



# Bringing the State to the Slum: Confronting Organized Crime and Urban Violence in Latin America

## Lessons for Law Enforcement and Policymakers

Vanda Felbab-Brown

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# Executive Summary

**P**ublic safety is increasingly determined by crime and security in urban spaces. How the public safety problem in urban spaces is dealt with in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as urbanization intensifies will determine citizens' perceptions of the accountability and effectiveness of the state in upholding the social contract between the citizens and the state. Major cities of the world, and the provision of security and order within them, will increasingly play a major role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century distribution of global power. In many of the world's major cities, law enforcement and social development have not caught up with the pace of urbanization, and there is a deep and growing bifurcation between developed and reasonably safe sectors of economic growth and social advancement and slums stuck in a trap of poverty, marginalization, and violence. Addressing the violence and lifting the slums from this trap will be among the major challenges for many governments.

There are many forms of urban violence. This article presents some of the key law enforcement and socioeconomic policy lessons from one type of response to urban slums controlled by non-state actors: namely, when the government resorts to physically retaking urban spaces that had been ruled by criminal or insurgent groups and where the state's presence had been inadequate or sometimes altogether nonexistent. Its focus is on Latin America—specifically Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Jamaica; but its findings apply more broadly and are informed by similar dynamics between non-state actors and state policies in places like Karachi, Pakistan, and Johannesburg, South Africa.

- In response to a crime epidemic afflicting Latin America since the early 1990s, several countries in the region have resorted to using heavily-armed police or military units to physically retake territories controlled *de facto* by criminal or insurgent groups. After a period of resumed state control, the heavily-armed units hand law enforcement functions in the retaken territories to regular police forces, with the hope that the territories and their populations will remain under the control of the state. To a varying degree, intensity, and consistency, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Jamaica have adopted such policies since 2000.
- During such operations, governments need to pursue two interrelated objectives: to better establish the state's physical presence and to realign the allegiance of the population in those areas toward the state and away from the non-state criminal entities.

- From the perspective of law enforcement, such operations entail several critical decisions: whether or not to announce the force insertion in advance; how to generate local intelligence; and when to hand over law enforcement to regular or community police forces.
- With respect to announcing the force insertion in advance, the element of surprise and the ability to capture key leaders of the criminal organizations has to be traded off against the ability to minimize civilian casualties and force levels. The latter, however, may allow criminals to hide and escape capture. Governments thus must decide whether they merely seek to displace criminal groups to other areas or maximize their decapitation capacity.
- Intelligence flows rarely come from the population. Often, rival criminal groups are the best source of intelligence. However, cooperation between the state and such groups that goes beyond using vetted intelligence provided by the groups, such as the government's tolerance for militias, compromises the rule-of-law integrity of the state and ultimately can eviscerate even public safety gains.
- Sustaining security after initial clearing operations is, at times, even more challenging than conducting the initial clearing operations. Although unlike the heavily-armed forces, traditional police forces, especially if designed as community police, have the capacity to develop trust by the community and ultimately to focus on crime prevention, developing such trust often takes a long time.
- To develop the community's trust, regular police forces need to conduct frequent on-foot patrols with intensive nonthreatening interactions with the population and minimize the use of force. Moreover, sufficiently robust patrol units need to be placed in designated beats for substantial amounts of time, often at least over a year.
- Ideally, police develop not only local police forces, but community-based and problem-oriented policing as well.
- Establishing oversight mechanisms, including joint police-citizen boards, further facilitates building community trust in the police.
- After the disruption of the established criminal order, street crime often significantly rises and both the heavily-armed and community-police units often struggle to contain it. The increase in street crime alienates the population of the retaken territory from the state. Thus, developing a capacity to address street crime is critical.

