides in Latin America are of children and youth aged 10 to 19 and homicide is the second leading cause of death for this age group in ten of the twenty-one countries in the region with populations over one million. Youth homicide rates are up to three times higher than overall national homicide rates

Yet these figures are just the tip of the iceberg. Although murders are relatively easy to record, we should be aware that murder and manslaughter account for only a small part of the violence. If we imagined the distribution of violence within a society as a pyramid we would find the murder cases at the top; below them would be the violence officially recorded by the police and the security authorities and by health and social services organizations; below that the so-called “reported violence” from surveys, and finally at the bottom, the “non-reported” violence not recorded anywhere (the “dark figure”), which would occupy the most space. International organizations have calculated that the economic costs of violence for a society and for individuals are immense. Violence is a key obstacle to development (Ayres 1998; Cohen 2005; Gaviria, Guerrero, and Londoño 2000; Londoño and Guerrero 1999; McIlwaine 1999; Skaperdas et al. 2009; Solimano 2004; WHO 2004).

At the same time we should avoid over-generalizations. Despite these data and the current high rates of violence, we should be aware that the level of violence has varied considerably over the course of history, the forms of violence have changed, and specific kinds of violence seem to have been dominant or become the subject of public debate in particular periods (Fandino Marino 2004; Timmons 2007).

For the purposes of this literature review, we consider violence primarily as direct physical violence exerted against individuals or groups by individual or collective perpetrators. Generally, we follow the WHO definition: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in

injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation” (WHO 2002). Although this is without doubt the core of the general understanding of violence, it might be useful to consider some other forms of structural and cultural violence which are in many aspects interwoven with the different forms of physical violence and political order in Latin America (Imbusch 2003). Despite the vagueness of these concepts, neglecting structural or cultural violence on a continent with profound social inequalities and important class and race cleavages, with strong discrimination and social exclusion, with extreme wealth and extreme poverty, is to omit important aspects of violence in this region.

There is an obvious need to differentiate between the categories: social, economic, political, and institutional violence. Whereas social violence should be understood violent acts motivated by the desire, conscious or unconscious, for social gain or to obtain or maintain social power (for example interpersonal violence, violence against spouses, child abuse, sexual assault of women and children, loss of control in arguments), economic violence is violent acts motivated by the desire, conscious or unconscious, for economic gain or to obtain or maintain economic power (for example street crime, carjacking, robbery and theft, drug trafficking, kidnapping, assaults in the course of economic crimes including killing and rape). Political and institutional violence involves violent acts motivated by the desire, conscious or unconscious, to obtain or maintain political power (for example civil war, guerilla or paramilitary conflict, politically motivated assassinations, armed conflict between political parties, terrorism and state terrorism, violence perpetrated by state political institutions such as the army, the police, or other security forces).

The high incidence of violence in Latin America has above all to do with the great social inequality and the unequal life chances of Latin Americans, with the juxtaposition of extreme poverty and tremendous wealth, with sustained processes of social exclusion, with the fragile legitimacy of the state monopoly on violence, with widespread deficits in the rule of law, and with extensive corruption among the police. Yet it also has to do with a machismo culture, indeed sometimes even with a genuine “culture of violence” (Buvinic, Morrison, and Orlando 2005). Violence as a form of behavior and a means of

engaging in conflict or asserting interests is hence far more accepted and far less an anathema than in, say, Western Europe.

Violence has been addressed as a complex phenomenon by many academic disciplines with their own perspectives on violence. Traditionally, violence in its most common forms has been regarded as an issue of criminal and social pathology and criminologists treated it as a kind of deviant behavior. It violates the prevailing values and norms of a society and represents a threat to order and integration, and must therefore be punished as a criminal offense. Then, violence has been considered as a political and social phenomenon, pointing to the political mobilization rates and social background of the perpetrators or to the political character of violent actions. Political scientists and sociologists therefore emphasize behavioral rationalizations, the internal logic underlying violent acts, and the political context in which violence takes place. Their concern is to arrive at appropriate explanations for and understanding of violence by taking account of the biographies and social environment of the perpetrators. They also seek to find out under what social circumstances violence becomes an effective behavior or an end in itself. Psychologists and social psychologists are more interested in individual or collective predispositions toward violence. They investigate how individuals develop a willingness to engage in violence and how victims of violence address their traumatic experiences. Nowadays, because of the high social and economic costs associated with violence and crime, it is widely recognized as a public health or macro-economic problem. Public health specialists consider violence as a kind of social pandemic because of the ongoing social and health problems involved, economists care about the direct and indirect costs associated with the different forms of violence, thus pointing to the adverse effects for the socio-economic development of societies affected by severe forms of violence.

Despite the fact that violence is a problematic worldwide phenomenon (WHO 2002), violence in Latin America and the Caribbean – due to its simple size – is becoming an ever more urgent challenge and a major economic, social, health and governance issue (Buvinic, Morrison, and Shifter 1999). Crime and violence adversely affect economic and social development, strengthen social exclusion and pover-

ty, undermine citizenship and security, and reduce the capacity of the state to govern effectively.

This review surveys the recent literature on crime and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean and provides a broad overview of the main ideas, principal research topics, and empirical findings, addressing the historical background of violence in Latin America (section 1), the different areas of violence research since the 1980s (section 2), and the specificities of youth violence (section 3). The concluding section (4) summarizes the main findings and suggests lines of further research and policy recommendations. An appendix provides important links to useful internet sites and data sources.

1. Historical Background

It would be easy to write the history of Latin America as a history of violence (Bodemer, Kurtenbach, and Meschkat 2001; Davis 2006; Fischer and Krennerich 2000; Kruijt and Torres-Rivas 1991; Lewis 2005; Visión Mundial 2003; Waldmann and Reinares 1999). Although this seems to be an inadequate generalization because periods of peace, civilizing processes, and democratization are neglected, it is easy to see that violence never has been absent in Latin American societies (Drake 2009; Halperin Donghi 1993; Safford and Palacios 2001; Sierra 2005; Touraine 1988; Waldmann 1994; Wickham-Crowley 1991). Although violence is historically endemic in the region, we will have to confine ourselves here to a brief outline of the history of violence there (for more detail, see Bernecker 1992ff.; Bethell 1984ff.; Rehrmann 2005; Tenenbaum 1996).

A history of violence in Latin America has not to start with the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors in the late-fifteenth century but with the pre-Colombian cultures and their violent orders and bloody rituals. The cultures of the Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs were great empires with violent orders. The function of violence was primarily mythical (e.g. human sacrifice, funerary cults). Violence was used in the conquest of foreign empires and to secure power. The less highly developed cultures of the Caribs, Arawaks, and Mapuche, too, were warlike peoples to a significant degree (König, Riekenberg, and Rinke 2005).

The discovery and conquest of South America by the Spanish and the Portuguese in the late-fifteenth century, along

with the gradual colonization of the subcontinent that followed, opened up a new chapter in the history of violence (Bitterli 1980; McAlister 1984; Reinhard 1985; Schmitt 1984). Although there were some regional variations, the swift decline of the last pre-Colombian cultures, the violent conquest of their individual empires by approximately 1550, the expulsion, extermination, and enslavement of the native inhabitants, and the creation of (colonial) governments based on forced labor characterized the course of almost the next three hundred years (Konnetzke 1965; Lockhart and Schwartz 1983). The significance and consequences of colonialism in Latin America remain controversial to this day, and there are ongoing debates about the symbolic and cultural implications of slavery and about whether the colonial era was crucial in setting the course for the future development of the continent.

The early independence of Latin America in the opening decades of the nineteenth century – with Haiti leading the field in 1804 (Ambroise and Rameau 1990; Fick 1990) – resulted in the conflictive founding of states and nations in all regions of the continent (Centeno 1997, 2002; López-Alves 2000; Thies 2005; Dunkerley 2002). But state- and nation-building remained incomplete, leading to ongoing weakness and limited state capacities to integrate fragmented societies. The crisis of the Latin America's state became as notorious as the deficits in national identity (Kurtz 2009; Miller 2006). The birth of these states was followed by violent alternations between centralists and federalists about the forms the new republics were to take, and the national borders of some countries shifted several times as the result of violent conflicts (Rinke 2010). Only gradually did governmental structures acquire stability, and only slowly were the young republics consolidated through the hegemony of local caudillos (Lynch 1992). The independence movements frequently resulted in the establishment of authoritarian governments and dictatorships (as in Central America and the Andean region) in which specific aspects of the colonial heritage were preserved. The consolidation of Argentina and Chile as nation-states did not come about until the mid-nineteenth century, when the interior was occupied and the “frontera” to the south was overcome by force (Esparza, Huttenbach, and Feierstein 2009; Rock 1987). In the

Caribbean, colonial dependencies remained largely intact. Only Brazil, which was governed by an emperor, succeeded in swiftly achieving stability (Smith 2002). Most of the debates about this phase in the continent's development center around the significance of the wars of independence for the constitutions and the self-image of the young nations. They also focus on the nature of the revolutions that led to independence and on their consequences for the region's continued socio-economic development, especially considering the vastly different developmental paths taken by South and North America (Fowler and Lambert 2006; Knöbl 2007).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, almost all the subcontinent's nations benefited from the liberal phase of world trade initiated under the leadership of Great Britain. This led to the formation of liberal oligarchies that were able to use the export economy (trade in natural resources, agricultural products, minerals) to consolidate their power and wealth and permanently stabilize their states. Only in the Southern Cone and later in Brazil were these developments accompanied by a limited degree of democratization. Authoritarian regimes or outright developmental dictatorships were dominant everywhere else, such as the Andean region and Central America. The Porfiriato in Mexico (1880–1910) was the textbook example of such a dictatorship of modernization, decreed and implemented from above. However, it culminated directly in the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1917 (Tobler 1984; Guerra 1985; Knight 1986), where more than one million people died.

The last of the wars between individual Latin American states over disputed territory were waged around the turn of the twentieth century. More important than these border disputes, however, was the Cuban war of independence. As a result of the meteoric rise of the United States to the status of a world power, this conflict grew into a Spanish-American war, in the aftermath of which Cuba attained formal independence in 1898 (Benjamin 1990; Pérez-Stable 1993). The rise of the United States and its ambitions for hegemony in its own “back yard” resulted not only in the irrevocable loss of influence of the former colonial powers of Spain and Portugal, but also to a realignment of the political and economic balance of power in

the region (the Monroe Doctrine), which led to a number of U.S. interventions in various countries on the sub-continent (Dent 1999; Niess 1984; Schoultz 1998).

The sociological and historical discussions about the liberal oligarchic phase of Latin American development centered mainly around the status of political violence in the modernizing dictatorships and, of course, around revolutionary violence of the kind that occurred during the Mexican Revolution. Violence as such, however, was not the main focus of interest; rather, violence was interpreted as a byproduct of political events.

The liberal oligarchic developmental phase ended, at the latest, with the world economic crisis of 1929. Efforts to achieve economic autarky during World War I, the subsequent collapse of the export model during the Great Depression, and the closure of important trade routes during World War II forced the states to reorient their economic development strategy towards import substitution industrialization (ISI). The state now came to view itself as the central motor of development whose duty was to provide flanking measures and economic policy support for the reorientation (Cardoso and Faletto 1976). In Mexico, what emerged from the turmoil of the revolution was a (semi-authoritarian) political regime that aimed at the inclusion and integration of all parts of the population within a corporatist state and its political party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Over the coming decades (until 1982), this regime ensured an unprecedented period of political stability, economic growth, and social equalization that became known as the “milagro mexicano” (Cockcroft 1983; Moreno-Brid and Ros 2009). In Brazil, Getulio Vargas and his successors pursued an ambitious industrialization and development project that, however, soon ran into difficulties after which the military staged a coup d'état in 1964. In contrast, developments in the Southern Cone were characterized by a far-reaching process of democratization and expansion of opportunities for social participation. In Argentina, the Peron regime (1943–55) triggered the necessary upheaval (Waldmann 1974). After Peron was ousted in 1955, a long period of political instability ensued in which civilian and military governments alternated in rapid succession (Rouquié 1986). Under the second Peronist regime, Peron's brief return to power in the early 1970s, the country moved towards con-

ditions resembling civil war (Lewis 2001; Marchak 2000). In contrast, Chile and Uruguay went through an exemplary process of democratization from the 1930s onwards and have been ruled by an unbroken succession of democratic governments since that date. The extension of political participation, the social integration of hitherto disadvantaged or excluded sectors of the population, and economic growth initially meant that these countries experienced very little social violence and even less political violence. It was not until the ISI-induced economic development process in Chile reached its limits during the 1960s and the course of political reform and social equalization began to stall while political participation increased, that a process of radicalization set in which brought the socialist Allende government to power in 1970, and a military dictatorship shortly afterwards in 1973 (Imbusch 1995). In Uruguay, the political exhaustion of the two alternating parties in the early 1970s led to the formation of an urban guerrilla force (Arocena 1987; Rey Tristan 2006) and then to a creeping transition into a military dictatorship.

Developments in Central America, the Andean region, and some Caribbean states took a very different course. The oligarchic regimes continued to exist in Central America (Bulmer-Thomas 1987; Torres-Rivas 1993), where they developed into tenacious dictatorships against which the earliest guerrilla and resistance movements were formed in the 1930s. As the economic growth benefited only a few family clans and there were no processes of social equalization, opposition movements were brutally suppressed and all forms of resistance persecuted (Bulmer-Thomas 1995). After the assassination of the popular politician Gaitán in 1948 (Braun 1986), Colombia lapsed into a bewilderingly complex civil war in which the state, parastatal violent actors, and guerrilla movements fought one another. After this phase, which became known as the “violencia”, the situation stabilized only briefly before new violent actors arose and ultimately swamped the country in an orgy of violence. Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador were ruled by a rapid succession of military and civilian governments from the 1930s onwards (Booth and Sorj 1983; Dunkerley 1984; Malloy and Gamarra 1988). These three countries were characterized by chronic socio-economic instability and a series of political revolutions (such as the Bolivian revolution led by the MNR in 1952; the Peruvian military coup

from the political left in 1968). Venezuela alone, after many years of dictatorship and a brief phase of civil war, achieved with the “Pacto de Punto Fijo” (1958) a liberal democracy in which two parties alternated in power until the 1980s.

The larger Caribbean islands were mostly ruled by brutal dictatorships from the 1930s onwards (Higman 2011). The Dominican Republic was under the absolute rule of the dictator Trujillo from 1930 to 1961. After his assassination, his successor, the democratically elected President Bosch, was overthrown in an American invasion (Krohn-Hansen 2008; Wiarda 1989). In Haiti, the Duvalier clan had a firm hold on the country from the 1930s. The first ruler was “Papa Doc”, followed until 1986 by his son “Baby Doc”. The regime was backed up by the notorious “Tontons Macoutes”, a special police/thug group that kept the population in check and brutally suppressed any sign of resistance to the regime (Abbott 1991; Ferguson 1987). Cuba came under strong American influence by the early 1950s, when the dictator Batista rose to power and supported the interests of the United States (Zeuske and Zeuske 1998) until he was ousted from office in 1958 by the successful revolution of Fidel Castro (Zeuske 2000).

The 1970s and 1980s were a time of upheaval in Latin America. The strategies of economic development based on import substitution were gradually exhausting themselves everywhere, while the debt crisis of 1982 forced drastic austerity measures and budget cuts. “Neo-liberal” politics and monetarist economic policies became more and more widespread. The political landscape was dominated by uprisings (in Central America) and military dictatorships (in the Southern Cone). Elsewhere, such as in the Andean region, chronic economic instability and susceptibility to political crises intensified.

Central America saw from the early 1970s the rise of new guerrilla movements that openly questioned the traditional systems of government and violently opposed the oligarchies (Kruijt 2008; Vilas 1995; Torres-Rivas 1981; Wickham-Crowley 1993). In Nicaragua, the fight against the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) grew into a fully-fledged national uprising and culminated in 1979 in a victory over the Somoza dictatorship, which had been in power since 1937. In El Salvador, the bitter struggle of the Frente Farabundo Martí

(FMLN) failed in the 1980s after the oligarchy was able to secure political and military backing from the United States. In Guatemala, too, the guerrilla groups that formed the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) ultimately remained unsuccessful. The failure of the uprisings subsequently led not to the pacification of these countries, but to a continuing escalation of violence perpetrated by a wide range of different protagonists. Costa Rica alone, thanks to a number of unique conditions in its history, remained an oasis of peace and nonviolence in the region.

The political landscape of the Southern Cone was dominated by brutal military dictatorships (Remmer 1989) whose character has been analyzed in the literature in terms of the “bureaucratic-authoritarian state” where the governmental bureaucracy was placed at the immediate service of violence under the rule of technocrats. These dictatorships pursued a long-term project for the transformation of society. In terms of the economy, this involved a neo-liberal restructuring (liberalization, deregulation, reduction of state influence, and limitation of state power to core functions) on the model of the “Chicago Boys”. In political terms, it sought to combat the subversion, communism, and terrorism that supposedly lurked in every corner and to foster the “true” values of the nation. In military terms, the regimes saw themselves embroiled in an internal war that they sought to win by means of a counter-insurgency concept imported from the United States (Gill 2004). They were willing to employ any means that seemed likely to help attain these ends, from systematic torture to state terrorism (Huggins 1991; Tobler and Waldmann 1991).

The chaos of the later Allende years in Chile was ended by the military coup by Augusto Pinochet in 1973 (Constable and Valenzuela 1991). Despite repeated crises, his military regime proved to be long-lived and brought about fundamental changes in the country. Pinochet and his “Chicago Boys” restructured the economy according to liberal economic principles (García 1989), seriously weakened the forces on the left of the political spectrum, and delegitimized socialist thought. Violence directed against the dictatorship was met with repression, torture, and murder (Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1986). Even the subsequent transition to democracy in 1990 took place under the aus-

pices of the dictatorship and left the country deeply divided (Moulian 1997). The new, post-dictatorial Chile is a fundamentally transformed country which bears no economic or political resemblance to the pre-dictatorship Chile of the Allende years (Angell and Pollack 1993). In Argentina, a military junta led by Jorge Videla put an end in 1976 to the second Peronist regime that had become mired in violence and conditions resembling civil war, with urban guerrillas, parastatal violence, Triple A (Alianza Anticomunista Argentina), and more (Auyero 2007; Robben 2007). This attempt, euphemistically named “proceso”, to transform the country cost the lives of over thirty thousand people and ended under General Galtieri with the military debacle of the Malvinas War (1982) and the total discrediting of the military. Unlike the case of Chile, what the dictatorship achieved here was a work of destruction large enough to generate political and economic instability and crises that would lead to severe polarization and social disintegration in the years that followed. In Uruguay, the transition to dictatorship came gradually in the years from 1973 to 1975, after urban guerrillas had caused increasing levels of violence and insecurity in the country (Kroch 1991). Although Uruguay is a small country, it was known until 1985 as South America’s “torture chamber”.

The military regime in Brazil (1964–85) occupies a special position in that it experienced more pronounced increases in violence and more frequent changes of leadership (Alves 1985; Skidmore 1988; Stepan 1988, 2009). The dictatorships of Castelo Branco (1964–67), Costa e Silva (1967–69), Souza e Mello (1969), Médici (1969–74), Geisel (1974–79), and Figueiredo (1979–85) were rooted in the state administrative system and established a new generation of regime-dependent technocrats and bureaucrats. Additionally, there was ideological continuity between the “tenentismo” of the 1930s and the military dictatorship, in that the military saw itself the elite and the keeper of the peace. Nevertheless, the coup in 1964 caused an increase in institutionalized violence (“violencia institucional”) in Brazil. State terror and the persecution of oppositionists increased rapidly, although they never reached the levels of the Southern Cone states. In the army, the traditional military virtues were blended with a belief in progress, with progressive concepts married to a messianic sense of mission. These ideals

seemed impossible to achieve without ensuring “internal security” and eliminating political resistance and potential communist conspiracies. The military declared communism, which was regarded as a particularly dangerous threat after the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959, the main enemy and blamed it for the “revolutionary, subversive war” against the country’s internal and external security.

The Andean region entered a phase of chronic crisis and political and economic instability in the mid-1970s. In Colombia, the FARC and the ELP stepped up their guerrilla operations against the government (Pécaut 2006a, 2006c; Braun 2003). The Cali and Medellín drug cartels were the first to exercise “disciplinary violence” in addition to the typical activities of organized crime syndicates. Later they also diversified into a kind of vigilante terrorism in the form of “social purges” against what were termed “desechables” – prostitutes, street children, thieves, homosexuals, homeless people, and urban and rural vagrants. Revenge and retaliation to avenge slights to the honor of the organization were also widespread. The formation of death squads and so-called “self-defense units” escalated the violence of the battle against drugs and terrorism. The governments of Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru changed in rapid succession in the 1980s. Administrative and economic policies were often erratic and contributed little towards improving the tense social situation in these countries (Kurtenbach, Minkner-Bünjer, and Steinhilf 2004). In Peru, the Maoist Shining Path guerrilla movement (Sendero Luminoso) spread violence and terror in the Andean highlands and elsewhere (Degregori 1990; Palmer 1992). It was not until the 1990s, after a significant escalation of the violence, that the authoritarian regime of Alberto Fujimori was able to crush this movement. In Venezuela, the first cracks and fault lines in the liberal democratic order were papered over with the “new” wealth from the oil trade (after the oil price hikes in the 1970s) and the country gave itself over to the illusion of the “administration of abundance”.