- Addressing street crime, especially when through problem-oriented policing approaches, also often tends to be relatively simple and inexpensive. Moreover, preventing at least some street crime through such measures allows police forces to concentrate on more complex street and organized crime.
- Moreover, community police units tend to be vulnerable (especially initially) to efforts by displaced criminals to reoccupy the cleared territories. Ceding a cleared territory back to criminal groups is extremely costly in terms of losing any established trust of the local population and being able to resurrect it later. Rather than operating on a predetermined handover schedule, a careful assessment of the relative strength of regular police and the criminal groups following clearing operations is likely to be a better guide for timing the handover from heavy forces to regular police units.
- Cleared territories often experience not only a peace dividend, but also a peace deficit—in the rise new serious crime (in addition to street crime). Newly-valuable land and other previously-inaccessible resources can lead to land speculation and forced displacement; various other forms of new crime can also significantly rise. Community police forces often struggle to cope with such crime, especially as it is frequently linked to legal businesses outside of their area of operation. Such new crime often receives little to no attention in the design of the operations to retake territories from criminal groups. But without developing an effective response to such new crime, the public-safety gains from the clearing operations can be completely lost. Instead of countering the causes of illegal economies and violent organized crime through strengthening effective and accountable state presence, government intervention may only alter the form of criminality and displace existing problems to other areas.
- Expanding the justice system to cover areas where no courts were previously present usually takes considerable time. As a result, a dispute-resolution vacuum often emerges immediately following the clearing operations. This near-term absence of dispute resolution processes and enforcement is one impetus for the rise of crime and disorder in the post-clearing phase.
- One of the acute dilemmas encountered by law enforcement forces in the retaken territory and managers of the operation is whether or not, how quickly, and in what form to suppress illegal economies that exist in the retaken territory. There may be several reasons why the state would want to suppress the illegal economy. These include the leakage of illicit flows to other locales, a belief that the profitability of illicit profits will dissuade slum residents from switching to legal economies, and a fear that the persistence of illegal economies will pull in new violence and perpetuate anti-social and anti-state values among the slum residents.

However, suppressing local illegal economies in urban spaces comes with significant costs, such as massive drops in household income of slum residents, new alienation of the population from the state, expansion of criminal activity and the rise of extortion, and the dissipation of law enforcement focus.

- Generating legal alternative livelihoods in urban spaces requires that the economic development strategy addresses all the structural drivers of illegal economic production. Beyond providing for security and the rule of law, such a comprehensive approach requires that stable property rights be established, access to microcredit developed, access to education and health care expanded, and crucial infrastructure deficiencies redressed.
- Often the most challenging problem for economic development in such situations is to generate sustainable legal jobs.
- Limited, isolated, discreet interventions, even when responsive to the wishes of the local community, are particularly ineffective in changing socioeconomic dynamics in a marginalized community. They do not have the capacity to alter basic social patterns or generate jobs in the community, and therefore, do not reduce crime. If they amount largely to patronage handouts, they can generate complex negative equilibria between criminal and official political patrons or a crime-pays type of mentality.
- Saturating an area with money in order to buy the political allegiance of the population produces neither sustainable economic development nor desirable social and political practices. Such massive cash infusions distort the local economy, undermine local administration, and can fuel corruption, new crime (such as extortion and resource theft), and moral hazard.
- Economic development of marginalized urban spaces is rarely politically neutral. While it does strengthen marginalized communities, it has the potential to undermine established powerbrokers (especially those who straddle the crime world and the official political world) by depriving them of their agent-patron role. Such powerbrokers, therefore, have an interest in hampering and limiting the extent to which the state is extended to the marginalized areas.
- Coordination across different line-ministries and agencies, and across different levels of government is often difficult to achieve, but failure to achieve good coordination can undermine the entire effort.





## Introduction

To an unprecedented degree, Latin Americans complain about living in fear of crime. In some parts of Latin America, such as in Mexico, Venezuela, and Central America, criminal activity has exploded. In other parts of the region, such as Colombia and Brazil, homicide rates and other victimization rates have fallen, but they nonetheless persist at high levels. Rates of violent crime are six times higher in Latin America than in the rest of the world.<sup>1</sup> El Salvador frequently ranks as one of the countries with the highest murder rate in the world, with 57.3 per 100,000 in 2007. Colombia's murder rate was 42.8 per 100,000 in 2006, Venezuela's was 36.4 per 100,000 in 2007, and Brazil's 20.5 in 2008.<sup>2</sup> Over 11,200 people were killed in drug-related violence in Mexico in 2010.<sup>3</sup> Kidnapping in the region is also frequent. Opinion surveys show that even in areas where violence has fallen, citizens often select crime as their number one concern.