In response to pressure from civil society, the phase of democratization (O’Donnell, Whitehead, and Schmitter 1986) after the dictatorships frequently saw the formation of truth and reconciliation commissions to assess the violence of the past and systematically investigate human rights violations (Schmolze and Rauchfuss 2007). Despite

political restrictions and widespread amnesties, the reports of these commissions helped to reconstruct and document the worst of the violent crimes of the military dictatorships. The most famous include the Rettig Commission in Chile, the “Nunca Más” report in Argentina, the report by the Archdiocese of São Paulo in Brazil, the reports of the CVR in Peru and COVERDAD in Ecuador, and initial studies by the CNRR in Colombia. But resistance from the military and powerful interest groups connected to the military meant that criminal prosecutions were generally slow to begin (Kaleck 2010; Koonings and Kruijt 1999; Krumwiede and Waldmann 1998; Nunn 2004).

The 1970s and 1980s brought not only considerable political and socio-economic change in the countries of Latin America (Munck 2008), but also significant change in the forms of the prevalent violence (Brysk 2003; Esparza, Breen Smith, and Gunning 2011). For several decades, political violence was a common feature of life in Latin America. Civil wars raging throughout Central America, and brutal military dictatorships, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism in the Southern Cone and the Andean countries all contributed to the formation of a “culture of violence”. While the overwhelming majority of violence – whether committed from above by the state and parastatal entities or from below by guerrilla forces – has been political violence, this form of violence has now receded significantly in most of the countries on the continent and has been replaced by other forms, mainly social, but also criminal. This is not to say that these forms of violence were previously nonexistent, but rather that they were present at a lower level than the generalized, dominant violence and thus only rarely became the subject of explicit attention. Whereas the political violence of the past aimed to change the balance of power in the state and in society, we are today confronted with an explosion of social violence, an increase in anomic violence, and a steep rise in criminal violence. In addition to this shift in the prevalent forms of violence, three other developments are worthy of note. Firstly, everyday violence used to be a phenomenon that occurred primarily in rural areas not directly under state control – the large number of violent conflicts over land speaks for itself here. In contrast, and partly because of the rapid progress of urbanization, violence today is a phenomenon associated with urban ag-

glomerations. This has brought about a concomitant change in discourses about violence as well as an increase in perceived threats and individual feelings of insecurity. Secondly, the heightened awareness of violence goes hand in hand with an awareness of “new” forms of violence which, thanks to the prevalent “machismo” culture, were previously not perceived, or only insufficiently perceived, as violence at all, such as domestic violence and violence against women. Finally, violence has become primarily a phenomenon involving adolescents and young adults – another one considerably less pronounced in the past.

2. The State of Research

Our brief historical survey has surely made it abundantly clear that violence is a long-term and everyday problem in Latin America. Violence runs like a leitmotif through the history of the subcontinent, starting with the Conquista and continuing through the colonial period and slavery as a form of violence. The following struggle for independence and assertion of the state and the nation, military dictatorships, and guerrilla activities all involved violence. At the same time, the label “continent of violence” often attached to Latin America is rather meaningless, because it fails to differentiate. For one thing, one form of violence is not the same as another: violence differs in severity and (political) motivation. For another, it is important to distinguish between the different causes and backgrounds. Finally, different forms of violence have been prevalent in different phases of history, so that at any given time the incidence of a specific form of violence may be greater or less. And last but not least, each country (and in some cases each region of a country) in Latin America has experienced a very different pattern of violence, thus precluding sweeping generalizations. That said, there is a general consensus that the political, social, and economic costs of violence are high. Violence hence represents a grave challenge to all states and all societies, and one that needs to be addressed constructively in order to identify the causes and background factors and ultimately in order to find ways of combating it appropriately and successfully.

2.1. Some Data on Violence in the Americas

The major wave of violence that has plagued the Latin American continent since the 1980s has received much

national and international attention, not least because it follows on the heels of a phase of intense political or institutional violence and accompanied the “third wave of democratization” (Hagopian and Mainwaring 2005). What is more, the kind of violence occurring today can hardly be called political any more, but instead takes the form of social, anomic, or criminal violence. It is an expression of social and economic, but not of political conflict. In addition, the scale and extent of violence are such that they give cause for concern. The new forms of violence in the continent’s major cities like São Paulo, Medellín, or Caracas have in a short space of time claimed more victims than full-blown wars do elsewhere. According to WHO statistics, violence is now one of the leading causes of death among people aged 15–44, and some 140,000 murders are committed each year. The number of injured, maimed, and or-

phaned has also increased drastically over the past two decades. For all these reasons international organizations like the UN, the World Bank, and research establishments in the United States and Europe as well as the Latin American nations themselves are directing renewed attention to the various “new” forms of violence.

Although the figures for the various forms of violence are incomplete, a number of established facts demonstrate quite plainly the scale and extent. If we take as our starting point the figures gathered in the WHO’s *World Report on Violence and Health*, we already find a shocking level of violence illustrated most dramatically by the homicide rates and trends. Most of these deaths occur in cities and result from interpersonal violence, not wars or armed conflicts. They represent a tremendous level of everyday violence.

Table 1: Homicide rates among youths aged 10–29

Country	Year	Total number of deaths	Homicides per 100,000 population		
			Overall	Males	Females
Argentina	1996	628	5.2	8.7	1.6
Brazil	1995	20,386 (1)	32.5 (4)	59.6	5.2
Chile	1994	146	3.0	5.1	---
Colombia	1995	12,834 (2)	84.4 (1)	156.3	11.9
Costa Rica	1995	75	5.5	8.4	---
Cuba	1997	348	9.6	14.4	4.6
Ecuador	1996	757	15.9	29.2	2.3
El Salvador	1993	1,147 (5)	50.2 (2)	94.8	6.5
Jamaica	1991	2	---	---	---
Mexico	1997	5,991 (3)	15.3	27.8	2.8
Nicaragua	1996	139	7.3	12.5	---
Panama	1997	151	14.4	25.8	---
Paraguay	1994	191	10.4	18.7	---
Puerto Rico	1998	538	41.8 (3)	77.4	5.3
Uruguay	1990	36	3.6	4.5	---
Venezuela	1994	2,090 (4)	25.0 (5)	46.4	2.8
Germany	1999	156	0.8	1.0	0.6
France	1998	91	0.6	0.7	0.4
Canada	1997	143	1.7	2.5	0.9
United States	1998	8,226	11.0	17.9	3.7

Source: WHO (2002), 28–29. Ciphers in parentheses indicate the rank of the top five.

The international homicide rates in the late 1990s – the most recent years for which comprehensive data are available – compiled by the WHO differ considerably between one region of the world and another and are especially high in Latin America. The only region with higher figures is sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, there is considerable variation within Latin America. Of those countries for which data are available at all, Brazil has the highest absolute totals for young people – more than 20,000 deaths a year – followed at some distance by Colombia (almost 13,000), Mexico (almost 6,000), Venezuela (more than 2,000), and El Salvador (ca. 1,200). The lowest absolute rates are found in Uruguay, Costa Rica, and (at that time still) Jamaica.

If, on the other hand, we look not at the absolute figures but at the rates per 100,000 inhabitants, the picture changes slightly: Colombia now comes top, with 84 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by 50 per 100,000 in El Salvador, just under 42 in Puerto Rico, more than 32 in Brazil, and 25 in Venezuela. The lowest rates here are in the three Cono Sur countries and in Costa Rica. By comparison, rates in Western Europe and North America are much lower. Only the United States, with a youth homicide rate of 11 per 100,000, comes anywhere close to the lower end of the Latin American figures.

However, rates of violence differ not only between major regions or countries, but also considerably within countries. Thus, in Brazil, for instance, the homicide rate in Recife (almost 160 per 100,000) is way above that for São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (ca. 60) and Brasília and Salvador de Bahia (ca. 40). In Colombia, too, there are big discrepancies: Whereas in Medellín and Cali the homicide rate is as much as 100 per 100,000, in Bogotá it is only 30. The same goes for Honduras and Guatemala where some provinces are plagued by homicide rates well above the national average, while in others there are relatively few homicides (Cohen and Rubio 2007). Similarly uneven distribution patterns are to be found in all the countries of Latin America.

Several other aspects should also be borne in mind when interpreting the data: First of all, these figures represent a statistical excerpt of the total violence in Latin America. The focus on a single year cannot show any historical development; nor

does it reflect the dramatic increase in violence that has occurred more recently in most of these countries. As far as these are available, comparable figures show clearly that violence (again measured by homicide rates) rose steadily almost everywhere between the 1970s and the 1990s. This applies equally to those countries with high violence potential and to those with a low level of violence, albeit to very different degrees. Whereas violence in Colombia, Peru, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago rose five-fold during this period, it doubled in Brazil, and rose by half in countries like Venezuela and Ecuador. By contrast, the increase was comparatively moderate in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. In some countries (such as Mexico) the level remained more or less constant, while in others still (Costa Rica, Paraguay) it even fell slightly (Ayres 1998). In the first decade of the new millennium these mixed trends continued. Whereas violence in Mexico, Venezuela, and Jamaica underwent a clear increase, it decreased slightly in the countries of Central America and in Colombia, Brazil, and Peru, and more or less stagnated in the rest (Cohen and Rubio 2007; Heinemann and Verner 2006).

The above figures represent only one kind of violent crime, namely, murder. Since, however, violence particularly among young people does not only take the form of murder, we need to look at the data for other, non-fatal forms of violent conflict in order to obtain a proper picture of the phenomenon of violence. Studies carried out by the WHO (2002, 2004) show that for every killing committed, another twenty to forty non-fatal acts of violence requiring medical intervention are committed. To this we must add the undefined, unquantifiable acts of violence that are not officially recorded, either because they are not reported or because they do not require immediate medical intervention. Rubio (1998b) estimates that only 15–30 percent of violent crimes in Latin America are reported. Victimization surveys provide an alternative tool for realistic estimates of the extent of crime and violence in the absence of reliable statistical data. Underreporting of violence and crime is especially severe in poor areas, whereas in middle-class and rich neighborhoods with similar levels of violence levels of reporting are much higher.

Finally, the WHO data also show clear gender difference in levels and types of violence. As elsewhere in the world, vi-

olence is above all a phenomenon associated with young males. Everywhere murders are committed they involve young women (both as victims and as perpetrators) to a much lesser extent than men. We should also bear in mind that in Latin America there are strong forms of violence against women that are not reflected or recorded in the homicide rates (ALOP 2010; CLADEM 1993; CLADEM and UNIFEM 2005; Morrison and Biehl 1999; SVRI 2010; UNICEF 2000a, 2000b). One general rule of thumb is that the higher a country's homicide rate is, the more likely young men are to be the victims and the smaller the proportion of girls and young women affected. In the countries with the highest homicide rates the ratio is about 1:15. It is, however, difficult to obtain reliable information about male perpetrators of violence and the exact circumstances of their violent behavior because the majority of violent crimes are never solved and the rate of crime-solving actually correlates negatively with the scale of violence.

2.2. Forms and Differentiations of Violence

As we have seen, it is difficult to get precise information about the magnitude of violence in its various forms and to draw comparisons. The measurement of violence via homicide rates is problematic because it fails to capture non-fatal types of violence and crime. Furthermore, homicide rates give only a skewed picture of the crime situation because the majority of crime tends to be property crime. Using only homicide data as a proxy for violence will not yield an accurate picture. Another problem is that homicide data are not always very reliable and often include other, unintentional deaths. Methodologies for violence indicators vary across countries, thus making comparisons difficult.

Looking at crime rates and the official data of the security institutions involves other problems. The distinction between crime and violence is not always clear. There is much to be said for regarding criminal violence as a component of more general violence. A given act of violence may or may not be regarded as a crime depending on whether it is classified as such by the law. For a long time domestic violence, which continues to be widespread, was not regarded as criminal behavior in Latin America; it was considered to be violence but not seen as a crime. Everywhere people have become more sensitive to these forms of violence, and

legal definitions have changed over time. Sometimes crime and violence overlap in one or another way, and not every criminal act is necessarily violent. "Victimless" crimes like prostitution or corruption contain only indirectly elements of violence. As a result, it is not easy to fully account for violence by looking only at the official crime statistics.

Several authors have therefore tried to differentiate between the various forms of violence and establish robust classifications. The whole picture of violence can then be categorized according to distinct variables: perpetrator (young men, gangs, drug dealers, criminals, etc.), victim (women, children, young men, elderly or disabled persons, etc.), type (physical, psychological, or sexual), motive (political, economical, social, instrumental, emotional, racist, etc.), or the relations between perpetrator and victim (parent/child, peers, friends, acquaintances, strangers, etc.).

Another common way of differentiating between forms of violence is to categorize them as self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, or collective violence. Self-directed violence is violence in which the perpetrator is the victim (for example in the case of suicide). In Latin America there was a rate of six suicides per 100,000 population in 2001. But suicidal violence accounts only for a small part of all violence and compared to Asia numbers are particularly low (Rosenberg and Fenley 1991; Rosenberg 1991; Mathers, Lopez, and Murray 2006). Interpersonal violence is the most common form of violence in Latin America. It includes all violence inflicted by one individual or a group of individuals against another individual or group in such different forms as ordinary physical violence between acquaintances, between strangers, or between family members and intimates (including forms of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse and neglect, and abuse of the elderly), youth violence, or violence at the workplace (WHO 2002, 2004). Collective violence is committed by larger groups (organized political groups, militias, or terrorist organizations) or states (state-sponsored violence, para-state forces, state institutions like police and the military, war). Collective violence may have a political and/or social character depending on its concrete forms and intentions. Political violence was long the most prominent form of violence across the Latin America. But not

war: deaths related to classical war between countries are negligible during the twentieth century throughout the region (Mares 2001). Compared to nearly every other region of the world, war-related deaths are very low.

Whatever classification is used and however violence is categorized, the extent to which countries in Latin America are affected by crime and violence varies significantly. But crime and violence levels have been alarmingly on the rise since the 1970s. Not only has there been a marked increase in levels of crime and violence but also a change in their form. Since the 1990s the most visible manifestation of violence is no longer overt political conflict but crime and delinquency. Violence itself is a heterogeneous phenomenon with a number of different manifestations like homicides, robberies, kidnappings, muggings, assaults, domestic violence, sexual violence, violence against children and the elderly, etc. Various forms of violence are seriously underreported, as victimization surveys clearly demonstrate. Different socio-economic groups experience violence differently: Middle- and high-income neighborhoods are mostly affected by property crime, whereas homicides and physical assault are much more common in low-income neighborhoods. Therefore, the problem of violence is worst for those social groups that suffer from social disintegration and cultural exclusion. They are the main perpetrators as well as the main victims. Young men are particularly affected. Furthermore, processes of rapid urbanization and massive migration have made violence an urban phenomenon that is most severe and visible in urban settings. The great conurbations account for a large part of the violence. Of course, parts of the rural population are also affected. A high incidence of ongoing rural violence can be found in conflict and post-conflict countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, or Colombia.

2.3. Actual Violence Scenarios:

Persisting Forms, Changing Types, New Discourses

Although the delicate process of re-democratization in the 1980s and 1990s brought about a gradual elimination of political violence, the contradictions of democratic governance, a tradition of impunity, weak political institutions, and rising social inequalities have provoked a recent upsurge of urban violence, a phenomenon that PAHO de-

finied as the “social pandemic” of the late 1990s. The growth of violence, and in particular the growing involvement of young people in economic and social violence, either as victims or as perpetrators, has become a common reality, and a heavy human, social, ethical, and economic burden for the different societies.

Political violence has continued to play a more than negligible role only in those countries already affected by civil war or popular uprisings (Waldmann 1994, 2009). In Central America there was a real escalation after the end of the civil war in El Salvador. Although the government and the guerrillas concluded a peace agreement in the 1990s, political murders remained the order of the day. The situation was aggravated by the virulence of youth gangs. In Colombia the state order remained permanently threatened by the continuing guerrilla activities of the FARC and other violent groups, and violence between guerrilla groups and state units escalated in regular cycles. A similar escalation of violence took place in Peru, where the authoritarian Fujimori regime inflicted decisive defeats on the Sendero Luminoso in the 1990s, albeit itself using terrorist means. A third focal point of political violence was Mexico, where the Zapatista (EZLN) uprising in Chiapas in the mid-1990s, the roots of which lay in the strong concentration of land ownership in the south of Mexico and in the repeated “reforms” of the Ejido system introduced in the wake of the Mexican Revolution, was the source of considerable political unrest and is a conflict that continues to smoulder.

The last example illustrates very well how different forms of violence combine and overlap, as also confirmed by the studies of Cristóbal Kay (2000, 2001) who suggests that the high potential for rural violence is largely rooted in an unequal and exclusionary agrarian socioeconomic system, although the concrete manifestations of violence depend on a number of factors, including political circumstances. In countries like Colombia or Brazil rural violence is due to structural conflicts that characterized since long the national land tenure systems and brought about new forms of violence in land conflicts in recent years. We notice not only a steady and uncontrollable increase in rural crime (for example in Colombia), but also the development of a political landless worker movement, the Movimiento Rural

dos Trabalhadores sem Terra in Brazil, which is fighting for radical land reform and redistribution.

Although violence has long tended to be discussed in terms of homicide rates, domestic violence is in fact the most important and pervasive type of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, even if its visibility is low (Alméras et al. 2002; Brasileiro 1997; Ellsberg, Heise, and Shrader 1999; Heise, Pitanguy, and Germain 1994; IDB Technical Note 7; Morrison, Ellsberg, and Bott 2004; Montaña and Alméras 2007; Távara Orozco 2010). There are still several countries in Latin America where sexual violence or intimate partner violence is not considered a criminal act. Surveys indicate that between 10 and 50 percent of women have been beaten or physically mistreated by their current or former partner (UNICEF 2000b). In up to half of these cases, domestic violence goes hand in hand with sexual or psychological violence, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, forced sexual acts, unwanted sexual comments or advances, rape, psychological abuse, and controlling behavior. Domestic violence affects many more households than criminal victimization. Studies on domestic violence reveal that women in the bottom income quintiles are more likely to suffer from domestic violence than those in the top quintiles. The probability of becoming a victim of domestic violence rises sharply as income declines. Empirical evidence suggests that the main risk factor for domestic violence is lack of education. Although women can be violent towards men in relationships, and violence exists in same-sex partnerships, the largest burden of intimate partner violence is inflicted by men against their female partners. Another important aspect of domestic violence is violence against children (CISALVA 2005; CONAPINA and CODENI 2005; Concha-Eastman and Benguigui 2007; Mora 2008; Pinheiro 2006a, 2006b; Venanzi 2003). Child abuse and neglect includes all forms of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health and development. It is estimated that six million minors in the region suffer severe maltreatment and that eighty thousand die each year as a result of injuries caused by parents, relatives, or others. Recent studies (Heinemann and Verner 2006; Cohen and Rubio 2007) show that sexual abuse is a

frequent phenomenon in urban Latin America concerning up to two million children and adolescents in Colombia and up to one million in Mexico. Public health specialists are particularly concerned about violence against children because of its devastating future effects: Maltreatment of children has significant negative effects on human capital and maltreated or abused children are highly likely to become violent perpetrators themselves. They therefore consider the prevention of violence against children as an important form of primary violence prevention.

In contrast to domestic violence, youth violence is highly visible, whether in the form of gangs, in schools, or on the streets (Boehnke 2002; Benvenuti 2003; CEPAL 2000; Cunningham, McGinnis, and García Verdu 2008; Daiute and Fine 2003; Frías Armenta and Corral Verdugo 2004; Hein and Barrientos 2004; Moro 2006; Maddaleno, Concha-Eastman, and Marques 2007; McAlister 2000; Melo 2008; Moser and Bronkhorst 1999; Muncie 2004; PAHO 2000; Pinheiro 2007; Redondo 2001; Reis and Tejeda 2008; Serra Hoffman, Knox, and Cohen 2010; Sommers 2006; Tonry and Moore 1998; UNDP 2006; UNICEF 2001; USAID 2004; Watts 1998; Weaver and Maddaleno 1999). In Latin America and the Caribbean, both the perpetrators and victims of violence are mostly young and male. For 2000, the WHO estimated the homicide rate for Latin American youth (aged 10–29) at more than 36 per 100,000, more than double the African rate. In the Caribbean, an estimated 80 percent of violent crimes are committed by men, most of them under 35, with an increasing number under 14. In the major Latin American cities, the vast majority of homicide victims are men, 60 percent of them between the ages of 15 and 29 (WHO 2002). Youth violence often occurs in the context of gangs (BID 2006; Castillo 2004; Covey 2003; Encinas 1994; Jones and Rodgers 2009; Klein 1995, 2005; Kontos, Brotherton, and Barrios 2003; Monod 2002; Nájjar 2004; PAHO and WHO 1997; Pellicer Palacin 2007; Ranum 2007; Reguillo 2000; Rodgers 1999; Rubio 2007; Strocka 2006; WOLA 2006a, 2006b). Although some female gangs are known (Mendoza-Denton 2008; Sanchez and Rodríguez 2008), gangs are primarily a male phenomenon and members tend to come from economically deprived urban areas. They flourish in environments where the established social order is weak or has broken down

and social bonds are tenuous. Youth gangs are known all over Latin America, starting in the 1960s in major cities like Mexico, Guayaquil, Bogotá, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro; currently they are a major problem in Central America. For many young people the gang is a way of life (Barker 2005; Botello and Moya 2005; Briceño-León and Zubillaga 2001; Sanchez 2000; Zubillaga 2003). Gang violence includes murder and assaults as well as robberies, theft, kidnapping, and other forms. Although it is a form of social violence, it has aspects of criminal and anomic violence, depending on the nature of the gang. The explosion of youth violence in Latin America has given rise to all kinds of concerns in recent years. Therefore youth violence will be discussed separately below (section 3).

Drugs and violence constitute another major problem for at least some of the Latin American countries (UNODC 2007a, 2007b). With U.S. and European consumers maintaining their high demand for drugs produced in Latin America, the drug trade is a tremendously profitable business. Latin American countries produce an estimated nine hundred tonnes of cocaine annually with a market worth of some \$60 billion. The value of the drugs trade often rivals that of the legitimate economies of the nations through which it flows. The precise routes involved have changed over time, as have the destinations themselves. When the big Colombian cartels controlled the market most cocaine was transported in private aircraft stopping over in the Caribbean. Today, most of the traffic is maritime, hugging the coasts of Central America, as the dominant distributors are Mexican cartels. Large flows of cocaine pass through Central America and Mexico, thus explaining the high rates of violence associated with drug trafficking in these countries. Another important reason for the rising violence associated with drugs is the changing origins of heroin produced for the United States. Since the 1990s most heroin comes not from Asia but from Latin American countries, especially Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico which are the greatest producers. In contrast to the large flows of drugs there are remarkably low levels of local use. The drug traffic that has flourished in the last two decades and has spread to ever more countries – partly as a paradoxical result of the efforts for stricter control and interdiction – has contributed substantially to the recent crime wave. On the

one side, drug traffickers have boosted the availability of firearms in Latin America, making it easier for individuals to commit crimes and making these crimes more violent. On the other side, young people are socialized into crime and violence when they try to get access to the income opportunities of the drug trade under conditions of high un- and underdevelopment and social exclusion. Furthermore, in the case of guerilla activities in Colombia or Peru, there is a growing intersection between purely criminal and political violence. Guerilla activities are often financed through the drug trade, thus allowing rebel groups to survive although they have already lost the fight politically. Furthermore, the “war on drugs” conducted by some Latin American governments – and in some cases supported militarily by the United States – has led to a further escalation of violence and a rising death toll. Recent experiences in Colombia and current strategies to combat drug trafficking in northern Mexico clearly show the power of the cartels and the problems faced by governments seeking to regain control.

With the rapid rise of crime and violence, citizen security has become a major concern for Latin Americans (Andrade 2005; Arriagada and Godoy 1999; Carrión 2002; Carrión and Dammert 2009; Dammert 2004a, 2004b, 2007a, 2007b; Dammert and Paulsen 2005; Davis 2006; Diamint 2004; Escobar 2005; Pegoraro 2000; Pontón and Santillán 2008; Rico and Chinchilla 2002; Rivera 2008; Santillán, Pontón, and Pontón 2007; Sozzo 1999; Waldmann 2002; WOLA 1998). Latinobarómetro polls show delinquency among the top concerns of the population along with unemployment, poverty, and corruption (Latinobarómetro 2010). The same polls reveal low levels of interpersonal trust. During recent years people have felt ever more insecure and consider the security situation of their city or barrio as critical. In recent years, up to 40 percent in the different countries report having become a victim of violence. Consequently, fear of victimization is rising. Often the public does not regard the police and other state authorities as guarantors of security and order but, on the contrary, as an additional security risk (for example in Mexico, in some places in the Andes, and in Brazil) (Brinks 2007; Candina and Frühling 2001; Schmid 2007; Sozzo 2005, 2008; Tulchin and Ruthenberg 2008; Waldmann 1996). Corruption, insufficient and

above all badly trained staff, low pay, inadequate equipment, and little willingness to cooperate with local civil society actors in city neighborhoods are regarded as the worst problems. Trust in the police is also low because violent police raids and corrupt behavior are often the rule rather than the exception. For this reason police reform has been considered an urgent matter for many years now (Dammert and Bailey 2005; Frühling 2001; López-Portillo and Frühling 2008; Sain 2010; Uildriks 2009; Vanderschueren 2002). Many crimes are not even reported, and those who can afford them prefer to employ private security services to get a degree of personal protection. Many well-off people live in gated communities, while others from the middle class barricade themselves behind high walls or alarmed fences and live in houses with bars on the windows and doors, sophisticated alarm systems, or large guard-dogs. The downside of people's experience of being victims and their fear of crime is an increasingly punitive attitude: many advocate far more stringent policing measures, or sometimes even military action (Bailey and Dammert 2007), approve of "social purging" ("limpiezas sociales") by para-state units, call for heftier sentences, support the death penalty, or arm themselves in order to protect their property and their families. In the poorer areas of Latin America lynch justice has become a routine instrument for those who can count neither on police protection nor on punishment of perpetrators by an overburdened justice system (Rubio 1999). In a situation where people feel devoid of protection and at the mercy of criminals, lynching is seen as a legitimate form of taking the law into one's own hands in order to obtain justice for the victims (Huggins 1991; Rodríguez Guillén and Mora Heredia 2006; Snodgrass Godoy 2004, 2006).

Polls like Latinobarómetro also suggest that violence tolerance levels differ across societies and that perceptions of violence levels do not always match reality. Thus threat perceptions have risen steeply even in areas where rates of violence are not actually that high or where forms of social violence have had only a small role to play in the past (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay). In many cases perceptions of violence are influenced by media reporting or public discourse, which leads to considerable misconceptions about the real situation (for example in Central America).

Interestingly, many Latin Americans seem to feel less secure than they actually are.

2.4. Some Remarks about the Specificities of Violence in Different Countries

As we have seen, different Latin American countries are affected by crime and violence in very different ways and exhibit very different cycles of violence. Thus there is a need not only to record and describe violent phenomena in general, but also to perform separate evaluations for each country in order to focus on the specific peculiarities of violence in individual countries. Without such evaluations, it is impossible to show why certain countries and regions are more severely affected by violence than others or to suggest explanations for this phenomenon. Additionally, this approach yields a clearer picture of who is involved in violence research in the various regions as well as of the topics and aspects of violence that have been the focus of particular attention in recent years. While it can be noted that violence research in Latin America is by no means an underdeveloped field of research – in fact, violence in all its various facets is a major focus of scholarship in many Latin American countries – the field has suffered for many years from poor networking. Additionally, sociological violence research has very little public impact and limited influence on public policy.

2.4.1. Mexico

In Mexico, violence was for many years a marginal issue which, while present in the awareness of the relevant experts, did not become the subject of wider public discourse. According to Johns (1995), the main reasons for this were: Firstly, Mexico's self-image as a proud nation with a long history and a unique identity prevented the development of an adequate awareness of the various permutations of violence. Where violence was committed, it was viewed as a relic of history (the legacy of colonial rule or of Catholicism) which needed to be overcome, but not perceived or addressed as a Mexican problem as such. Secondly, the long hegemony of the PRI as the official party prevented violence becoming an issue of public significance. Due to its semi-authoritarian character and an ingenious system of patronage and dependency, the party was not only able to exercise relatively strong control over discourses about violence, but often also to avert impending

ing violence before it broke out. Thirdly, violence in Mexico was for many years a rural phenomenon. In the 1980s, the rates were highest in the south of the country, where the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca recorded just under 40 murders per 100,000 residents. In 1985 alone, 1,312 murders were committed in Oaxaca without the issue being addressed in public discourse. This may be connected with the fact that, even today, the region remains one of the country's poorest and most backward with a largely indigenous population and a long history of conflicts related to the distribution of land. When the focus of violence then shifted further north in the 1990s – partly owing to the drug trade – levels of violence in the south nevertheless remained high. Fourthly, Mexico continues to be dominated by a strong culture of “machismo” which, for instance, automatically assumes that the husband is the head of the household and systematically trivialises or ignores violence against women and children (Frias 2009; Gutman 1996). Fifthly and finally, the actual figures for violent crime after the Revolution and after the beginning of PRI rule showed a declining trend for several decades, so that reporting focused less on the violence that still occurred than on these decreases in frequency (Hernández Bringas 1989; Damiron 2008).

Even though significant levels of interpersonal violence – including violence against fringe groups – have persisted over the years in the major cities, the public perception of violence has changed dramatically in recent times. This is primarily the result of events that catapulted the issue to center-stage in the public debate. The Zapatist (EZLN) rebellion in Chiapas in the 1990s was the initial wake-up call for government and society alike, because the uprising revitalized political violence and drew on traditions dating back to the Mexican Revolution (Díaz-Polanco 1997; Estrada Saavedra 2008; Harvey 1998; Hernández Navarro 1995; Reyes Ramos 2001). The unsolved agrarian question in the south of the country, the relative backwardness and poverty of the region, and the effects of neo-liberal policies on rural areas triggered the violent uprising of the population under Comandante Marcos (Arnson and Benítez Manaut 2000; Bobrow-Strain 2007; Le Bot 1997). The return of violence as a subject of public discourse in Mexico was also due to the mass murders of women in Ciudad Juárez

on the Mexican-American border (Bowden 2010; Domínguez-Ruvalcaba and Corona 2010; Gutiérrez Castañeda 2004; Löffler 2007). The background to these murders of young maquiladora workers in the northern Mexican border town – described as femicide because of the macabre ways in which the women were raped, tortured, and killed – remains unsolved to this day, even though the murders triggered a wave of outrage (Jiménez Ornelas 2004; Monárrez Frago 2002, 2006; Monárrez Frago and Tabuenca 2007; Panther 2008; Rodríguez 2007; Staudt 2008). Finally, it was the unbridled violence connected with the drug trade in the north of the country that terrified the population of the states of Chihuahua and Sinaloa (Freeman 2006; Fuentes Romero 2007a, 2007b; Grayson 2009; Velasco 2007). In particular, war between rival cartels for control of routes and territory, together with concerted attempts by the Mexican government to contain the cartels, have caused the situation to escalate still further. Since 2006, Mexico has found itself confronted with a spiral of violence unknown since the days of the Mexican Revolution, which has seen the murder of almost 35,000 people in the northern states. Luis Astorga in particular (1995, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2007a, 2007b) has published many studies on the drug trade and its historical, political, and cultural dimensions; his works represent a major contribution to the understanding of this dramatic escalation of violence.

There are no comprehensive studies on violence in Mexico (González Casanova and Ramírez Braulio 2008). However, a rough idea of its extent can be gained from studies by the Mexican Ministry of Health (Secretaría de Salud 2006; Fundación Mexicana para la Salud 1998) and CIDAC (2009). INEGI (2003) also publishes data about violence. CIDAC categorizes violence into murders, executions, auto theft, and a residual category. The murder rate is a comparatively reliable indicator for the extent of violence, since almost all murders are officially registered. The category of executions, on the other hand, is of major significance both because it indicates the extent of violence between organized criminal gangs and because it registers powerfully in public awareness (increasing feelings of insecurity and vulnerability). Auto thefts provide a representative impression of the degree to which the public is endangered by armed

groups. The residual category simply lists all reported violent crimes that were committed in the various states. These studies show a murder rate far above the national average in the states of Oaxaca (16.4 per 100,000 residents), Chihuahua (15.0), México (14.3), Guerrero (13.4), Sinaloa (12.0), and Nayarit (11.5). The figures for executions (once again given per 100,000 residents) are highest by a wide margin in the northern states of Chihuahua (32.1), Durango (17.6), and Sinaloa (17.5), roughly reflecting the degree to which each of these states is affected by the drug cartels. Auto thefts are most frequent in the states of Baja California (18.9 per 1,000 vehicles), Chihuahua (17.0), and México (13.2). With regard to the remainder category, the country's capital, Mexico City (Distrito Federal) tops the list with 25,457 crimes per 100,000 residents, followed by the states of México, Tamaulipas, Baja California, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Guanajuato, and Jalisco, all of which have between 10,000 and 15,000 crimes per 100,000 residents. These figures may reflect the high degree of urbanization in these regions, with its concomitant population density and considerable tendencies to marginalization (Perea 2008c; Tépach Marcial 2005).

The situation of research on youth violence in Mexico is rather paradoxical. On the one hand, Mexico is the country with the highest standards for investigations on youth affairs throughout Latin America. On the other hand, there are virtually no such investigations. Only during the 1980s was there a wave of publications about "chavos banda" or youth gangs (Zermeño, Zicardi, and Castillo 1988; García-Robles 1987; Gomezjara et al. 1987; León 1984; Villafuerte, López, and Nava 1984). Nowadays, studies about youth violence and social conflict have nearly disappeared for two reasons: First and foremost, surveys of youth violence are part of the aforementioned collective awareness of violence in Mexico. Secondly, the praiseworthy attempt to decriminalize young people had the consequence of reducing research conflict and violence among young people. Nonetheless, the issue is addressed by Valenzuela (1988), Hristoulas (2006), Nateras (2007), Perea (2008a), and Valdéz (2009). A recent thesis on violence deals in more detail with the migratory flows of the "mareros" from Central America to California (Narváez 2007), including some remarks on Mexico.

Violence against women and children has become an ever more important research topic since the 1990s (INEGI 2003). Although some of the literature deals with the case of the women of Ciudad Juárez, there is also a growing literature on domestic violence in Mexico (Agoff et al. 2006; Knaul and Ramírez 2005; Torres Falcon 2002). Although countrywide data for this phenomenon are not available and the estimated number of unrecorded occurrences is extremely high (Jiménez 2005), studies for Mexico City indicate that violence is an everyday phenomenon in one out of three homes in the region of the capital city (CESOP 2005). In the overwhelming majority of these cases, the violence is committed by the (generally male) head of the household or husband, while women and children are usually the victims. Domestic violence has many facets, ranging from physical violence such as beating, spanking, and rape through symbolic violence like yelling, insults, and verbal humiliation to various forms of intimidation, neglect, and contempt. Justifications for this violence are derived from traditional social norms about the rights and duties of men and women, from assigned gender roles and gender hierarchies, and also to a significant degree from the country's pronounced "macho" culture (Frias 2009; Herrera Carnevale 2007). All three of these factors, however, have exhibited clear signs of erosion in recent years, so that women are increasingly likely to defend themselves and to report domestic violence to the authorities. Elena Azaola is one of several researchers who has spent years studying violence against women and children and the relationship of women to the police and the prison system (Azaola and Estes 2003; Azaola 1996, 2008).

In recent years, the increasing escalation of violence has brought the issue of public safety into sharper focus (Centro de Análisis de Políticas Públicas 2010). However, discussions about public safety in Mexico generally center around the inadequacies of the security forces and the weaknesses of the police and the justice system in prosecuting and punishing crimes. This problem has intensified considerably in recent years (CIDAC 2009). There is unanimous agreement that the country still lacks an integrated vision of crime-fighting that includes the prevention of violent crime. There is an urgent need to improve professionalism among the police forces, whose cor-

ruption and brutality itself represents a considerable security risk to the people, as well as in the legal system, to enable it to effectively uphold justice against crime and violence. Criminal trials are currently conducted with no regard for transparency; the courts operate at the discretion of the judges and are prone to corruption as well as exhibiting class and racial biases. A huge number of crimes goes entirely unpunished; according to some estimates, over 90 percent of criminal acts never come before the courts at all and thus incur no legal penalties. Due to the inconsistency and repeated interruption of efforts on the part of the security forces, no progress has been made to date in reforming and strengthening the relevant institutions (Jiménez 2006). In the face of the drug wars in the north of the country, current efforts to end the violence are openly geared towards the problematic strategy of militarizing the police (Aguar 2006; Bergman 2007). At the other extreme, we find a phenomenon which Elena Azaola and others describe as penal populism: systematically increasing penalties and raising sentences without a simultaneous increase in arrest rates (Arteaga Botello 2006a, 2006b). Of the roughly 225,000 prison inmates, only 7 percent are serving sentences for serious crimes, while almost half spend protracted periods in pre-trial detention during the course of an investigation. The remainder are in prison for petty crimes. In many cases, the stigma of having spent time in prison causes these people to become more deeply involved in a criminal environment.

2.4.2. Central America

The phenomenon of violence is a serious one in most countries of Central America (UNODC 2007a). But it is important to note that underdevelopment as such does not cause crime, because the poorest nations and individuals are not always the most crime-prone. In Central America, the safest countries are arguably the richest (Costa Rica) and the poorest (Nicaragua). But there are other aspects of underdevelopment, such as extreme social inequality and great rural poverty, that make it more likely for a country to experience violence and crime. Wealth disparities provide criminals with both a justification (addressing social injustice) and an opportunity (wealth to steal) for their activities, as well as generating “expressive violence”. What is more, feelings of resentment over inequality tend to be ex-

acerbated when class divisions fall along ethnic lines, as they often do.

All of the countries in the region have been affected by serious conflicts, including civil wars in Guatemala (1960–96), El Salvador (1980–92), and Nicaragua (1972–79, and then the Contra war until 1991) (Brockett 2005; Kruijt 2008; Lungo Uclés 1996; May 2001; Martí i Puig and Figueroa 2006; Torres-Rivas 1993; Vilas 1995; Wood 2003). Together with the authoritarian responses to insurgent uprisings, these conflicts have devastated economies and societies. The impact was profound, and the repercussions are still manifest today. Terror tactics were used in a number of cases, including public massacres of civilians, “disappearances”, death squads, torture, and mass rape, as the reports of the various truth and reconciliation commissions reveal. A large share of the population witnessed, experienced, or participated in these atrocities, and this has produced widespread trauma. Conflict introduced small arms (Godnick, Muggah, and Waszink 2002; PNUD 2003) and taught the practical and psychological skills required for their use. Conflict also ripped apart communities and undermined trust, thus degrading the mechanisms of informal crime prevention that provide the stoutest checks on anti-social behavior. In countries like El Salvador and Guatemala the incidence of violence was higher in the postwar period than during the civil wars (Bourgeois 2001; Little and Smith 2009; Moser and McIlwaine 2000; UNDP 1998).

The existence of gangs in Central America has been a major theme for researchers from the region and abroad (Aguilar Villamariona 2006b; Winton 2005; Barnes; Brevé 2007; Cruz 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2007; Demoscopia 2007; ERIC/IDESO/IDIES/IUDOP 2001–2006; Frank 2010; Men-cía 2006, 2007; Muñoz 2007; Peetz 2005; Ribando 2005; Rocha and Rodgers 2008; Rodgers 2000; Rubio 2005; Save-nije 2007a, 2007b; SIDA 2008; WOLA 2006a, 2006b). Gangs (called “pandillas” or “maras”) have existed in Central America for some time, and they are considered to be one of the most important consequences of the civil wars in the region. During the civil wars, large numbers of Central Americans sought refuge in the United States, mainly in the Hispanic slums of Southern California. These areas

suffered from serious gang problems during the 1970s and 1980s, and many of the immigrants found themselves targeted by local gangs. At this time, young Salvadoran men formed the Mara Salvatrucha, one of the most notorious and wide-ranging street gangs in the Western hemisphere. Its reach was extended back to El Salvador and throughout Central America when immigration laws were tightened in 1996 and members were repatriated after completing their jail sentences. They came back to marginalized urban areas with minimal access to basic services, high levels of youth unemployment compounded by insufficient access to educational opportunities, overwhelmed and ineffective justice systems, easy access to arms and an illicit economy, dysfunctional families, and high levels of intra-familial violence (Arana 2005a, 2005b; Alvarez, Zubieta, and Villareal Sotelo 2007). Furthermore, a demographic youth bulge created a cohort of youth without jobs, decent education, or realistic expectations of employment, thus fuelling gang membership. Besides Mara Salvatrucha there are several other gangs, the most famous being Mara 18 and Mara Marabunta (Bähr 2004; Concha-Eastman and Santacruz 2001; Savenije 2004; Vaquera and Bailey 2004; USAID 2006). While assessing the scale of the gangs is difficult, there are an estimated seventy thousand gang members in Central America today, with Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala being the worst affected.

The deportation issue is a key concern for many nations in Central America and in the Caribbean. Many researchers claim that criminals schooled in the United States contribute to crime and violence in their home countries when deported. The effect of U.S. gang culture on Central American youth gangs is estimated to be strong. On the other hand, estimates vary on the extent to which gang members are responsible for the rising crime levels in their respective countries. In Honduras, the *maras* have been blamed for the bulk of violent crime, but research indicates that less than 5 percent of all crime is committed by people under 18 years of age. In El Salvador, it is claimed that 60 percent of all intentional homicides are carried out by *maras*, but again, the evidence for this conclusion is unclear. In Guatemala, a recent police study revealed that only 14 percent of all intentional homicides can be attributed to gang activities. Equally important, the supposed con-

nection between *maras* and drug trafficking is by no means clear. Nevertheless, gang members in Central America are involved in many acts of violence and crime, such as extortion, often “taxing” various forms of public transportation, or demanding payment from businesses enjoying their “protection” (Rubio 2006; WOLA 2006a; UNODC 2007a).