Organized crime is one of the principal sources of the violence, but street crime also flourishes and frequently receives far less attention from the region's governments. Two decades of efforts to improve and reform law-enforcement institutions in the region often have little to show in improvements in public safety and accountability of law enforcement.

The response in Latin America to the crime epidemic has varied. Some Central American countries have adopted the so-called *mano dura* (iron-fist) policies, criminalizing membership in youth gangs and resorting to extensive imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> Several countries have ultimately resorted to using heavily-

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Jorge Sapoznikow et al., "Convivencia y Seguridad: Un Reto a la Gobernabilidad" (Coexistence and Security: A Challenge to Governability", Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC: 2000, and Centro Nacional de Datos, Fondelibertad, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, República de Colombia, "Cifras Extorsión" (Extortion Rates), June 20, 2007; [www.antisecuestro.gov.co/documentos/7\\_16\\_2007\\_4\\_58\\_07\\_PM\\_CifrasHistorias.pdf](http://www.antisecuestro.gov.co/documentos/7_16_2007_4_58_07_PM_CifrasHistorias.pdf), May 17, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "Murder Rate Among Youths Soars in Brazil," *The Washington Post*, February 24, 2011. Since data collection, reporting mechanisms, and strength of law enforcement varies greatly among Latin American countries and many murders go unreported and undetected, there are limits to the accuracy of the data. Moreover, data are not always available for the same year for all countries.

<sup>3</sup> "Ejecutómetro 2010" (Metrics of Execution 2010), *Reforma*, December 27, 2010; *Grupo Reforma* statistics cited in Transborder Institute, *Justice in Mexico News Report*, August 2011, [www.justiceinmexico.org](http://www.justiceinmexico.org).

<sup>4</sup> For details on the *mano dura* policies, see Clare Ribaldo Seelke, "Anti-Gang Efforts in Central America: Moving Beyond *Mano Dura*?" Center for Hemispheric Policy, University of Miami, April 2007, <https://www6.miami.edu/hemispheric-policy/SeelkeTaskForcePaper.pdf>.

armed police or military forces to retake territories with weak state presence, which are essentially governed by criminal groups or illegal militias or, in the case of Colombia, by an insurgent group.

There are many forms of urban violence and policy approaches toward them vary. The dynamics of youth gang violence in Tegucigalpa, Honduras are different from generalized rioting in London; reducing a high murder rate in New Orleans requires different policies than responding to ethnically-driven civil war in Fallujah, Iraq.

This paper presents some of the key law enforcement and socioeconomic policy lessons from one type of approach—when a government physically retakes urban spaces ruled by criminal or insurgent groups, where state presence had been sporadic, limited, or sometimes altogether nonexistent. Its focus is on Latin America—specifically Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Jamaica; but its findings apply more broadly and are informed by similar dynamics between non-state actors and state policies in places like Karachi, Pakistan, and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Brazil adopted such a heavy-force takeover policy toward its shantytowns in the 2000s, first in São Paulo and then Rio de Janeiro.<sup>5</sup> Rio's Pacification Policy (Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora—UPP) toward the poor and crime-ridden *favelas* (slums)—home to 1.2 million of Rio's 6 million inhabitants -- involving forcible takeover and subsequent handover to community police forces, has received widespread attention.<sup>6</sup> As of November 2011, nineteen UPP outposts have been established in the *favelas*, mostly those close to the 2014 Soccer World Cup and the 2016 Rio Olympics venues and to major Rio arteries. Policies in both cities drew lessons from a similar pacification policy, *Grupamento de Policiamento em Áreas Especiais* (GPAE), implemented with varied and limited effectiveness in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* in 2000.<sup>7</sup> Both GPAE and UPP policies in Rio and its equivalent in São Paulo