Two further points distinguish the Central American situation from violence and crime in other regions. One is the aforementioned extent of exposure to drug flows and its violent and corruptive implications (UNODC 2007a), the other is the overall rate of violence since the end of the civil wars. Exceptions are Costa Rica (Bustamente 2004), and to a certain extent Nicaragua (Dirinpro, Nitlapan, and Ideso 2004; Gómez 2006; Oettler 2009; Rocha 2006), where gangs are nearly absent and levels of violence are much lower than in the neighboring countries (Carcach 2008; CIEN 2002; Cordero and Vargas 2007; Cruz, Trigueros, and González 2000a, 2000b; FUNDASAL 2005; Hume 2009; Leyva 2001; Pineda and Bolaños 2009; PNUD 2007; Zepeda López 2005). All other countries have recorded homicide rates of more than annual 100 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in recent years. Key to this issue is the availability of firearms. Reputable sources estimate that there are half a million legally registered firearms in Central America, and an estimated 800,000 unregistered firearms in civilian hands. Firearms are used to commit more than 70 percent of all homicides in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Especially in El Salvador and Guatemala, no adequate efforts have been made to understand or deal with this phenomenon. Furthermore, violent crime including armed robbery, banditry, assault, kidnapping, sexual assault, and carjacking is common, especially in San Salvador.

High murder rates are generally associated with high rates of violence against women and children. While most murder victims are male, several countries in the region show an unusually high share of female victims (for example Guatemala). Although data on domestic violence are limited, those that do exist clearly show that organized crime and anomic violence are not the only sources of violence in the region (Menjívar 2008; McClusky 2001; Zur 2001).

It comes as no surprise that security policies are a major topic of concern in Central America. Some studies show that security policies that hinge on suppressing gang activities may fail to address the core crime issues. Heavy-handed crackdowns on street gangs, such as the “mano dura” policies pursued in El Salvador, do not address the causes of violence in these societies and must be considered counter-productive (Aguilar 2007; Thale 2006). Violence by young people is real and in need of attention, but it is a symptom, rather than the cause, of the underlying forms of structural violence. But the “mano dura” is not the only answer to violence in the region. There are many proposals for containing and preventing violent behavior that sometimes even include civil society. One important difference between the countries of the Central American isthmus is the much more enlightened way to deal with youth violence in Nicaragua and Costa Rica that did not lead to such heavy escalations of violence than in El Salvador and Guatemala (CCPVJ 2009; Chinchilla 2004; Falkenburger 2007; Rivera 2005; Rocha 2008).

As a result of the widespread violence in Central America, public insecurity is another topic on the political agendas of these countries. On the one side, the phenomenon is addressed via repressive policies against perpetrators to uphold public order and secure at least a certain measure of civility (FESPAD and CEPES 2004; Jütersonke, Muggah, and Rodgers 2009). On the other side, there are studies about the ways violence is perceived by the people. These studies often deal with the sensation of violence produced in media discourses. But they lead only to a more or less correct picture of the amount of violence and the individual dangers associated with it. We have to conclude therefore that media reports or television programs structure the perception of violence in important ways (Huhn, Oettler, and Peetz 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Huhn 2008a, 2008b; Oettler 2007; Peetz 2008).

Needless to say, besides dealing with the different forms of violence and crime some literature on Central America also assesses the impact of violence on development (Cruz and Romano 1998; UNODC 2007a): crime erodes social and human capital, crime means bad prospects for economic development, and in the end crime undermines democracy.

2.4.3. Caribbean Countries

High levels of violence and crime are one of the most troubling and pressing problems of the Caribbean region. As a UNODC study reports (2007b), the Caribbean is highly vulnerable to crime for several reasons: It suffers from a geographical location between the producers and consumers of various drugs; as small islands, the Caribbean countries have long coastlines where it is difficult to enforce law; the police, courts, and prisons of the small criminal justice systems are easily overwhelmed; police have to deal with massive tourist inflows that exceed the local population; the region has one of the highest prisoner-to-population ratios in the world; and finally, a number of countries here have experienced periods of political instability, which may have an impact on violence and crime.

Despite this generalizing picture, the Caribbean is a highly diverse region, resulting from different and changing colonial powers that left their language, culture and politics in the area, very different levels of development (for example Barbados is highly developed, Haiti is extremely poor), and populations ranging from 4,000 in Montserrat to over 11 million in Cuba. Generalizations with regard to violence and crime should be avoided, not least because crime victim surveys are extremely problematic for different reasons. Murder figures are generally considered the most reliable indicator of violent crime in a country, but even here definitions of murder vary widely. There are great differences between countries, ranging from Cuba on the one side to Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago on the other (Avril 2001; Brea de Cabral and Cabral 2009, 2010; Crequi 1995; Francis and Harriott 2003; Harriott 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d; Lawton 2008; Le Franc et al. 2008; Moser and Holland 1997; Sives 1997; World Bank 1996).

Taking a closer look, the available data (UNODC 2007b) reveal that homicide rates are highest in Jamaica where homicide rates have exploded since 1982 to reach more than 50 per 100.000 in 2006. The murder rate in Guayana has been a subject of frequent alarm in the country, but there is no clear trend. During the last two decades murder rates ranged between 75 and 125 annually. The Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago show rapidly rising rates since the year 2000. In the Dominican Republic

the homicide rate almost doubled, in St. Lucia it more than doubled, and in Trinidad and Tobago it more than quadrupled. According to police statistics, the French départements in the Caribbean also show remarkably high murder rates, despite their relative affluence. Out of the one hundred French départements, Guiana ranks first in terms of homicide, Guadeloupe and Martinique rank third and fourth. So homicide rates in the Caribbean are quite high by world standards. And in most of these countries homicide rates seem to be rising quite rapidly.

Domestic violence against women and children is another major concern (Blank 2007; Cáceres Cruz et al. 2002; Danns 1989; Haaded 2003; Lazarus-Black 2007; Rawlins 2000). Violence against women affects a significant percentage of women and girls in the Caribbean. Although rape is greatly underreported everywhere in the world, according to the latest available CTS data three of the top ten recorded rape rates occur in the Caribbean, with the Bahamas followed by St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Jamaica. In the Dominican Republic, women between the age of 15 and 34 account for nearly two-thirds of all violent deaths of women, despite only representing 36 percent of the female population. At highest risk are young women who are domestic workers or have recently ended an intimate relationship. In two-thirds of cases the perpetrator is the victim's husband (boyfriend) or ex-husband, followed by mothers and fathers (ALEPH 2006; Cáceres and Estevez 2004). Police statistics offer only a very incomplete picture of violence against women, since the majority of the incidents are not reported to police. The lack of reliable victimization surveys makes it very difficult to get precise information on other forms of violence against women, but physical and psychological maltreatment are frequent throughout the Caribbean. Ideas and values of masculinity seem to belong to the root causes of violence against women in the Caribbean (Chevannes 2001; Harriott 2002; Reddock 2004; Román Tirado 2003; Sukhu 2006).

Property crime seems to be more frequent in the wealthier countries than in the poorer ones. Generally, data on property crime are far less reliable than other forms of violence because the rate of reporting varies greatly between jurisdictions and across time (Bowling 2010; Foglesong and Stone

2007; Harriott 2006a, 2006d, 2009). Wealthier countries may have much higher rates of property crime than poorer countries simply because there are stronger incentives for reporting victimization where many more people have insurance. The best-reported property crime is vehicle theft.

Potential risk factors for crime and violence encompass conditions on different levels. Only murder and robbery rates show no clear relation to possible explanatory variables (Francis and Harriott 2003; Harriott, Braithwaite, and Wortley 2004; Román 2006; Sookram et al. 2009). Household-level victimization data from Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic show a more pronounced profile of risk factors (UNODC 2007b): Poorer households in poor communities face a higher risk of violent crime, while property crime often strikes the wealthy. A large population of young men in a community is associated with higher levels of crime in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Crime is highly concentrated in urban areas and in most cases in areas with a high population density (Robinson, Levy, and Baker 2008; World Bank 1996). A wide variety of risk factors contribute to the prevalence of youth violence (Lewis and Carter 1995; World Bank 2003), including poverty, youth unemployment, large-scale migration to urban areas, drug trafficking, a weak education system, ineffective policing, the widespread availability of weapons, drug and alcohol abuse, and the presence of organized gangs (OAS 2007).

Organized violence is mainly related to drug trafficking (Clarke 2006a, 2006b; Figueira 2006; Harriott 2007a; Klein, Day, and Harriott 2004), which has decreased in recent years in this region with the shift of trafficking to the Central American corridor (UNODC 2007b). Drug flows aggravate crime and violence in a range of ways: First of all, they produce local drug use problems, thus resulting in secondary effects on domestic crime problems. Second, drug transactions often involve firearms, and firearms are traded for drugs (Epps 2008). Third, movement of drugs nearly inevitably leads to a certain corruption of local law enforcement officials. Fourth, the laundering of the revenues undermines legitimate economic activities. Other forms of organized crime affect the region as well. Among the most important are kidnapping, money laundering, and corruption.

With regard to crime containment, clear priority is given to the law-and-order approach to the detriment of other approaches (such as integrated citizen security approaches or public health approaches) (Harriott 2000, 2003, 2006b, 2006c, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e; Harriott, Braithwaite, and Wortley 2004; Government of Jamaica 2004). Although there is no ideal approach, and measures against violence always need to be case specific, approaches that foster violence prevention can be more effective and cheaper. Reducing repressive “mano dura” programs in favor of expanding prevention would represent an effective strategy. Investigators point to the urgent need for more services to be offered to reintegrate deportees, and for gun ownership to be more strictly controlled, and suggest that evidence-based programs from other regions can be helpful to address youth violence.

2.4.4. Colombia

Colombia’s long experience with violence is broadly reflected in literature to this day (Arocha et al. 1998; Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Bergquist and Sánchez 1992; Boaventura de Sousa and García Villegas 2004; Bolívar, González, and Vazquez 2006; CEDE and UNIANDES 1997; Echandía 2006; Fals Borda, Guzman, and Umaña 2005; González, Bolívar, and Vásquez 2003; Montenegro and Posada 2001; Palacios 2005; Palacios and Safford 2006; Pécaut 1987, 2001a, 2001b, 2001d, 2001e, 2006a, 2006c; Perea 2009a, 2009b; Pizarro 2004a, 2004b; Richani 2002; Rosales Ariza 2007; Rubio 1998a, 1999; Ruiz 2001; Simons 2004; Uribe 2004; Waldmann 2007a, 2007b; World Bank 1999). For nearly sixty years, violence has been a crucial aspect of the public sphere. Since 1946, Colombia has been confronted with permanent armed conflict, starting with the “Violencia” from 1946 to 1965 (Chacón Barrero 2004; Meertens and Sánchez 1983; Roldán 2002; Uribe 1990), a vicious undeclared civil war between liberal and conservative factions. Eric Hobsbawm (1994) considers “la Violencia” to be the strongest peasant mobilization of the twentieth century after the Mexican Revolution. In the end, the parties negotiated a peace agreement that divided political power and distributed posts in the administration equally between the parties.

By the time the Colombian army defeated the last nucleus of resistance in the final stage of the “Violencia” in the

mid-1960s, modern guerrilla groups were already rising (Braun 2003; Dudley 2006; Kurtenbach 1997; Pizarro 1996; Ramsey 2000; Villanueva Martínez 2007). Like many other Latin American nations, Colombia evolved as a highly segregated society, split between the traditionally rich families of Spanish descent and the vast majority of poor Colombians, many of whom are of mixed race. This group provided the natural constituency for left-wing insurgents who nowadays fall into two main groups, the bigger FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), and the ELN (National Liberation Army) (Calvo 1987; Ferro and Uribe 2003; García Durán, Grabe Loewenherz, and Patiño Hormaza 2008; Hickman 1983; Medina Gallego 2000; Pécaut 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Peñate 1998; Pizarro 1991). At the other end of the political spectrum are right-wing paramilitaries with roots in vigilante groups set up decades ago by landowners for protection against rebels (Davis and Pereira 2003; García-Peña 2005; Hristov 2009; Lair 2008; Medina 1990; Noreña Betancur 2007; Observatorio del Conflicto Armado 2007; Romero 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2003a, 2003b, 2007a, 2007b; Rozema 2007). The main group was the AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia). At the beginning of the 1980s, the paramilitary groups rose to become a third party in the conflict between the government and the left-wing guerrillas, opposing any attempt at negotiation, thus openly confronting the Colombian state and challenging its weakened legitimacy (Gutiérrez Sanin 2005; Sánchez and Peñaranda 2007).

Over the years, elements of all armed groups have been involved in drug trafficking (Holmes 2003; Holmes, Gutiérrez, and Curtin 2009; Pécaut 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001c). In a country where the presence of the state has always been weak, the result has been a grinding war on multiple front lines, with the civilian population caught in the crossfire and often deliberately targeted for “collaboration”. Human rights organizations blame paramilitaries for massacres, “disappearances”, and cases of torture and forced displacement. Rebel groups commit assassinations, kidnappings, and extortion. The state itself reacted brutally against both rebel groups and the population in the affected areas, and sought support from the anti-drug campaigns of the United States (Amnesty International 1994).

Colombia has long had one of the highest per capita rates of homicide and kidnapping in Latin America. Homicides are related to political violence, to drugs, and to ordinary crime (Concha-Eastman 2002; Núñez Gómez 2004). Most kidnappings are for ransom and foreigners have long been potential targets. The most prominent case of kidnapping in recent years was that of French-Colombian Ingrid Betancourt, who spent years in the hands of rebel groups. Assaults and robberies have occurred after thieves have exposed travelers to incapacitating chemicals that cause unconsciousness. Travelling in rural zones outside the major cities involves a high risk of violence, kidnapping, or being caught in road blocks set up by illegal armed groups (Sánchez and Nuñez 2001; Sánchez 2003).

So obviously, violence in Colombia is a very complex phenomenon. Over the years, a great deal of literature has been published, especially since the 1980s. Although many books and articles deal with the early phase of violence in Colombia (“la violencia”) (Guzmán, Umaña, and Fals Borda 1985), the bulk is about the second phase of violence, including some very up-to-date reports (González, Bolívar, and Vázquez 2006; Peñarranda 2007).

What about the role of young people in this context of severe violence? There are two main answers to this question. On the one side, we see the participation of young people recruited by illegal forces (guerilla groups, paramilitaries, drug cartels) or the Colombian army. Compulsory military service is a central issue with regard to the involvement of young people in the civil war. The Consejo de Estado recently enacted a decree forbidding the involvement of non-professional soldiers in combat. The recruitment of young men – often under 18 years of age – into the illegal armies is the other route to participation in the internal war. Although this practice is condemned by human rights organizations, there are no specific studies about the role of young people within the armed groups. On the other side, young people are involved in normal interpersonal violence and crime. While joining the different military, paramilitary or guerilla forces was often beyond their control (Sierra de Arango and Rojas Moncriff 2005), involvement in violent crime is a behavior proper to unequal social structures, relative deprivation and individual choices.

Many young people join urban gangs, which are present in all smaller and larger cities in Colombia. Recently, the issue of gangs experienced a brief boom but it is always overshadowed by interest in military actions undertaken by paramilitary forces or the state. Youth gangs are a sui generis phenomenon in Colombia; even in Medellín where armed actors had a major influence, youth gangs are responsible for most of the violence. In other cities, gangs are a central element of urban conflict. Despite the decisive role of young people in urban violence, there are few investigations about gang violence (Ardilla, Pombo, and Puerto 1995; Bedoya and Jaramillo 1991; Fernández Menéndez and Ronquillo 2007; García 1998; Pérez and Meija 1996; Perea 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2008b; Romero 2008a). Research has focused on the armed actors to the detriment of the study of other forms of violence.

Another prominent phenomenon of violence related specifically to young men is the “sicario”, which appeared in Colombia mainly between 1985 and 1995. *Sicarios* are professional hit men or hired contract killers, adept at assassination, kidnapping, bombing, and theft, who gradually became a class of their own in organized crime in Colombia. Unlike their ancient forerunners, *sicarios* have never had an ideological underpinning. Perhaps the only cause they were dedicated to was opposition to the extradition of Colombian criminals. They were used by drug cartels to combat police and authorities and to eliminate enemies. Later on, these assassins acted more as independent individuals or gangs than loyal followers of a leader, and there were plenty of *sicarios* willing to serve the rival cartels. Many of them died in combat against police forces. *Sicarios* belong to the long history of professional kidnappers (“secuestradores”) and murderers in Colombia (Salazar 1990; Salazar and Jaramillo 1992; Bedoya and Jaramillo 1991; Jaramillo, Ceballos, and Villa 1998).

It is without doubt the strategic importance of organized armed violent groups and their capacity to destabilize the country that legitimizes the preponderance of studies on the armed actors. Today, at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, finishing the internal war is a top priority in Colombia. The U.S.-backed government of Alvaro Uribe took a hard line on persecuting illegal violent

forces, and succeeded in improving security for the people, at least in the cities (Casas Dupuy 2005; Martin and Ceballos 2004; Mockus and Acero 2005), but at tremendous social and economic costs (Gaviria et al. n.d.; Gaviria and Velez 2001). Despite the importance of political conflict, the number of deaths directly connected to the war is reduced in comparison to the total amount of the annual homicides, with politically motivated homicides amounting to only 25 percent of total homicides in the country (Gómez 2003). But differences between regions and between urban and rural settings remain important. Medellín and Cali have long been the most violent cities in the world due to guerrilla activities and the drug trade. During the 1990s, these cities accounted for 60 percent of national homicides but only 40 percent of the national population. In the first decade of the new millennium urban homicide has decreased by roughly 40 percent, and violence is more present in rural areas where armed actors control many aspects of collective life, even applying their own justice systems.

2.4.5. Venezuela

Venezuela is among the most violent places in Latin America today. Since Hugo Chávez became president violence and crime have risen tremendously. Critics accuse him of failing to make crime a priority. Class tensions, which are a central part of life in other South American countries, were for a long time papered over using oil wealth in Venezuela, but now armed robberies, carjacking, and kidnappings are frequent. Nearly ten thousand homicides were reported in 2005 according to the latest government statistics. Experts argue that the real figure is much higher. Venezuela's murder rate ranked third in Latin America in a recent report from PAHO, behind Colombia and El Salvador. Crime rates are especially high in *barrios* and *ranchitos* (slum areas). Petty crime such as pick-pocketing is prevalent, particularly on public transport in Caracas.

The rapid increase in violence in the past two decades appears to be related to the collapse of the old political and social order and is also closely linked to certain violent events which represent turning points in the country's recent history (Briceño-León 2004, 2005, 2006; León 2010; Santos 1992). This is evident even on a cursory examination of the homicide rates published by LACSO (2004,

2007). The murder rate in Venezuela was still relatively low throughout the 1980s. At approximately 8 per 100,000 residents it was higher than in countries like Costa Rica and the Southern Cone states, but far below the rates of Colombia and Brazil. This period marks the final phase of the period of relative stability achieved through the "Pacto de Punto Fijo" in 1958 following the end of the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez. The murder rate doubled between 1989 and 1993. This rapid rise coincides with the 1989 "Caracazo", a popular uprising against price increases resulting from neo-liberal economic policies, and two attempted coups in the early 1990s. The murder rate then stagnated at this higher level until 1998. This period is characterized by relative political stability and an increase in the legitimacy of state institutions in the country. After 1999 there was another steep jump in the murder rate, which reached hitherto unknown levels. This new increase coincides with the rise to power of Hugo Chávez. Today, the national average is more than 50 murders per 100,000 residents (Avila and Briceño-León 2007; Briceño-León and Pérez 1999). The murder rate in Caracas, however, is triple that (Briceño-León and Pérez 2002; Alcaldía de Chacao; Sanjuán 1997).

In addition to murders, the LACSO statistics (2007) also list "ejecuciones extrajudiciales" and indeterminate causes of death, most of which resulted from the use of weapons. The "extra-judicial executions" comprise killings by organized crime groups and acts of police brutality. This category of violence, too, has seen a steep increase since 1999. While the number of cases of indeterminate cause of death tends to vary, it too has risen rapidly since 1998.

In addition to these three types of killings, a reasonably complete picture of the incidence of violence in Venezuela must also include the effects of ordinary violent crime (IESA 1997; Ugalde 1994). These include cases of organized crime, drug crime, auto theft, and at present also police brutality, which has at least partial support from the population (Avila, Briceño-León, and Camardiel 2006). Additionally, the frequency of kidnapping and armed extortion has increased sharply since 1998. However, the most frequent crimes in Venezuela are robbery without violence, robbery involving violence, and murder (in that order).