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<sup>5</sup> For the evolution of the policing response in São Paulo, see Jennifer Peirce, "Divided Cities: Crime and Inequality in Urban Brazil," *Paterson Review*, 9, 2008, The Norman Patterson School of International Affairs Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: 85-98, [http://www.diplomatonline.com/pdf\\_files/npsia/2009/PDF%20-%20Jen%20Peirce%20-%20Crime%20and%20Inequality%20in%20Urban%20Brazil.pdf](http://www.diplomatonline.com/pdf_files/npsia/2009/PDF%20-%20Jen%20Peirce%20-%20Crime%20and%20Inequality%20in%20Urban%20Brazil.pdf); Ted Goertzel and Tulio Kahn, "The Great São Paulo Homicide Drop," *Homicide Studies*, (4), November 2009: 398-410; Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley, 2001). Daniel Brinks, "The Judicial Response to State Killings in Buenos Aires and São Paulo in the 1990s," *Comparative Politics*, 36(1), October 2003: 1-19.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the pacification policy, see, for example, Benjamin Lessing, "Depois da queda do Alemão: o futuro da guerra do tráfico," *O Globo Online: Favela Livre*, December 16, 2010 and André Gomes Alves, "Segurança Pública e Polícia Pacificadora: A Fruição do Direito a Segurança Pública nas Favelas de Rio de Janeiro," Universidade de Brasília, Faculdade de Direito, Junho 2011, [http://bdm.bce.unb.br/bitstream/10483/1966/1/2011\\_AndreGomesAlves.pdf](http://bdm.bce.unb.br/bitstream/10483/1966/1/2011_AndreGomesAlves.pdf). For background on life in the *favelas* prior to UPP and the evolution of government policy responses, see, for example, Maria Alves and Philip Evanson, *Living in the Crossfire: Favela Residents, Drug Dealers, and Police Violence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press; 2011); Enrique Desmond Arias and Corinne Davis Rodrigues, "The Myth of Personal Security: Criminal Gangs, Dispute Resolution, and Identity in Rio de Janeiro's *Favelas*," *Latin American Politics and Society*, 48(4), 2006: 53-81; and Ben Pengalese, "The Bastard Child of the Dictatorship: The *Comando Vermelho* and the Birth of the 'Narco-culture' in Rio de Janeiro," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 45(1), 2008: 118-143.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Clarissa Huguet and Ilona Szabó de Carvalho, "Violence in the Brazilian *Favelas* and the Role of the Police," *New Directions for Youth Development*, 119, Fall 2008: 93-109; Paul Chevigny, *Edge of the Knife: Police Violence in the Americas* (New York: Norton, 1995); and Graziella Moraes D. da Silva and Ignacio Cano, "The Case of Pavão-Pavãozinho-Cantagalo in Rio de Janeiro's *Favelas*," in Tom Tyler, ed., *Legitimacy and Criminal Justice: International Perspectives* (New York: Russell Sage Foundations, 2007): 186-214.

have sought to break with Brazil's historic pattern of deep social marginalization and isolation of the shantytowns by erecting physical walls around them, and resorting to highly repressive and violent, but only temporary, police excursions into the shantytowns controlled by criminal gangs.

In Mexico, President Felipe Calderón deployed the military into Mexico's streets to take over law enforcement functions in many of the country's cities, including Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana, troubled by intense violence generated by brazen and brutal drug trafficking groups (DTOs). The strategy has been based on the premise that regular police forces in Mexico are so corrupt and hollowed out that they are unable to respond effectively to the violence and do not have the capacity to reduce the power of the DTOs. Once the military reduces the threat posed by the DTOs from a national security threat to a public safety problem and the police have been reformed, Calderón contended, the police would once again take over law enforcement functions. So far, Ciudad Juárez has seen the pullback of military forces and return of law enforcement to the police, even though extraordinarily high criminal violence in the city declined by only 24 percent from its peak levels, and the handover had as much to do with public dissatisfaction with military forces in the city as with their effectiveness in bringing violence and criminality down.<sup>8</sup>