Young people between the ages of 15 and 29 are most likely to become murder victims, followed by the 30–44 demographic cohort. Murder is the primary cause of death in these age groups, ranking far ahead of traffic accidents and certain diseases. The LACSO victimization survey (LACSO 2007; CONAREPOL 2007) also discovered that only four out of ten victims of violence file a complaint. The main reasons for this are the failure of the police and the legal system to investigate such complaints; fear of reprisals from the police; and ignorance about where to go to report a crime. The number of crimes that go unpunished has been increasing for years, too. Of every one hundred cases of violent death reported, only seven are solved and only one perpetrator receives a sentence. Anxiety has increased significantly in the country's major cities, and population surveys in recent years show that the fear of being mugged or becoming a victim of violence is significantly greater than the fear of unemployment.

However, the reasons for the steep increase in violence are relatively obscure, as the temporal coincidence of particular events with an increase in homicide rates cannot alone constitute a causal explanation (Briceño-León 1997; Ávila et al. 1997). At the structural level, however, it is argued that the transition from an affluent society to a crisis-ridden one has not only greatly accelerated social change, but has also caused society to become poorer, more unstable, and more violent. It must also be noted that the neo-liberal economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s vastly exacerbated the social problems and caused a sharp increase in social inequality (León 2010). The long years in which mechanisms of social inclusion functioned relatively well have given way to overt processes of disintegration. Additionally, the repressive and violent responses of the state to the “Caracazo” and the attempted coups are seen as ruptures in the political compact and the symbolic order of democracy which not only brought about an institutional crisis, but also promoted crime and violence. Finally, the ambivalent attitude of the Chávez government towards curbing violence has been blamed for the increase in violent crime (Ferrándiz 2009). On the one hand, there is a certain amount of tolerance – up to and including permissiveness – for certain crimes (“es comprensible que la gente robe si tiene necesidad”). On the other hand, the govern-

ment prosecutes several thousand “pre-delinquentes” every year despite the fact that the Venezuelan criminal law does not even know that category. Finally, it has been speculated that the government may be promoting violence by openly criticizing certain police measures (anti-violence campaigns and campaigns against weapons) and by pointing out the usefulness of violence in certain situations (Briceño-León and Pérez Perdomo 1999; Briceño-León 2005).

There are also a number of factors that facilitate or favor the use of violence, such as the increasingly easy availability of weapons (pistols, revolvers, and automatic firearms), excessive use of alcohol and drugs, and mental deficits and inadequate social competence in certain individuals. These latter factors are also repeatedly cited as causes of domestic violence, especially violence against women, which is a not inconsiderable factor in Venezuela (PNUD and AVESA 1999).

Until now, youth violence is not a specific topic in Venezuela although the majority of perpetrators are adolescents and young men, the same demographic cohort that is identified by victimization surveys as the primary target group (LACSO 1996, 2007; Ávila et al. 1998). Another subject of debate is the situation of adolescents and street children, who are at least partially dependent on criminal activities for survival (Albano 2002; Márquez 2002).

2.4.6. Andean Region

For a long time, violence in the Andean region was associated with political violence (Basombrío 2006; Kurtenbach, Minkner, and Steinauf 2004; Malloy and Gamarra 1988; Thoumi 2003; Urbano 1991). The main reason for this was the chronic political instability in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, where democracy and mechanisms of popular representation have always been poorly developed (Burt 2004; Carrión 2007; Flores Galindo 1999; Mainwaring, Bejerano, and Pizarro 2006). Additionally, indigenous peoples still accounted for the majority population in these countries, and had been denied political and social rights for many decades. Even today, ethnic tensions are often superimposed upon social conflicts (Muñoz, Paredes, and Thorp 2006; Roitman 2008; Thorp, Caumartin, and Gray Molina 2006). These authoritarian regimes have never hesitated to

use violence against protest movements that began to threaten their rule (Lair and Sánchez 2004). These countries are also characterized by great socio-economic inequality, which has regularly given rise to political conflicts. In general, however, it must be said that involvement in different forms of violence has varied greatly from one country to another, and the same is true of the types of violence that have been addressed.

In Peru, political violence remains the central focus of interest. In particular, the violence committed by the Maoist Sendero Luminoso guerrilla movement led by Abimael Gúzman and the extremely repressive response by the Fujimori government have been the subject of numerous scientific studies (Burt 2007; Fumerton 2002; Klarén 2007; Manrique 2002; Montoya Rojas 1997). The reasons and background events that led to the formation of Sendero Luminoso in the 1980s in the highland region of Ayacucho have been investigated along with its merciless acts of violence and its goals and ideology, which at times so threatened the Peruvian government that its authority and legitimacy were openly called into question (Degregori 1990; Palmer 1992; Stern 1998; Tarazona-Sevillano 1990; Taylor 2006). Another factor that has been studied is the far-reaching transformation of the Peruvian state as a result of the efforts to combat the guerrillas: In the course of the 1990s, Peru not only became an authoritarian state with dictatorial powers, but also allowed its own security forces to resort to terror tactics in combating the uprising and thus committed numerous grave violations of human rights (Burt 2006, 2009; Degregori et al. 1996; Jiménez 2009; Ortega 2005; Tapia 1997). Neither Ecuador nor Bolivia has a comparable record of political violence. Ecuador is the only country in the region in which anti-government protests by indigenous groups and organizations regularly involve violence, either committed by the protesters or applied in order to suppress the protests.

Like the rest of Latin America, the Andean region has experienced a sharp increase in everyday violence (Acosta 1999; Andrade 1994; Goldstein 2004). The increase was largest in Peru, followed by Ecuador and Bolivia (INEI 1999; Instituto APOYO 1997). However, the data for this region is particularly poor and permits only very approximate con-

clusions about specific types of violence. Homicide rates in these countries are approximately average. Like elsewhere in Latin America, murder has become primarily an urban phenomenon in which young men account for the majority of perpetrators and victims alike. Murders and robberies are frequently committed by gangs (Argudo 1991; Cervino 2004), which have been present for many years in Guayaquil and Lima and spread more recently to Quito, where their activities destabilize the security situation and severely affect urban life. The overwhelming majority of gang members are young people from the lower levels of society. Explanations for the popularity of gang membership range from the lack of social prospects through the desire for recognition and identity in a social group to the simple instrumentality of criminal behavior. A few studies deal with the actual mechanics of socialization of adolescents in the gangs and with gangs as a specific subculture (Strocka 2008; Muñar, Verhoeven, and Bernales 2004).

Gangs and armed groups are not, however, the only perpetrators of violence. Other, less tightly organized groups and individuals are responsible for a wide variety of everyday violence in all Latin American countries. Studies of these groups distinguish between different kinds of violence and examine the social backgrounds of the perpetrators as well as the security measures implemented at various different levels (for example INEI 1999).

The rapid growth of interpersonal violence and the increase in all types of property crime has also brought the issue of public safety into sharper focus (Basombrío 2005; Borja Núñez 2004; Costa 2010a; Ojevedo Segovia 2006). In particular, researchers and authorities have grappled with the question of what to do about the high levels of urban insecurity and whether the police or the military should be ultimately responsible for maintaining safety and public order (Pontón and Santillán 2008; Costa 2007, 2010b; Costa et al. 2010). A special research unit on public safety established under Fernando Carrión at FLACSO in Quito has produced a number of publications on the security situation in Latin America. Its periodical, *URVIO*, began in 2006 to focus on security-related issues such as prisons, police reform, the judicial system, gangs, the role of the media, and possible prevention and intervention strategies. The research unit

also publishes the report “Ciudad Segura” at regular intervals. These various publications always extend their focus to include security issues of general, trans-regional relevance and to provide comparative studies.

In recent years, the topic of domestic violence and violence against women and children has grown significantly within the broader category of interpersonal violence (CLADEM 2004; Espinoza Matos 2000; Ramos Padilla 2006; Tórres Pinto and Mezza Rosso 2005; Tortosa 2003). Even if the difficulty of recording this type of violence and the high estimated number of unrecorded occurrences makes it impossible to do more than speculate about its true extent, it is undisputed that violence against women and children represents a grave social problem. Physical violence against women and children is a regular occurrence in over half the households in Peru and Bolivia. Additionally, ethnic stratification and its repercussions in these societies mean that even creating awareness of violence against women represents a particular challenge in its own right. For some time now, however, a few works have been available that provide an overview of the problem in the Andean region (CLADEM 2004). Some of them are published by government ministries which are addressing the problem by means of prevention and intervention programs (for example Ministerio de la Mujer y Desarrollo Social in Peru). Here, as everywhere, it is the typical forms of domestic violence – yelling, intimidation, threats, blows, beatings, confinement, and various forms of mistreatment and neglect – that are committed by male heads of households against women and children. One unequivocally positive development is that violence against women and children is no longer considered a private matter or treated as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as a problem of the region’s socio-economic and cultural order and, at the very least, a public health problem.

2.4.7. Brazil

Violence is a widespread phenomenon in Brazil, which today holds an uncomfortable place at the top of the ranking of the most violent countries in the world, with a national average of homicides close to 30 per 100,000 inhabitants. Every year approximately 50,000 people are murdered (World Bank 2006). But this picture is far from

complete because it is part of a broader scenario of violence and crime that has emerged over recent decades (Rose 2005; Misse 2006; Gawryszewski 2004; Sheper 1992; Sheriff 2008). Therefore, crime and violence became central themes to reflect about Brazil and Brazilian society and issues related to welfare, economy, public health, justice and governance in the country. With its dramatic numbers of homicides, especially in the largest cities, it is possible to say that crime, violence, and fear have become constitutive characteristics of the Brazilian urban centers, producing more fear, prejudice, and stigmas, and thus transforming everyday life and changing the social landscape of the cities.

During the past thirty years, after the successful transition from military dictatorship, Brazil witnessed a strengthening of the country’s democratic institutions and civil society. The proliferation of nongovernmental organizations, growing institutionalized mechanisms, and spaces for participation and popular demands are processes that, for all their faults and weaknesses, also characterize the consolidation of democracy in the country. However, frustrating any expectation that a democratic regime could have positive effects on “violence”, homicide rates and overall crime rates escalated dramatically during the same period (Caldeira and Holston 1999; Clark 2008; Gratius and John de Sousa 2007; Misse 2005; Peralva 2000; UFRJ and NECVU 2002). As a result, the increasing rates of crime appear as challenges to the democratic process, particularly when violence is understood as a matter of socioeconomic development.

Facing this reality, research on violence in Brazil has privileged different perspectives that can be subsumed beneath various research topics such as structural, interpersonal, domestic, institutional, communitarian, or urban violence. These categories express the multidimensionality of the phenomenon, but also the difficulties of circumscribing it because there are a many intersections between the different forms of violence.

Undoubtedly, any reflection about violence in Brazil has to start from its centrality and how the phenomenon is related to the historical inequalities that characterize Brazilian society (Arpini 2003; Caldeira 2001; Pandolfi 1999;

Richardson and Kirsten 2005; Rolnik 1999). Brazil is one of the countries with the greatest social inequality measured by Gini Index, and the gap between the wealthy and the poor is extreme. Brazil is second only to South Africa in the world ranking of income inequality. A huge proportion of the population lives in poverty, formerly in rural areas (Sant Ana and Rogerio 1998), today in urban settings. The combination of structural inequalities, disorganized urbanization processes, availability of firearms, and weak institutions, together with cultural aspects and a very particular democracy – capable of guaranteeing political but not social rights – are some of the elements key to understanding this scenario. The incidence of violent crime, including muggings, armed robberies, and sexual assault, is high, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and other large cities (Adorno, Cardia, and Poletto 2003a, 2003b; Borges 2006; Cardia 2005a, 2005b; Pinheiro 1997; CEDEC 1996; de Lima 2009; Feghali, Mendes, Lemgruber 2006; Pinheiro and Almeida 2003; Piquet Carneiro 2000). Carjacking is common in the major cities and criminals often use guns (Fernandez 2007; Peres 2004; Mesquita Neto 2005; Tourinho Peres 2004). Gang-related violence is an important factor throughout the State of São Paulo and in the larger cities mainly in the south of the country (Abramovay et al. 1999a, 1999b; Adorno 1999; Coelho Andrade 2007; Souza 1999; Zaluar 1994). Many young people live in juvenile subcultures that glorify the warrior ethos and the assertion of masculinity through the power expressed in threats based on the use of firearms. Crime levels within slum areas are very high, and victims are often seriously injured or even killed when resisting perpetrators. During the peak tourist season, large organized criminal gangs have reportedly robbed and assaulted beachgoers. Express kidnapping, where individuals are abducted and forced to withdraw money from ATM machines to secure their release, are common in the major cities like Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, Salvador de Bahia, and Recife. Taking unregistered taxis is a further way to get robbed and assaulted. Petty crime such as pickpocketing and bag snatching is widespread and thieves operate in outdoor markets, on public transport, and in hotels.

The first studies on the theme in Brazil appeared during the first half of the 1970s dealing with juvenile delinquents

in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (Misse 1973; CEBRAP 1973), and since the 1980s the topic of urban violence has been under serious discussion at the main universities in Brazil, to the point where violence today comprises a significant part of Brazilian sociological and anthropological production (Misse 2000; Barreira and Adorno 2010). One of the most controversial issues since the 1980s has been the question of the drug trade and the social organization of urban crime in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (Arias 2006a, 2006b; Dowdney 2003; Misse 2010b, 2010c; Zaluar 2001a, 2001b, 2004). Discussions have become polarized around the more or less organized nature of the retail drug market in shanty towns and slum areas in general, and the extra-legal extermination groups (*milícias*) maintained by businessmen to repress and kill armed robbers in their districts. The drug trade is a well known problem in the major cities of Brazil and since groups are well organized they pose a major threat to social order and control. The growing recruitment of poor young people into drug-related organizations has also led to research on different aspects of primary and secondary socialization of youth (Zaluar 2000a, 2000b, 2004). Recently, a new form of illegal territorial control has emerged: The *milícias* are hybrid paramilitary groups, made up of active or retired policemen and members of other emergency and security forces, such as firemen, prison officers, members of the armed forces, and private security guards. They became a parallel power controlling low-income communities in Rio de Janeiro. Although they present themselves as dedicated to combating drug trafficking, their repertoire of action is not restricted to providing safety and order for the people living in the communities, but includes the control of other illegal activities and services within the neighborhoods (charging residents for alternative transport, illegal sale of gas, etc.) (Zaluar 1996a, 1996b).

Researchers also identify significant changes in patterns of urban criminality since the mid-1970s. Controversy arose about how the breakdown of more civilized standards of behavior should be interpreted. One perspective describes the phenomenon by magnifying its criminal specificity, another one by putting the criminal aspects into the broader dimensions of violence, pointing to the enormous social inequality in Brazil. The first pole stresses individual

choices, claiming that there is no correlation between urban poverty and crime. This group of researchers calls for more studies on penal impunity which they consider to be the factor most responsible for the growing violence. Discrimination against the Afro-Brazilian population and poor sectors of society by the police and the court system are also mentioned (Coelho 1980, 1987; Paixão 1995; Adorno 1998). In contrast to this perspective, others concentrate on the strategies used by poor youth to make their living through participation in illegal markets, and their modes of operating under conditions of social subordination with its intense accumulation of social disadvantages (Misse and Motta 1979; Zaluar 1985; Misse 1997, 2006). Studies point to a number of factors involved in these phenomena, especially the exhaustion of conventional models of social control (Adorno 1998), the inefficiency of the inquisitorial model of police and court action in Brazil (Kant de Lima 1994), a crisis of social reciprocity (Velho 1996), a reversal of civilizational standards (Zaluar 1999), the deformation of individualism (Misse 2006, 2010a), and the emergence of violent socialization patterns (Machado da Silva 1999).

Institutional violence is another area of major concern in Brazil. Given the facts, it is no surprise that the work of the police and the violence perpetrated by police forces constitute a specific and pioneering field of study in Brazil (Zaluar 1999). There is an extensive literature that shows how repression perpetrated by the state has been influential throughout Brazilian history, and that underprivileged groups are the main victims of abuse of power (Ramos and Musumeci 2005). One of the strategies of the state against crime is the excessive use of force by the police (Ahnen 2007; Human Rights Watch 1997; Higgins, Flaritos-Faturis, and Zimbaro 2002). In many cities executions by police are part of everyday life (Cano 1997). It is estimated that police forces are responsible for 20 percent of criminal homicides in Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, a relevant proportion of police are involved in illegal schemes, drug trade, and arms trafficking. The great lethality of state responses to crime and the persistence of severe human rights violations, both targeting particular social groups, must be understood as a constitutive part of politics. These are subsidies to the reproduction of an extremely unequal society, responsible for democratic fragilities and the insuff-

icient consolidation of citizenship. Police reform and conflict training for officers are other topics in this field of research. Furthermore, the establishment of women's police stations (MacDowell Santos 2005) should make it easier for women to report violent aggression without danger of being mistreated by policemen.

If murder rates have grown significantly over the past three decades, it is necessary to point out this affects especially young people between 15 and 24 years old (Waiselfisz 1998). The rise in homicides in Brazil is immediately related to the rise in murders of adolescents. If victimization by violence has an age, as many studies show, it has also a color: in the biggest Brazilian urban centers the young victims are mostly poor and black, living either on the outskirts of the cities or in the slums (Goldstein 2003; Saldaña Pereira and Rambla 2007; Wacquant 2003).

In recent years the literature on violence has begun addressing many new topics. Although youth was already addressed in a broad range of studies, the question of youth violence has become a research theme on its own and an object of intense intervention by organized civil society, because there is nothing inevitable about youth violence (Adorno 2002a, 2002b; Abramovay et al. 1999a). Two other important themes for researchers have been violence against women and violence in schools. A wealth of studies deals with the different forms of violence against women in the context of domestic violence and of sexual crimes and assaults (Guimares 2010; Taquette 2007). Another of the major issues studied by violence researchers is violence against children, especially street children (Gonçalves 2003; Hecht 1998; Mickelson 2000; Miraglia 2008a, 2008b; Moran and de Moura Castro 1997; Ribeiro and Trench Ciampone 2001; Rizzini 1994). Miriam Abramovay (2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) and others (Alli 2002) have conducted extensive studies of violence in schools. Abramovay not only shows that schools can become violent institutions and that victimization represents part of the everyday experience of school students, but also points out the difficulty of ensuring conditions of socialization that delegitimize violence when the general environment is a violent one. Finally, given the enormous significance of violence in Brazil, other studies focus on the immense financial

costs (ISER 1998) and security questions and strategies (Adorno and Lamin 2006; Alvarez, Salla, and Souza 2004; Mesquita Neto 2008; Oliveira 2002).

2.4.8. The States of the Cono Sur

Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay are among the Latin American countries where violence rates are relatively low (WHO 2002). This is attributed partly to the significantly higher level of development of these countries and partly to the different political culture that is dominant here. Nevertheless, violence has been a recurring subject of discussion in recent decades even in these countries: First while coming to terms with the extreme political violence of the past (during the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s), subsequently in debates about rising homicide rates and the increase in everyday violence (public safety discourses), and finally in the context of violence by or against adolescents and children. While political violence has decreased sharply in these countries, there has been a considerable increase in social violence.

For many years, public discourse in these countries focused primarily on the sometimes protracted periods of military dictatorship in their history. This focus is reflected not only in three reports by the Truth And Reconciliation Commissions that investigated the violence and grievous human rights violations perpetrated by the military regimes (torture, disappearance, murder of dissenters, etc.), but also in a wealth of publications that deal with the backgrounds, origins, and peculiarities of the military regimes (Arocena 1987; Burbach 2004; Feitlowitz 1998; Guissani 1991; Goicovic 2005; Lewis 2001; Marchak 2000; Rey Tristán 2006; Robin 2005; Wright 2007). Many of these highlight the terror tactics practiced by the governments, the traumatic consequences of the military regimes for society, and their destructive effects on the community (Osiel 2002; Robben 2007; Straßner 2007). Given the after-effects of the military regimes, many authors view them as the triggers for processes of social disintegration that subsequently culminated in violence (Cid Ferreira and Valle Cabrera 2006; Dammert 2004b; Hojman 2002; Kaztman 1996). The economic policies of the military regimes not only played a substantial role in exacerbating social inequality in these countries, but also cast their social structures into turmoil, and touched

off far-reaching changes in them. This phenomenon, however, took different forms in each of the three countries (Rey Tristán 2007): While Chile was able to revert to its long tradition of political nonviolence after the collapse of the Pinochet dictatorship, and political violence has once again been completely delegitimized in Uruguay too, the situation in Argentina is very different. Not only does the country have a long history of political violence (Massot 2003; Romero 2005; Vaccarezza 2010; Kaleck 2010; Larraguy 2010), but military posturing and social protests caused several uprisings in the period following the dictatorship. Additionally, the long period during which the perpetrators went unpunished prompted repeated political protests in all three countries. The best-known and most far-reaching example of these protests are the “*madres de la Plaza de Mayo*” in Argentina.

Along with political violence, increasing levels of everyday violence represent another major issue in the Southern Cone states (Dammert and Oviedo 2004; Kessler 2004; Lederman 1999; Spinelli 2005; Sperberg and Happe 2000). Although homicide rates remain far below those of other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Colombia, and El Salvador, they have nevertheless doubled in the past two decades. In particular, interpersonal violence and above all assault, robbery, and burglaries have increased significantly in the larger cities and have caused considerable disquiet and insecurity among the population. For example, Lucía Dammert (2000a, 2000b) notes that while violent crime has increased throughout Argentina, the rise has been particularly steep in Buenos Aires. The majority of the crimes are property crimes, mostly committed by young men between the ages of 16 and 25. In the case of Chile, Dammert points out that murder and homicide are not the only significant factors for creating feelings of insecurity, but that robberies, assault, and burglaries are of equal weight, and also that the probability of becoming a victim of such crimes is high. Although reporting patterns for the different types of crimes vary considerably, there has been a marked increase in the reporting of all types since the end of the 1990s (Dammert 2005). The literature reveals similar trends for Uruguay even though this country recorded the lowest increase in crime in the past decades (Paternain and Sanseviero 2008; Observatorio Nacional sobre Violencia y Criminalidad

2004, 2006). Violence is more prevalent in the major urban agglomerations than in rural areas. The highest increases were recorded for theft and armed robbery.

The primary reasons for the increases in violence are believed to be socio-economic factors and changes in the social structures that underpin the communities (the erosion of social cohesion patterns). Social fragmentation can be understood as a cultural and social process of dissolution of solidarities that causes sudden changes in social identities and the perceptions of the people. Social fragmentation leads to a fracturing or serious weakening of social relations marked by a pronounced increase in conflicts. Many investigators point out that the successive regressive transformations of the social structures since the 1980s resulted in a weakening of affective primary relations of kinship, an erosion of confidence and trust between citizens, and an undermining of social ties (Míguez and d'Angelo 2006; Isla and Míguez 2003). Although only preliminary statistical analyses of such social relationships are currently available, various studies point out that while economic crises, social inequality, and unemployment are constitutive factors for explaining the increase in violence, poverty as such is less significant in this context.

Interestingly, it is the safest countries of Latin America that have been the source of the intensive discourse about public safety and order of recent years that has spread from here across the entire continent (Isla 2007; Dammert and Malone 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006; Dammert and Lunecke 2002; Dammert, Karmy, and Manzano 2004; Saín 2007; Sozzo 2008). This is due not only to a real increase in violent crimes, but also to the fact that approximately 70 percent of these crimes previously went unreported in Argentina and the average probability of a perpetrator being convicted was no higher than approximately 40 percent. Prosecuting violent crimes within the judicial system is an extremely time-consuming process, and the work of both the police and the judicial system is ineffectual (Gayol and Kessler 2002), as reflected in the fact that two-thirds of the prison population have not yet received a final sentence. Moreover, the Argentinian police itself is a considerable source of insecurity (Auyero 2007; CELS and Human Rights Watch 1998; Human Rights Watch 1991; Saín 2008).

Almost 90 percent of the population say that they do not feel safe and are afraid of being attacked. In the case of Chile, confidence in the police and the judicial system is considerably higher than in Argentina, because these institutions (especially the Carabineros) are fairly dependable (for ongoing instances of police brutality, see Álvarez and Fuentes 2005). Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of the population feels insufficiently protected and is afraid of violent attacks. Almost 10 percent of households own firearms for defense against possible attacks. Finally, numerous studies stress the high cost of violence for state and society (Gambi Olavarría and Contreras Villablanca 2005; Lira 2000) and call for more effective prevention strategies (Guajardo García 2008).

Another increasingly important issue in the Southern Cone states, especially in Chile and Argentina, is violence perpetrated by adolescents and children. The increasing involvement of adolescents is presented in the mass media as a veritable “wave of youth violence” (Míguez 2004, 2008a; Blanco et al. 1999; del Felice 2006, 2008). And while it is true that arrests of adolescents have skyrocketed in recent years, one should not forget that adolescents are not only perpetrators, but also and primarily victims of violence. Studies of this issue show that adolescents and children are exposed to a variety of risk factors and that there is a high degree of intra-familial violence (Araujo, Guzmán, and Mauro 2000; Ciuca Díaz 2008; Falú and Segovia 2007; Observatorio de Equidad de Género 2008; SERNAM 2009; Traverso 2001; UNICEF 2000a, 2000b). Two-thirds of all children living in families suffer some form of violence while growing up (such as ill-treatment, beatings, etc.); 20 percent of them are faced with psychological violence and 30 percent are exposed to severe physical violence. Intra-familial violence is also directed at women (Larraín 2008). A study by the Universidad de Chile (2001) has shown that up to 50 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 49 suffer psychological repression, while roughly one-third experience physical violence and 15 percent sexual violence. A similar situation can be observed in schools (Kornblit 2008; Míguez 2008b; Observatorio Argentino de Violencia en las Escuelas), where the most important strategy for asserting oneself in conflict situations is verbal or physical violence. In many schools crime is familiar. Over 50 percent

of school students report occurrences of theft and robbery in schools and state that they have taken drugs or alcohol on school premises at least once (INJ 2001).

The high overall level of violence in families and schools provides the perfect social breeding ground for violent behavior in adolescents. The probability of becoming violent later in life as a result of learning violence at an early age increases still more through the presence of youth-specific risk factors.

2.5. Causes and Determinants of Crime and Violence

The causes of violence and crime in Latin America and the Caribbean are diverse and complex. No single factor is able to adequately explain the high levels of violence. Therefore, the highly complex issue of possible causes can be analyzed from different perspectives, and the phenomenon should also be broken down in its component elements.

Generally speaking, we can easily identify a number of factors that are likely to have contributed to the increase in violent crime in Latin America since the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. Some intrinsic factors and characteristics of each country may have aggravated the problem for certain countries. However, we can identify factors that increase the overall risk of crime and violence in most countries of the region: civil wars and armed conflicts with growing availability of firearms, high levels of inequality, low rates of economic growth and high unemployment rates, urbanization and rapid growth of large cities, drug trafficking and organized crime, deficiencies of basic urban infrastructure and community organizations in the poorer neighborhoods, low levels of effectiveness of the police and other institutions of the criminal justice system, poor public education standards, etc. (Briceño-León 1997).

Although all these factors may be important to explain violence, they do not give us any indication of the relative importance of single factors and their explanatory power, their concrete importance for specific forms of violence, or the relation between root causes and additional factors. If we take a closer look at the concrete explanations for situations of violence, we find very different perspectives ranging from criminological or economic to a social or public health point of view.

Criminologists, for example, consider factors as varied as age, gender, race, heredity, environment, family background, crime reduction policies and strategies, and economic indicators to explain the correlates and causes of violent crime. Many of them suggest that violent crime is a consequence of social and economic inequalities leading to different life chances between individuals. These studies find strong correlations between violent acts and social class: people living in lower-class areas have higher official crime rates. In an individualist rational perspective violent crime is economically motivated behavior and in cases of “successful” violent acts benefits exceed costs. Relative poverty is then recognized as the most obvious incentive for violent crime (Cerqueira and Lobão 2004).

To consider violence as a social or political phenomenon, we have to switch to a perspective taking into account societal factors and the macro-level. Sociologists and anthropologists, while conceding that social and economic conditions vary both within and among countries, point to a range of internal and external factors, which can commonly be associated with high levels of violence and delinquency involving many youth in the region. The impressively rapid urbanization process experienced by several countries, together with persistent poverty, inequality, political violence, the inadequacy of social services, the consolidation of transnational crime organizations, the spread of drug use and drug trafficking, the disintegration of families and social networks, and the availability of weapons, are all considered and often cited as the main root causes of violence in the region. The highly complex and multifaceted problem of youth violence is often described by social researchers as a violent reaction to an unequal and unjust society, which seems to offer few opportunities for disadvantaged adolescents to break out of the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion (Berkman 2007; Briceño-León 1999; Concha-Eastman 2000; Hagan and Peterson 1995; Koonings and Kruijt 2007, 2009; Kruijt 2004; Levine and Rosich 1995; Moro 2006; Moser and Shrader 1998).

Economic perspectives on violence point to the violence-related costs for individual and community and look for economic determinants of violence and crime in Latin

America. Crime and violence have traditionally been analyzed in terms of expected benefits vs. expected punishment (or costs). Early works focused nearly exclusively on the incentives for potential criminals, concluding that the higher the return rates of criminal versus legal behaviors and the lower the probability of incarceration, the higher the individuals' propensity to commit a crime. Furthermore, empirical studies show that violence responds to changes in expected punishment, although the severity of sentences does not have a significant deterrent effect. More important seems to be the probability of being caught and tried (Buvinic, Morrison, and Orlando 2002). Other economic studies find that income inequality, not poverty or a low income as such, is a crucial determinant of crime, and that the greater the inequality, the higher the intentional homicide and robbery rates (Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza 1998, 2000, 2002). It is estimated that a one percent rise in a country's Gini coefficient is associated with a similar increase in its homicide rate (Newman 1999). GDP growth also has a positive impact on crime rates because employment possibilities rise. Intercontinental comparisons reveal that countries with a more unequal distribution of income tend to have higher crime rates than those with more egalitarian patterns of income distribution. Later studies differentiate that picture, taking into account other variables like education and schooling, and conclude that poverty and inequality combined with poor educational attainment or high levels of urban concentration are strong determinants of violence. Nowadays, the relationship between inequality and violence is not considered to be completely straightforward: Some countries have seen decreasing income inequality accompanied by an increase in violence, others a decrease in homicide rates accompanied by an increase in income inequality. The correlation is only strong for robbery, theft, etc. Today, inequality combined with feelings of social injustice is believed to generate violent conflict (Imbusch 2008b; Rubio 1999). There is a widespread consensus in the literature that the explanation for the abnormally high levels of violence is primarily the extent of inequality rather than the overall levels of development in Latin America.

Experts from WHO and PAHO formulated a more complex model from a public health perspective that regards viol-

ence is an outcome of a complex interaction among many factors. They emphasize that violent behavior is learned and that it is affected by biological as well as environmental factors. The concrete relationship is captured in an "ecological model" that classifies risk factors for violence at four levels: individual, relationship, community, and society. Risk factors for violence are conditions that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence. This model seeks to distinguish systematically between the various factors that affect individual, social, and collective violent behavior (WHO 2002; Moser and Shrader 1998).

Although some risk factors may be unique to particular types of violence, the various types generally share a number of risk factors. Concrete explanations of violent acts have to take into account the interaction of these factors on different levels. In the "ecological model" policies to reduce violence and crime should encompass sound macro-economic measures to generate quality employment and reduce income inequalities, as well as solid institutional reforms to improve the quality and accessibility of education.

One problem of these general explanatory models for high rates of violence in Latin America is that, although they identify important determinants of violence, they do not sufficiently assess the importance of individual variables for the present eruption of violence. For example, some of the more fundamental factors are perennial problems in the development of Latin American countries, while other factors cause problems only in some countries and not in others. Thus explanations for the sharp increase in violence in recent years must offer more specific arguments and must bring together different levels of analysis.

Some researchers from Latin America therefore do not look any longer at general single factors to explain violence but argue that the recent rise in violence registered in Latin America originates from a complex set of factors. They emphasize that explanations of violence have to differentiate between different levels of contributing factors. Only this allows a multi-factorial approach whereby we can grasp both the particular aspects of the social structure of Latin

Table 2: The ecological model of violence

Level	Risk factors
<i>Individual</i> (biological and personal history factors that influence how individuals behave)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Early developmental experience · Demographic characteristics (age, education, family, personal income) · Victim of child abuse and neglect · Psychological and personality disorders · Physical health and disabilities · Alcohol or substance abuse problems · History of violent behavior · Youth · Male · Gun ownership
<i>Relationship</i> (with family members, friends, intimate partners, peers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Marital conflicts around gender roles and resources · Association with friends who engage in violent or delinquent behavior · Poor parenting practices · Parental conflict involving the use of violence · Low socioeconomic status of household
<i>Community</i> (neighborhood, school, workplace)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · High residential mobility · High unemployment · High population density · Social isolation · Proximity to drug trade · Inadequate victim care services · Poverty · Weak policies and programs in workplaces, schools, residential care facilities
<i>Societal</i> (broad factors that reduce inhibitions against violence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Rapid social change · Economic inequality · Gender inequality · Policies that create and sustain or increase economic and social inequalities · Norms that give parents' rights over child welfare · Norms that entrench male dominance over women · Poverty · Weak economic safety nets · Poor rule of law · Poor criminal justice system · Social or cultural norms that support violence · Availability of means (weapons, firearms, etc.) · Conflict or post-conflict situations

Source: WHO (2002)

America and its cities and the dynamics of people's behavior. Roberto Briceño-León (2002, 2005, 2008) presents such a sociological explanatory framework, pointing out that the social process leading to violence in Latin America is highly complex, and simplifications must be avoided because the goal is not to reduce the phenomenon's multifaceted nature but to formulate scientific hypotheses to understand what is really going on when violence occurs. His proposal, developed at LACSO in Caracas, is a model not for universal explanations but for a concrete explanation of the current violence in Latin America. The sociological framework has three dimensions, representing three distinct levels of explanation: The structural level refers to social processes of a macro-sociological nature that persist over a longer period of time. At this level, Briceño-León refers to background factors of violence. The second level contains meso-social aspects, thus representing the area where the situation and culture have more immediate effects on behavior. At this level, he refers to factors that foment violence. The third level includes micro-social factors which he calls facilitators because they have a more individual nature and cannot be considered causes. At the macro-social level, Briceño-León identifies five types of factor: Increased urban inequality and increased education in combination with increased unemployment are two factors of situational nature. Two others are of a contingent nature, namely increased but unattainable aspirations, and changes in family structures. One factor is cultural, the decreasing capacity of the Catholic Church to exert social control. Factors that foment violence can be found at the meso-social level. They refer to specific situations that increase violence by fomenting a type of exacerbating behavior: Of the three factors at this level two are situational, namely urban segregation, producing divided cities, and the local drug market; one is of a cultural nature, namely the cult of masculinity. At the third level we find factors that are not the origin of violence but which facilitate violent behavior or make it more damaging and more lethal, because it enables and stimulates such a behavior. The availability and possession of firearms among the population, alcohol consumption, and the inability to express feelings verbally are the three factors on the individual level that contribute to the rise of violence. These factors not only contribute to the breakdown of

urban life but are also a serious threat to citizenship in Latin America (Weyland 2003).

Some researchers identify factors that contribute to the legitimization of violence (Apter 1997). They mention a country's level of impunity and corruption, racism, perceived lack of justice, and its links to social exclusion (Moser and van Bronkhorst 1999). The state's lack of capacity to effectively protect its citizens has a lot to do with the aforementioned policing problems and the problematic resort to military force to uphold public order, but also with the effectiveness of the judiciary and the deficits of the criminal justice system. The judicial systems of many Latin American countries are highly inefficient and arbitrary. Access to justice is especially problematic for the poor and for socially excluded minorities. The high levels of impunity are seen as a key reason for the high levels of violence in Latin America (Ayres 1998). Although black people and ethnic minorities won important rights during recent years making them equal citizens of their states, discrimination and racism occur in all these countries, leading to harsher punishment for minority groups while members of the socioeconomic elites are often treated with velvet gloves. The perceived lack of justice where perpetrators are well known in a barrio leads to self-justice that sometimes provokes spirals of violence.

2.6. The Social Costs and Consequences of Violence and Crime

Violence and crime are among the key obstacles to development in Latin America (Ayres 1998; Londoño, Gaviria, and Guerrero 2000). Violence constantly undermines development efforts at various levels and leads to the depreciation of all forms of capital, physical, human, and social. This is even more dramatic if we remember some important facts about violence: Violence disproportionately affects the poor and erodes their livelihoods and assets. Children and youth are heavily affected by violence, since childhood and adolescence are critical stages of personal development and for the accumulation of these assets. The fewer assets an individual has, the more likely they are to turn to alternative means of survival, including violence. Therefore, one way to measure the consequences of violence and crime is to look at the asset

vulnerability of violence (Moser and van Bronkhorst 1999; Heinemann and Verner 2006). That means that violence erodes

- labor when it limits access to jobs,
- human capital when it limits access to education and health facilities,
- social capital when it reduces trust and cooperation between community members and community-level social organizations,
- household relations when it limits the capacity to function effectively as a unit,
- productive assets when it destroys factories and housing.

The effect violence has had on the accumulation of human capital is staggering: Londoño (1998) estimates that the net accumulation of human capital in Latin America and the Caribbean has been cut in half due to the increase in crime and violence since 1980 (IDB Technical Note 4).

Another way of conceptualizing the effects of crime and violence on development, rather than focusing on individual or household assets, is to discern the direct and indirect impact of violence on society and economy and thus estimate these as costs (for example for policing, for health services, etc.). Although not all expenditures can be regarded as costs of violence, since there is always a need for some basic level of police, judicial, and health spending, even in the absence of violence, the assumption is that high incidences of violence will divert government resources from other, presumably more productive purposes. Thus, the magnitude of the problem can be expressed in monetary terms, differentiating between direct monetary costs, indirect (non-monetary) costs, and economic and social multiplier effects.

Table 3: A typology of socioeconomic costs of violence

<p><i>Direct monetary costs</i>, i.e. the value of goods and services used in treating or preventing violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · police costs · diverse costs of criminal justice systems · costs for perpetrator control or incarceration · medical costs · costs for psychological counseling · damage to physical infrastructure · costs for social services · private security contracts · life insurance costs 	<p><i>Indirect, non-monetary, costs</i>, i.e. pain and suffering associated with violence and crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · increased morbidity · increased mortality via homicide and suicide · abuse of alcohol and drugs · depressive disorders
<p><i>Economic multiplier effects</i>, i.e. macroeconomic, labor market, and intergenerational productivity effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · decreased labor market participation · reduced work productivity · lower earnings · increased absenteeism · intergenerational productivity impacts · decreased investments and savings · capital flight · decreased government revenues · decreased tourism · impact on policy-making 	<p><i>Social multiplier effects</i>, i.e. the impact on interpersonal relations and quality of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · intergenerational transmission of violence · erosion of human capital · erosion of social capital and the social fabric · reduced quality of life · erosion of state's credibility · reduced participation in democratic processes

Sources: Morrison, Buvinic, and Shifter (2003); WHO (2004).

Studies documenting the socioeconomic effects of (interpersonal) violence differentiate a broad range of categories of costs. Estimates of these costs vary widely and differences mainly result from the inclusion or exclusion of different categories, or the different time spans covered by the studies. Due to different methodologies, figures from the studies are not strictly comparable with one another and are only intended to provide an indication of magnitudes.

The direct economic costs of violence in Colombia represent 11.4 percent of GDP and in El Salvador 6.9 percent (Rubio 2000; Cruz, Romano, González and Sistí 2000). In recent years, these two countries have been the worst af-

ected by violence and crime. But even in cases where the magnitude of violence was smaller, direct costs are considerable: 6.9 percent for Venezuela (Navarro 1999), 4.9 percent for Mexico (Lozano et al. 2000), 3.3 percent for Brazil, and 2.9 for Peru (Couttolene, Cano, Carneiro and Phebo 2000; Eyzaguirre 2000). The costs increase considerably if we include the indirect costs: Then, the total costs of violence are estimated to represent some 24.9 percent of GDP in El Salvador, 24 percent in Colombia, 12.3 percent in Mexico, 11.8 percent in Venezuela, 10.5 percent in Brazil, and 5.1 percent in Peru (Briceño-León 2002). The total economic cost of violence for the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1993 was estimated at \$1 billion (Moser and van Bronkhorst 1999).

It is estimated that countries in Latin America devote between 0.3 and 5 percent of GDP to treat the health consequences of violence and spend between 2 and 9 percent of GDP to provide judicial and police services. In Colombia, public spending on security and criminal justice was estimated at 5 percent of GDP in 1996, private expenditures on security amounted for another 1.4 percent of GDP. In a separate study, the Colombian National Planning Department estimated the costs of urban violence and armed conflict at 18.5 percent of GDP between 1991 and 1996. In Venezuela direct costs of violence are estimated to be 9 percent of GDP in terms of health and material losses in 1997 (Buvinic and Morrison 2000; Buvinic, Morrison, and Shifter 1999; Buvinic, Morrison, and Orlando 2002; Gaviria, Guerrero and Londoño 2000).

In 2004, the WHO published an international study on the economic dimensions of interpersonal violence. The overview of costs included such different categories as child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, workplace violence, youth violence, guns, drugs, and gangs but supplied little data for the Latin American countries. Calculations of the costs of domestic violence against women reveal that the lost productive capacity of the women totals \$1.73 billion in Chile and \$32.7 million in Nicaragua. Direct medical costs plus lost productivity are equivalent to 2 percent of GDP in Chile and 1.6 percent of GDP in Nicaragua (WHO 2004).

In addition to the direct costs, crime and violence have significant multiplier effects on the economy and society by depressing savings, investments, earnings, productivity, labor market participation, tourism, and ultimately growth. A study on Colombia suggests that for every additional 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, the level of investment falls approximately 4 percent (Buvinic and Morrison 2000). That means if homicide rates had remained unchanged since the 1960s, total annual investment in Colombia would be 20 percent higher. Another study on Colombia by Rubio (1996) concludes that without the cumulative effects of lost growth as a result of crime and violence the country's per capita income would be about 32 percent higher. The reduction in average annual growth was estimated at 2 percent through the decade of the 1990s (Schneidman 1996; Heinemann and Verner 2006; Solimano 2004).

Although the social multiplier effects are less easily to quantify, the impact of violence on interpersonal relations and quality of life is not to be underestimated. Processes in this field include the intergenerational transmission of violence, erosion of social capital, reduced quality of life, and diminished participation in democracy. As the historical experience of most Latin American countries shows, (political) violence may have an important function in terms of catalyzing political and social change. When efficient institutional channels for peaceful democratic participation are nonexistent, violence may be a necessary means of initiating political and social change. On the other side, violence has been used again and again by political, economic, and military elites to stop social change and suppress the people. Unlike political violence, interpersonal violence does not have such simple effects on social change and democracy. A high incidence of violence, however, challenges the state's monopoly of force and its responsibility to protect its citizens. In Latin America, the promise of reduced state violence has not always materialized and often democratization has been accompanied by a continuation or even an increase in the use of force by the police or the military. Therefore, political regimes in the region have been described as "uncivil democracies" characterized by a weak democratic culture. After authoritarian rule, the political right to vote has been achieved

everywhere, but demands for stronger social participation and a democratic culture of conflict have been blocked by elites. Social cohesion generally weakened during the last decades and crime and violence have had devastating effects on social capital, thus fuelling the ongoing erosion of interpersonal trust and the norms of reciprocity (ECLAC 2007; Lederman, Menéndez, and Loayza 2002). A World Bank study on Jamaica concludes that one of the clearest impacts of violence in communities is social fragmentation. Crime and violence have adverse effects on the ability of community members to associate with one another. In many areas, recreation centers, dance halls, youth clubs, and sports facilities no longer function because of crime and violence. Crime and violence make it increasingly difficult for any sort of community organizations not based on fear and coercion to function (World Bank 1996). Recent studies on urban security not only reveal that generalized feelings of fear are widespread among Latin American citizens but argue that the political impact of social violence is very strong within a regional context characterized by a weak democratic culture (Frühling and Tulchin 2003; Heinemann and Verner 2006).

2.7. Strategies against Violence

As the causes of the various forms of violence in Latin America are complex, strategies for combating violence too must be nuanced and varied. It is self-evident that appropriate strategies must be directed at the causes and/or attendant circumstances of violence rather than attempting to provide quick fixes for superficial phenomena. Some causes, moreover, are considerably easier to combat than others. Political violence, for example, cannot be successfully countered in the short term but must be addressed on a medium- to long-term basis through comprehensive democratization processes, by entrenching the rule of law and human rights, and by enabling social participation. Similarly, the extreme social differences between individual groups, strata, and classes and the social injustice which is repeatedly cited as the most important underlying factor for the high levels of violence cannot be remedied in the short or medium term. However, countries in Latin America find themselves faced with the need to deal with the unbridled violence in some way and, at the very least, to contain it.

Different societies in Latin America have pursued very different intervention strategies. At times they have employed preventative measures, at other times interventions were staged to achieve greater social control, or repressive strategies were employed to contain outbreaks of uncontrolled violence. Even though there is widespread agreement about the need for preventive measures to deal with violence, and even though integrative programs are generally given preference (Arias and Dammert 2007; Basombrío 2010; CDC 2001; Rodríguez 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Valle 2006; Vanderschueren 2004a, 2004b, 2008), the reality is that preventive measures in the true sense have generally been implemented only in post-conflict situations and that strategies of social control have been employed with greater frequency. In contrast, strategies of repression by the police and the military have invariably been used when the task was to combat violence or crime directly and to arrest criminals or perpetrators of violence. Because of frequent deficits in the professionalism of the security forces, pure strategies of repression have proved to be either inadequate or highly excessive (Arriagada and Godoy 2000; Carranza 2003, 2004; Greene and Pranis 2007) and have frequently involved a high risk of escalation.

It is important to note that the bulk of the literature on intervention strategies for violence has been developed in high-income countries or by scholars working in international organizations. Despite this, the evidence base for violence prevention is expanding rapidly (Banco Mundial 2003; Chinchilla and Rico 1997; Dahlberg and Butchart 2005; Moser and McIlwaine 2006; Moser and Shrader 1999; UNICEF 2001, 2003; World Bank 2010b). Gaps remain in relation to effective strategies for reducing interpersonal violence (Willman and Makisaka 2010). The greatest strides have come in the areas of youth violence, domestic violence, and child abuse. The many commonalities among the various forms of violence in relation to their epidemiology and etiology suggest that there are common pathways to prevention. International organizations like WHO and PAHO have developed prevention strategies to identify the most important factors that might be incorporated into effective violence intervention plans. They are based on two key dimensions: the stages of human development and the ecological model mentioned earlier.

Violence has a lot to do with human development because it is generally considered to be a kind of learned behavior. Such learning takes place at different developmental stages so intervening at early stages may reduce the likelihood that violence is expressed later on. The ecological model is an important dimension of the typology, because violence is the product of multiple and overlapping levels of influence on behavior. The model assumes that violent behavior is influenced by social contexts and the individual attributes brought to these contexts. Therefore, intervention strategies may attempt to influence aspects of risk factors at any or all of the model's four levels (individual, relationship, community, society). Furthermore, intervention strategies have to reflect different development stages and thus promote a differentiated program of interventions.

But a simple or mechanistic understanding of the approaches is insufficient. Preventive interventions are typically classified in terms of three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary interventions focus on preventing violence before it occurs. They are targeted towards reducing risk factors and increasing protection factors among broader population groups. Primary prevention strategies include such different aspects as influencing the cultural context and cultural traditions that justify violent practices, or restricting access to lethal means, such as firearms, and limiting the time and space where firearms can be carried, or running mentoring programs to improve parenting, or reducing income inequality to close the gap between extreme poverty and extreme wealth. Although emphasis on primary prevention is essential for reducing the burden associated with violence, secondary prevention programs are necessary for addressing the immediate consequences of violent actions and behaviors, while tertiary programs focus on long-term care. Secondary prevention focuses on groups that have a high risk of exhibiting or developing violent behavior (such as economically and socially disadvantaged youth). Tertiary prevention is geared towards individuals that have exhibited or been victims of violent behavior in order to avoid repeat offenses or prevent re-victimization.

Because of its multiple causes and consequences, addressing violence requires implementing measures in several different sectors of society. It is evident that no single for-

mula can be applied to all situations of violence but there are specific violence prevention actions for:

- the education sector, for example teaching conflict resolution skills, creating non-sexist school curricula, carrying out cognitive interventions, improving the school climate, reducing drop out rates, and improving opportunities to enter labor markets, etc;
- health, for example providing access to reproductive health care, improving detection of victims of violence, conducting home visits to low income mothers, creating alcohol and drug abuse programs, etc.;
- justice, for example creating alternative dispute resolution centers, incorporating violence prevention activities into judicial reform projects, measures to control the availability of guns, reducing levels of impunity, providing training on domestic violence for judicial personnel, etc.;
- the police, for example implementing community policing, providing police training, increasing cooperation with agencies of civil society, solving and prosecuting more cases in order to reduce impunity, etc.;
- the social service sector, for example conducting conflict resolution workshops for couples, providing social skills training, organizing mentoring programs for high risk teens, etc.;
- the media, for example mounting information campaigns to change norms regarding violence, reducing violence in TV programs, providing training for journalists on how to report on crime, etc.;
- housing and urban development; for example incorporating security issues in housing construction programs, building sports and recreation facilities, facilities for neighborhood organizations, etc.;
- civil society in general, for example generating private sector support for violence prevention initiatives, implementing programs for at-risk youth, involving the church and other community groups in efforts to change prevailing attitudes and socially accepting norms regarding violence, etc. (IDB Technical Note 5)

Studies show that implementing preventive interventions costs less than dealing with the outcomes of violence, in some cases by several orders of magnitude (Rosenberg 1991). Although most evaluations of prevention programs

measure costs and effects in high income countries, there is some positive evidence from Latin America too, for example the 1995–97 Civic Culture Program of Antanas Mockus, then the mayor of Bogotá (Mockus 1999). Preventive measures do not, however, invariably have so explicit a programmatic character; rather, individual measures for containing violence are often embedded in programs that serve a very different purpose. Thus it is impossible to measure the exact weight, scope, and success of explicit prevention strategies, though the relevant literature does not question their fundamental significance and desirability.

Control strategies as intervention measures range between the poles of preventive and repressive and may take the form of public surveillance, control of situative dangers and risk factors, or control over certain groups or segments of the population, all with the aim of achieving or improving security. Control strategies may be direct or indirect. Direct strategies are aimed at potentially violent situations or groups of perpetrators, while indirect strategies serve to control the environments of possible perpetrators (potentially violent settings, family backgrounds, certain urban social spaces). Another distinction that is commonly made is between formal and informal control. Formal control is exerted by state bodies, while informal control is brought to bear by society. The surveillance and control of urban spaces takes a variety of different forms in Latin America. The police may patrol the streets or be posted in strategic places such as important buildings and intersections. Private security firms and guards are ubiquitous in the larger cities as protection against thieves and attackers for stores and homes. Many suburbs are monitored by vigilante groups, while others take the form of gated communities entirely inaccessible to the mass of the population. Video surveillance for large properties and buildings, like the erection of explicit boundaries (high walls or fences) and other barriers (such as window bars) has become standard procedure in many places. These are not confined to affluent and middle-class areas, but may be frequently found in poorer areas as well. Safety and security issues climbed back to the top of the social agenda some time ago, and they are evidently of keen interest to all strata and groups in society. The prominence of security issues indicates, above all, the fundamental failure of the state to

provide effective protection for its citizens. It also highlights the state's desperate attempts to extend its fragile monopoly on violence to contexts where the state is more or less absent and to regain control over national territory.

Today, control strategies have greater importance than preventive measures in almost every country in Latin America. This is partly because preventive measures, while effective in the medium and long term, rarely have a positive impact in the short term. The severe loss of influence of traditional sources of authority such as families, schools, and the Catholic Church has led to a renewed quest for suitable and situationally adequate methods of control in the context of a perceived weakening of mechanisms of social cohesion. Increasingly, too, control is taken to mean surveillance of situations and events, localities and groups, in order to detect and prevent violent acts at an early stage.

Preventive and controlling interventions may be aimed at either direct or indirect containment of violence. They are, however, not the only two options for addressing the problem. A third, and key, strategy has always been that of repression. Repressive measures are generally brought to bear by state institutions on criminals and perpetrators of violence. Governments resort to various ways and means of suppressing or containing violence. They may issue laws and regulations declaring the use of violence to be illegitimate and may punish violent acts depending on their severity – in other words, they may penalize deviant behavior. When faced with continuing violence or extraordinary violent events, they may threaten to tighten the laws and raise the penalties as a deterrent to potential perpetrators. Depending on the severity of the crimes and the prevalent types of violence, many developing countries deploy not only the police, but also the military or paramilitary police units to preserve order and ensure security. State security forces then take action against undesirable demonstrations and illegal gatherings, stamping out hotspots that represent sources of repeated violence. In using repressive methods more frequently than preventive strategies to combat gang crime and youth gangs, the security forces rarely help to decriminalize youth gangs and youth violence. While they did succeed in the case of Nicaragua, they frequently contribute instead to the explicit criminal-

ization of youth gangs and violence and thus to the strengthening of cohesion among the gang members, and ultimately, as in El Salvador, to an increase in violence. The severe crackdowns on youth gangs that form part of the policy of “mano dura” in some Central American countries have proved particularly unlikely to succeed.

It should be borne in mind that the police forces of many countries on the subcontinent are violent actors not only in the sense of a state monopoly on violence that is perceived as legitimate. Their lack of professionalism, low pay, corruption, and willingness to employ young men with a predisposition to violence also mean that the police forces themselves represent a threat to the population. However, the frequent failure of strategies for suppressing violence is due not only to the spirals of violence and counter-violence that result from these conditions, but also to the fact that the state monopoly on violence in many Latin American countries is porous and governments are unable to enforce it throughout their territories. Areas which are de facto outside state control are then taken over by parastatal organizations of dubious legitimacy or by local and regional “strongmen” who enforce order and security in their own ways.

Another way in which purely repressive strategies are counterproductive is that adolescents and young adults frequently receive severe sentences for comparatively petty crimes. The brutalization of these juvenile delinquents subsequently proceeds at a faster pace in prison, where they not only become victims of violence themselves but also learn to use violence as a means for asserting their own interests, and sometimes even for sheer survival. While in prison they also come into contact with criminal environments and become socially isolated while serving sentences of several years. Thus the groundwork is laid for their future careers in violence, and the occurrence of renewed outbreaks of violence is only a matter of time and circumstance.

To sum up, we can state that crime and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean can be more effectively prevented and reduced by:

- improving the data to give us a better understanding of the nature and extent of violence in the region,
- reducing social inequality and urban poverty,

- targeting programs on vulnerable groups, especially at-risk adolescents and women,
- building (or rebuilding) social capital,
- putting forward comprehensive programs to deal with youth and gang violence,
- strengthening the capacities of local governments to combat crime and violence through community involvement and partnerships with civil society and the private sector,
- reforming the criminal justice systems and professionalizing the forces of public order (Ayres 1998; Cohen and Rubio 2007).

3. Youth and Violence

Since the 1990s, the issue of “youth violence” has developed into one of the major topics on the political and social agenda of most Latin American countries (McAlister 2000). As the preceding chapters have shown, violence has not only increased significantly in most countries in the region over the past two decades, but has also turned into a phenomenon that affects youth. For one thing, a large proportion of the delinquents involved in crimes and violent acts are young people. Similarly, most of the victims of violent acts are young people between the ages of 14 and 29 (Imbusch 2008a, 2009). Another reason for the increasing focus on young people may be that young people frequently seek public attention and that their provocative conduct is widely visible, which typically leads to increased media attention and more time for the issue in the news media. Finally, a developmental argument may carry considerable weight: If young people who are still in a critical phase of their socialization lapse into violence and criminal behavior, in other words, if they are socialized through violence – or, worse still, into violence – then these experiences will have lasting knock-on effects in their later lives. At this phase in their lives, young people learn behavior patterns which cannot be unlearned later in life without greater or lesser difficulty (depending on situation and social status).

Since young people form a large proportion of the population in most developing countries (where they sometimes represent the largest single population group), it is unsurprising that many international organizations pay close at-

tention to the situation of young people in these countries (WHO 2002, 2004; World Bank 2005, 2007; World Youth Report 2003, 2005, 2007; UNICEF 2006). According to the definition used by WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA, the term “adolescents” refers to persons aged between 10 and 19 years. The UN describes the age group between 15 and 24 as “youth” and uses the term “young people” for persons aged between 10 and 24 years. In addition to these rigid age brackets, which are irrelevant to the lives of most young people, there are also functional and cultural definitions of youth. Functional definitions proceed from the assumption that youth refers to the age at which childhood gradually gives way to adulthood, which is characterized by certain rituals and physiological changes. Cultural definitions focus more strongly on social contexts and on the roles ascribed to or adopted by individuals within a society. Thus “youth”, in the various societies, is more a social construct than a rigidly defined age bracket. Accordingly, there are many places where youth does not denote a specific age group so much as a specific status and specific types of conduct. The World Youth Report (2005, 150) offers the following general definition: “Youth represents the transition from childhood to adulthood and is therefore a dynamic stage in an individual’s development. It is an important period of physical, mental and social maturation, during which young people are actively forming their identities and determining acceptable roles for themselves within their communities and societies. They are increasingly capable of abstract thought and independent decision making. As their bodies continue to change, their sexuality begins to emerge, and they are presented with new physical and emotional feelings as well as new social expectations and challenges.”

There are currently about 140 million young people living in Latin America and the Caribbean. In some countries, young people under 24 years of age account for up to 60 percent of the population. While Latin America, unlike many African countries, has already reached its demographic peak, the proportion of young people in the population will remain at a high level in the coming years (World Youth Report 2007). Demographic pressure and the concomitant socio-economic problems are one reason for the critical situation in which many young people find

themselves in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP 2006). The phenomena that make up a youth crisis include extreme social differences in young people's prospects. These differences are expressed in the different educational levels of different social strata or milieus, unequal employment prospects, higher unemployment and high underemployment, gender and ethnic discrimination, and high migration figures. The UNDP has therefore correctly noted that the causes of the youth crisis are largely exogenous to youth. They have a lot to do with the shrinking of economic, social, and political prospects that young people are confronted with. To a large extent, youth crisis is to be understood as a crisis of the transition from youth to adulthood. Young people have fewer education and employment opportunities, and thus decreasing chances of establishing themselves as adults in an increasingly competitive world. Because they are excluded from decision-making, they may see the mainstream political channels as irrelevant. Their responses to this situation can be violent or non-violent, but their concrete actions often reflect a lack of status, and they are taken in an attempt to renegotiate the passage from youth to adulthood. For UNDP, the problem for Latin American societies is to increase both the concrete opportunities available to young people and their sense of inclusion in society (UNDP 2006; Berkman 2007; CEPAL 2008; CEPAL, AECID, SEGIB and OIJ 2008). The issue of youth violence has therefore pre-occupied a number of major international conferences since the 1990s (see Appendix).

What are the main structural factors behind the growth of youth violence? It is easy to argue that inequality and impoverishment, further reinforced by the neoliberal macroeconomic policies adopted by many countries throughout the region, together with the incapacity of the national states to address poverty and exclusion in the distribution of economic, political and social resources, account for the main reasons for the proliferation of juvenile delinquency and violence.

The economic crises experienced by several countries in the region together with the implementation of reckless macroeconomic adjustment policies have seriously weakened the capacity of the state to invest in basic services

such as education and health, thus further eroding an already weak and fragmented welfare state. The vulnerability of youth to poverty and marginalization is well illustrated by the number of adolescents working to supplement the family income. In the large urban centers of Latin America, many children work in the most hazardous sectors such as prostitution and drug trafficking. Particularly those young people living in low-income families and deprived neighborhoods experience trauma and stress related to poor and overcrowded living conditions, domestic violence, lack of quality education, exclusion from the labor market, lack of recreation areas and facilities, police violence, and various forms of discrimination. Relative deprivation and other complex social and economic problems tend to be concentrated at the bottom of the social pyramid, leading to large numbers of crimes committed by poor and marginalized people mainly against equally impoverished individuals. Under these conditions and circumstances it is no surprise that a number of youth involve themselves in gangs, criminal activities, and delinquency.

The social situation of young people in Latin America is characterized by a considerable crisis situation that might at least partly explain the rise in youth violence in the region. First of all, there is widespread poverty and inequality between the young people. Although violence does not originate in poverty per se – which would mean that the poorest countries like Haiti, Bolivia, and Peru or the Brazilian north-east should have the highest rates of violence and crime, whereas crime rates and violence are actually high in the large cities – it is impoverishment and inequality in combination with feelings of injustice that lead to violent conflict. The increase in violent crime in the region is strictly linked with the urbanization of poverty and with the increase of inequality and social polarization due to neoliberal politics and structural market reforms. Secondly, education is generally considered to provide low-income youths with better opportunities and life chances. But access to quality education in Latin America still seems to be the privilege of the more wealthy classes and completion rates remain insufficient to ensure a skilled labor force for competitive markets. High drop-out rates and poor educational attainment generally translate into higher probabilities to suffer marginal-

ization. Third and consequently, youth unemployment in the region has risen to unprecedented levels. Years of high population growth combined with inadequate education have produced a glut of unskilled labor without chances on the labor markets. Unemployed youth represent about 50 percent of the total number of unemployed in the region. It is very likely that youth violence emerges not only out of their youthful wildness, but especially in response to socio-economic situations that function to their detriment. Besides poverty, inequality, and lack of education, and the frustrations deriving from such conditions, there are other factors on the individual, household, community, and societal level which contribute to an increase in youth violence. Other structural determinants of youth crime can be seen in the availability and proliferation of firearms, the expansion of drug markets, and the absence of the state, in terms of the inability of the state to enforce the law, to secure the legal monopoly of violence, to combat corruption, and to protect the citizens, especially the lower classes, from abuses of power (CEPAL 2008).

Altogether, the consequences of economic and social problems and a lack of human security can be identified as root causes of youth crime in the region. From these structural, mainly economic and social reasons, we can conclude that adolescents and young adults in any Latin American society face a number of challenges related to their age and this particular transitional period of their life. Adolescents who must deal with the consequences of social disintegration and economic exclusion may find it difficult to legally earn an income while at the same time being confronted with huge expectations on the part of parents, peer groups, and society or simply with the phenomenon of “easy money”. The highly complex and multifaceted problem of youth violence can thus be summed up as a violent reaction to an unequal and unjust society that offers few opportunities for disadvantaged youths to break out of the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion. It is no surprise that under such circumstances young males between the ages of 15 to 25 are generally the most violent group in Latin America and at the same time suffer from the highest homicide rates and experiences with violence in the region (Waiselfisz 2008).

While CEPAL, AECID, SEGIB and OIJ (2008) present comparative figures for youth homicide rates in the 1980s and at the beginning of the new millennium in order to document the steep rise in youth violence, the evaluation of youth violence in Latin America by Waiselfisz (2008) not only provides a comparative compilation of the most recent data on violence (murder, suicide, death by firearms, death in traffic accidents), but also shows that in the countries most severely affected by violence murder is by far the most frequent cause of death for young men. Another commendable aspect of this study is that Waiselfisz includes not only homicide rates, but also the figures for suicides; these figures show that the youth suicide rate, too, is far above the global average in almost all the countries of the subcontinent (with the exception of Cuba and Uruguay).

In recent decades, the single most dominant theme in the context of youth violence has been that of youth gangs. Throughout the 1990s, there was exponential growth of youth gangs in Latin America. In different countries and areas they are called *maras* (in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras), *bandas* (in Colombia and Ecuador), *chimbos*, *manchas* (in Peru), *pandillas* (in Mexico and Nicaragua), *barras* (in Argentina), *parchas*, *chapulines* (in Costa Rica), *quadrilhas* or *galeras cariocas* (in Brazil). Youth gangs exist to differing extents in nearly all Latin American countries. While it is difficult to estimate the concrete proportion of violence and crime caused by these youth gangs, there can be no doubt that they have become an ubiquitous force in many urban barrios and that they are major contributors to the high levels of crime.

According to Rodgers (1999) youth gangs exist in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. Although empirical studies are lacking, the presence of youth gangs has also been reported in Belize, Honduras, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Ecuador. In Nicaragua there are some 110 *pandillas* in Managua alone, with approximately 8,500 members. In Mexico City and Guayaquil there are approximately 1,500 *bandas*. In Chile, subcultures with different attitudes and normative beliefs have been identified in urban and rural groups of criminal youth. In

Medellín, there are some 200 youth gangs with very young affiliates. In Rio de Janeiro there are some 6,000 children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18 involved in drug gangs that control most of the favelas (Benvenuti 2003). The phenomenon of youth gangs has assumed most dramatic proportions in Central America, particularly in El Salvador, where in recent years the number of members of *maras* and the level of criminal violence have skyrocketed. The two major gangs – “Mara Salvatrucha” (MS) and “Los de la 18” (the 18th Street Gang) – are known for their extreme violence, well-structured organization, possession of many lethal weapons, and heavy consumption of alcohol and narcotics. Youth gangs in Latin America are overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon.

A recent report on gang violence by USAID (2006) points to some common root causes of gang activities: marginalized urban areas with minimal access to basic services, high levels of youth unemployment compounded by insufficient access to educational opportunities, chronically high levels of social and economic inequality, overwhelmed and ineffective justice systems, the rise of drug markets, easy access to arms and an illicit economy, dysfunctional families, and high levels of intra-familial violence.

Nevertheless, the “world of gangs”, and their formation, structure, and behavior are often popularly defined in terms of stereotypes that typically include the idea that gangs are composed of late-adolescent males who are violent and fuelled by drugs and alcohol; sexually hyperactive, reckless, cold-blooded, drug-dealing criminals who strive for profit and domination within the inner city neighborhoods (Benvenuti 2003). But many studies correctly depict violence and gang membership in Latin America as a more complex social issue. Mostly, the development of gangs is the result of multiple marginalities (Virgil 1998), meaning manifold exclusions from mainstream society. Out of these dynamics, a specific inner city culture – “una cultura callejera” – has emerged that seeks to fill the vacuum left by the lack of education, non- or underemployment, and lack of normal social bonds or social integration. Therefore, many studies on gangs in Latin America put the greatest emphasis not on their criminal activities but on their socio-cultural aspects, thus

downplaying a bit the harm gangs cause to local communities. They remember Frederic Trasher’s classic proposition from 1927 that a gang “is an interstitial group, originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict.” Trasher characterized gangs by the following types of behavior: “meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory” (Trasher 1927). The most widespread criteria considered to set youth gangs apart from other juvenile peer groups is their routine association with illegal and violent activities. Therefore it is misleading to label youth gangs as violent and criminal by nature. The conception of youth gangs as inherently violent is of course the result of a widespread criminalizing process (Jones and Rodgers 2009).

If we take a closer look at the socio-cultural aspects of the gangs in Latin America, numerous studies underscore the interplay of gangs and youth violence with other forms of social behavior and the formation of identities (Jones and Rodgers 2009; Strocka 2008). Because youth gang members are predominantly male, many scholars tie them to machismo and specific conceptualizations of masculinity. Masculine identities are manifest in male-on-male as well as in male-on-female violence. Gangs have also introduced new acts of violence which may function as rites of passage for the new gang members, for example “beating-in” for male and rape for female gang members. Gangs often establish distinctive, characteristic identifiers such as tattoos and their iconography, body piercings, graffiti tags, colors, hand-signals, clothing and hair styles, jewelry, hip-hop lyrics, and special signs like secret greetings, slurs, or code words and other group-specific symbols associated with the gang’s common beliefs, rituals, and mythologies to define and differentiate themselves from rival groups or gangs. The use of these symbols is also associated with macho performances, extending cultural mores, and adding explicit sexualized and violent overtones. Furthermore, they communicate specific informational cues to threaten, disparage, taunt, harass, and intimidate other groups or the public, thereby establish-

ing clear territories of control and rivalries among different gangs.

At the same time, membership in a gang is a kind of “surrogate family” and constitutes a form of negative integration. Gang membership represents a kind of inclusion in a situation of exclusion, since belonging to a stigmatized group allows for collective identification while also bringing recognition and guaranteeing an identity that cannot be attained by other means. At the micro level, many gangs form a system of social integration that goes some way towards compensating for social disintegration at the macro level, even as it reinforces this disintegration. In this way, youth gangs form an alternative space for processes of socialization for excluded and marginalized children and adolescents whose sense of belonging is rooted in ritualized recognition and collective activities which range from shared recreational activities all the way to the perpetration of criminal and violent acts. Thus the gang offers a possibility of social participation and provides a system of values that gives rise to personal and group identities by means of new communication codes and relationships of authority. Gang members often report the need for identity, solidarity, social networks, security, and protection. Obviously, gangs often serve as a partial replacement for crucial lacking social institutions, such as families, schools, and labor markets.

In general, gangs represent an attempt by young people to reconstruct their identities, and to rebel against institutions (for example family, school, or even the labor market) that are characterized by chronic inequality and exclusion. This is what Hagedorn (2008) calls “resistance identities”. They constitute violent means of rebellion, a way of condemning the lack of opportunities available to them and the state’s failure to properly address their needs. As such, they present alternative sources of income, and a means of reconstructing a sense of security, belonging, recognition, and participation that society seems to deny them in a categorical manner.

Earlier in this review, much has been written about the different strategies to contain violence effectively. Policy discussions over crime and violence are often framed

politically and ideologically. There are many different ideas and programs to combat violence, ranging from extreme repressive strategies such as “mano dura” or “super mano dura” to more conciliatory strategies like community policing (Aguilar Villamariona 2006a). Successful strategies depend on the type and extent of violence as well as the societal context in which it takes place. However, it is by no means easy to achieve the right balance in terms of preventing crime, meeting the needs of the victims, protecting society, and dealing with young offenders. But it should be emphasized that much juvenile crime is transitory, prevention should be highlighted instead of pure repression, and formal intervention should be minimized as much as possible while at the same time respecting the rights of the victims and the needs of the children and young people and their families. This might be a way to effectively deal with violent crime and juvenile offenders without producing the counter-productive side-effects of traditional methods of violence control.

At the moment, we see a lot of campaigns for harsh repressive measures against certain delinquent groups and “wars against crime” that find some support among local populations. But if we take a closer look at the perceived youth violence problems of Latin American governments (CEPAL, AECID, SEGIB and OIJ 2008), there is not only a considerable range of most important problems associated with young people but also a multitude of programs existing from different government authorities to deal with the social problems of young people (CEPAL 2008). Despite the undeniable will to come to terms with the problem of youth violence, there remains a considerable gap between official pronouncements and actual concrete action.

4. Conclusions

Violence is an endemic aspect of everyday life in Latin America. Scientific literature and data on the different forms of violence at different historical times are abundant. On closer examination, however, it is evident that the scientific output varies greatly between different regions and countries. In some countries, there is a broad debate about violence and the issue is studied by several research facilities (universities or other scientific institutions), while

violence research is institutionally underdeveloped in other countries. To date, there is no country in Latin America where conflict and violence research represents an academic discipline in its own right. Similarly, there is no sign of regular higher education courses that aim to develop competence in conflict management or violence counseling. Literature production comes from Latin American as well as international scholars, but important aspects of violence are still neglected and there are many open questions for further research.

First of all, we need a more detailed understanding of the reasons and causes for the extent of violence in Latin America. The factors proposed to date include structural, societal, or personal background, peculiarities of Latin American history or the history of single countries, high rates of economic and social inequality and forms of social disintegration, truncated modernization processes, and race, class, and poverty.

Second, we need to know more about the reasons for the important differences between the Latin American nations and their levels of violence as well as for the similarities of violent developments during certain periods. With regard to this aspect, the Latin American subcontinent is diverging into different regions and sub-regions that should be considered separately to reach more valid conclusions in a comparative perspective.

Third, most of the literature on violence in Latin America is descriptive in scope thus providing many valuable insights into the development of violence. But what is at stake is a more analytical understanding of violence, a theory of violence – if possible – or explanatory models to address more systematically the different forms and aspects of violence.

Fourth, methodologies for fruitful violence research and databases on violence are weak. This is a problem for violence

research all over the world, but the situation is slightly more dramatic in Latin America where an adequate infrastructure for empirical research is often lacking, where violence research itself is sometimes dangerous or simply impossible due to adverse circumstances. Methodologically, there are different approaches to violence research (quantitative and qualitative, with many sub-groups). Reliable data on violence in different countries are rare due to a lack of statistics, inaccuracies in police data, or for political reasons. There is an urgent need to improve the knowledge base on violence in different countries to get more reliable and comparative data of a longitudinal or cross-sectional type.

Even for the recent rise in crime and violence in Latin America, the available evidence is not conclusive. Existing sources of reported crime and violence data are often contradictory, methods of violence research are neither compatible nor reconcilable, and statistics and data sets are unreliable. Nothing would be more misleading than unqualified overgeneralizations. If any pattern is clear, it is that crime and violence are highly variable across countries and even across localities within countries. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear that violence in Latin America is a serious problem that has a significant impact on the health, well-being, economic development, and security of the region. Violence and insecurity are likely to erode democratic attitudes in several Latin American and Caribbean countries. Particularly countries where processes of institutional consolidation and democratization are still evolving, the effects of violence and insecurity on political processes and democracy are a heavy burden. They matter for democracy in the region as well as for perceptions about the performance of governments on public security issues. The way people perceive the commitment of their governments in tackling public insecurity and crime is important for democratic legitimacy.

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Appendix: Links, Internet Sources, Data

1. National Statistics Offices

Mexico and Central America:

- Mexico: INEGI www.inegi.org.mx
- Nicaragua: INEC, INIDE www.inec.gob.ni
- El Salvador: DIGESTYC www.digestyc.gob.sv
- Honduras: INE www.ine-hn.org
- Guatemala: INE www.ine.gob.gt
- Costa Rica: INEC www.inec.go.cr
- Panama: ENDEP www.contraloria.gob.pa/dec/Ende.aspx

Caribbean Region:

- Dominican Republic: ONE www.one.gob.do
- Jamaica: Statistical Institute of Jamaica www.statinja.com
- Cuba: ONE www.one.cu

Andean Region:

- Colombia: DANE www.dane.gov.co
- Venezuela: INE www.ine.gov.ve
- Ecuador: INEC www.inec.gov.ec
- Bolivia: INE www.ine.gov.bo
- Peru: INEI www.inei.gob.pe

Brazil:

- IBGE www.ibge.gov.br
- Ministério da Saúde <http://tabnet.datasus.gov.br/cgi/idb2004/matriz.htm>

Cono Sur:

- Argentina: INDEC www.indec.mecon.ar
- Chile: INE www.ine.cl
- Uruguay: INE www.ine.gub.uy
- Paraguay: Dirección General de Estadísticas, Encuestas y Censos www.dgeec.gov.py

2. Leading Scholars on Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean

Mexico

Astorga, Luis (UNAM-IIS, México D.F.)
 Azaola Garrido, Elena (CIESAS)
 Fuentes Romero, David (Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, U de Baja California)
 Herrera, Cristina (FLACSO, México D.F.)
 Jiménez, René (UNAM-IIS, México D.F.)

Caribbean

Harriot, Anthony (University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica)
 Rapley, John (CaPRI, University of the West Indies)

Venezuela

Briceño-León, Roberto (Universidad Central de Venezuela, LACSO, Caracas)
 Hernández, Tosca (Instituto de Ciencias Penales y Criminológicas, Universidad Central de Venezuela)
 Sanjuán, Ana María (Centro para la Paz, Universidad Central de Venezuela)
 Zubillaga, Verónica (LACSO, Caracas)

Brazil

Abramovay, Miriam (RITLA, Brasilia)
 Adorno, Sérgio (NEV-USP, São Paulo)
 Cardia, Nancy (NEV-USP, São Paulo)
 Miraglia, Paula (ILANUD, São Paulo)
 Misse, Michel (NECVU, IFCS/UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro)
 Rattón, José Luis (Center for the Study and Research of Crime, Violence and Politics at the UFPE - Universidade Federal de Pernambuco)
 Rizzini, Irene (CIESPI, Rio de Janeiro)
 Zalar, Alba (Universidade do Estado de Rio Janeiro)

United States

Bailey, John (University of Michigan)
 Biehl, María Loreto (IDB, Washington D.C.)
 Buvinic, Mayra (World Bank, Washington D.C.)
 Concha-Eastman, Alberto (PAHO/WHO, Washington D.C.)
 Fajnzylber, Pablo (World Bank, Washington D.C.)
 Morrison, Andrew (IDB, Washington D.C.)
 Pinheiro, Paulo Sérgio (OAS, Washington D.C.)
 Sommers, Marc (USAID, Washington D.C.)

Central America

Carranza, Marlon E. (UCA, San Salvador)
 Castellanos, Julieta (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras)
 Cruz, José Miguel (UCA, San Salvador)
 Rocha, José Luis (UCA, Managua)
 Sandoval García, Carlos (Universidad de Costa Rica)
 Vul Galperín, Mónica (Universidad de Costa Rica)

Colombia

Orozco, Iván (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá)
 Palacios, Marco (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá)
 Perea Restrepo, Carlos Mario (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá)
 Pizarro, Eduardo (IEPRI, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá)
 Romero, Mauricio (Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá)
 Sánchez Gómez, Gonzalo (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá)
 Uribe, María Vitoria (Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá)

Andean countries

Andrade, Xavier (FLACSO, Quito)
 Basombrío, Carlos (Instituto de Defensa Legal, Lima)
 Carrión, Fernando (FLACSO, Quito)
 Costa, Gino (Fundación Ciudad Nuestra, Lima)
 Degregori, Carlos Iván (IEP, Lima)
 Morales Cordova, Hugo (Universidad de Lima)
 Pajuelo, Ramón (IEP, Lima)
 Panfichi, Aldo (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú)

Cono Sur

Dammert, Lucia (Consortio Global por la Transformación de la Seguridad, Santiago)
 Frühling, Hugo (CESC, Santiago)
 Isla, Alejandro (FLACSO, Buenos Aires)
 Kessler, Gabriel (Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento/CONICET, Buenos Aires)
 Míguez, Daniel (CONICET, Buenos Aires)
 Pegoraro, Juan (Universidad de Buenos Aires)
 Petrisans Aguilar, Ricardo (ILACON, Montevideo)
 Rodríguez, Ernesto (CELAJU, Montevideo)
 Sozzo, Máximo (Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Santa Fe)
 Tiscornia, Sofía (Universidad de Buenos Aires)
 Vanderschueren, Franz (Universidad Jesuita A. Hurtado, Santiago)
 Viscardi, Nilia (Universidad de la República, Montevideo)

Europe

Hume, Mo (University of Liverpool)
 Jones, Gareth (LSE, London)
 Kay, Cristóbal (IIS, The Hague)
 Krug, Etienne (WHO, Geneva)
 Kruijt, Dirk (Utrecht University)
 McLwaine, Cathy (Queen Mary, University of London)
 Moser, Caroline (ODI, London)
 Pécaut, Daniel (EHESS, Paris)
 Rodgers, Dennis (LSE, London)
 Waldmann, Peter (University of Augsburg)

3. International Organizations and Research Institutions Relevant for the Study of Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean

Center for Disease Control, Atlanta
www.cdc.gov

Center for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Oxford
www.crise.ox.ac.uk

Centroamerica joven, FLACSO El Salvador
www.centroamericajuven.org

Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL)
www.eclac.org

Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO)
www.clacso.org.ar

Crisis States Research Center, LSE, London
www.crisisstates.com

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)
www.flacso.org

Hispanic American Center for Economic Research,
Washington D.C.
www.hacer.org

Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and
Violence, Bielefeld
www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/ikg/index.htm

Instituto Latinoamericano de las Naciones Unidas para la
Prevención del Delito y el Tratamiento del Delincuente
(ILANUD)
www.ilanud.or.cr/

Inter-American Development Bank
www.iadb.org

Interdisciplinary Latin America Center, Bonn
www.ilz.uni-bonn.de/links_es.html

International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS)
United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research
Institute (UNCRI)
www.unicri.it/wwd/analysis/icvs/data.php

International Women's Tribune Center
www.iwtc.org

Internet Resources for Latin America
http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/laguia/

Laboratorio de Ciencias Sociales (LACSO), Caracas
www.lacso.org.ve

Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)
http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/lapop

Latin American Network Information Center
http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/las-org/

Latin American Studies Organization
http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/links.html

Latinobarómetro
www.latinobarometro.org

Nucleo de Estudos da Violência – Universidad de São Paulo
www.nevusp.org/mapas/

Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence
www.massviolence.org

Pan American Health Organization
www.paho.org

Peace Research Center, Madrid
www.cipresearch.fuhem.es

Madre – Demanding Rights, Resources and Results for
Women Worldwide
www.madre.org

Sexual Violence Research Initiative
www.svri.org/

Stop Violence against Women (SVAW), Advocates for
Human Rights
www.stopvaw.org

United Nations Development Program
www.undp.org

United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs
www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_cicp_research.html

Washington Office on Latin America
www.wola.org

United Nations Surveys of Crime Trends and Operations of
Criminal Justice Systems
www.uncjin.org/stats/wcs.html

Woodrow Wilson Center
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.
home&topic_id=1425](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=1425)

World Health Organization
www.who.int/violence-injury-prevention/violence/en/

World Bank
www.worldbank.org

Youth Portal for Latin America and the Caribbean
www.youthlac.org

4. Conferences on Youth and Violence in Latin America (2000-2010)

Crime and Violence: Causes and Policy Responses

Universidad de los Andes / World Bank, May 4–5, 2000, Bogotá

Simposio 2001: Violencia de Género, Salud y Derechos en las Américas

June 4–5, 2001, Cancún, México

Youth Violence in Latin America: Gangs, Street Violence, and Juvenile Justice in Perspective

LSE, May 26–27, 2005, London

Coloquio: Violencias, Culturas Institucionales y Sociabilidad

FLACSO, November 8–10, 2006, Buenos Aires

Seminário: Violência Urbana

CEBRAP / ILANUD, December 4, 2006, São Paulo

Primera Jornada de Investigaciones en Violencia y Justicia

IDES, December 7, 2006, Buenos Aires

Security Sector Reform in Latin America: Impact of Irregular Threats

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, September 10, 2007, Washington D.C.

Crime, Violence, and Security in the CARICOM: Creating Community in the Caribbean

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, October 30, 2007, Washington D.C.

Colloquium: The Role of the Police in Crime Prevention

ICPC's Seventh Annual Crime Prevention Colloquium, November 8–9, 2007, Oslo

In War as in Peace: Youth Violence – A Challenge for International Cooperation

Evangelische Akademie Loccum, November 14–16, 2007, Rehburg-Loccum

New Directions for the Study of Citizen Security in Latin America

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, January 28, 2008, Washington D.C.

The Politics of Violence in Latin America

Public Symposium, ConocoPhillips Theater, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, April 24, 2008

Seminario: Prevención de las Conductas de Riesgo entre la Juventud

XVIII Cumbre Iberoamericana, October 15–16, 2008, México D.F.

Congreso Internacional sobre Paz, Violencia y Desarrollo

Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, February 20, 2009, México

Representations of Violence in Latin America

Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, March 6–7, 2009, University of Texas, Austin

Violent Crime and Democratization in the Global South

March 18–19, 2009, Cape Town, South Africa

Gewalt im Frieden: Formen, Ursachen, Einhegungsmöglichkeiten der Gewaltkriminalität in Zentralamerika

Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Universität Leipzig, March 25–28, 2009, Leipzig

III Encontro Anual: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública

April 1–3, 2009, Vitória

Violence Prevention – A Critical Dimension of Development

The World Bank, April 6–7, 2009, Washington D.C.

Workshop: The Politics of Violence in Latin America

The Armed Groups Project, May 15–17, 2009, Banff Centre, Banff, Canada

*The Prevention of Youth Violence in Latin America: Lessons
Learned and Future Challenges*

Woodrow Wilson Center (co-sponsored with the Inter-
American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence),
October 27, 2009, Washington D.C.

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