In Colombia's Medellín, the counterinsurgency and anti-crime policies in the 2000s also followed similar patterns. President Álvaro Uribe first sent the military to the city in 2002 to retake the poor *comunas* ruled by the leftist guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (the FARC). The success of this *Operation Orion* in defeating the FARC in Medellín allowed the crime-lord-cum-paramilitary leader Don Berna to consolidate control over the criminal markets in the city. His firm control over the poor *comunas* and a panoply of criminal rackets in the city resulted in a significant drop in homicides throughout much of the first decade of the 2000s. Medellín mayors Sergio Fajardo and Alonso Salazar took advantage of greater security in the city and extended a host of development activities to the poor *comunas*, including infrastructure and public spaces such as libraries. In the latter part of the decade, Don Berna was imprisoned and extradited to the United States. His departure from the city gave rise to new violence in Medellín, as tens of criminal groups emerged and have fought over control of drug smuggling and distribution, prostitution, extortion, and gambling.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For details on the strategy, its effectiveness in particular Mexican cities, and its overall accomplishments and shortcomings, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Calderón's Calderón: Lessons from Mexico's Battle Against Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Michoacán*, Latin America Initiative Paper Series, September 2011: 16-23, [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/09\\_calderon\\_felbab\\_brown.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/09_calderon_felbab_brown.aspx). For the overall security policy in Mexico, including its police and judicial reforms, civil-military relations, anti money- laundering and gun control measures, and the role of United States, see Eric Olson, Andrew Selee, and David Shirk, eds. *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> For details, see Adam Isacson, "Medellín: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back," in *Tackling Urban Violence in Latin America: Reversing Exclusion through Smart Policing and Social Investment*, WOLA, June 2011; and Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Reducing Urban Violence: Lessons from Medellín, Colombia," The Brookings Institution, February 14, 2011, [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/0214\\_colombia\\_crime\\_felbabbrown.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/0214_colombia_crime_felbabbrown.aspx).

Another example comes from Kingston, Jamaica, where for several decades the Tivoli Gardens neighborhood has been ruled by drug gangs linked to Jamaican political parties. Since the 1990s until 2010, this garrison was ruled the drug lord Christopher “Dudus” Coke. When Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding finally yielded to U.S. pressure to arrest Coke and extradite him to the United States in 2010, Golding sent a heavy force to Tivoli Gardens in an operation that resembled urban warfare more than a standard police arrest.<sup>10</sup> Coke ultimately surrendered to the United States, and Prime Minister Golding promised to adopt community policing and social development in Tivoli Gardens.

Between October 2009 and April 2011, I conducted fieldwork in all the places mentioned above, with the exception of Jamaica. The goal of my research was to study the design and effectiveness of the law enforcement approaches and socioeconomic policies adopted in those places for reducing criminality and marginalization. For that purpose, I interviewed local government officials, police and military officers, academics and think tank experts, NGO representatives, journalists, residents of the poor neighborhoods, and, when possible, members of the drug gangs and criminal groups operating in those areas. The lessons presented below are derived from this fieldwork. For lessons from Jamaica’s struggle against organized crime, I rely solely on written analyses of other scholars and journalists. The paper is also informed by my research on state-building and responses outside of Latin America to violent non-state actors, especially in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and sub-Saharan Africa.

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<sup>10</sup> For details on Jamaica’s drug gangs, their relationship to political parties, and the 2010 operation to arrest Coke, see Desmond Arias, “The Impact of Organized Crime on Governance and State-building,” Center for International Cooperation, New York University, forthcoming December 2011.

## The Twin State-Making Challenge

When dealing with urban areas pervaded by illicit economies, violent criminality, and inadequate state presence, the government needs to pursue two interrelated objectives. First, it must better establish its own physical presence. In some cases, in Rio's *favelas* for example, such an assertion (or even insertion) of state authority may require retaking territory that has been physically controlled by violent non-state entities. In other cases, establishing such presence may entail demonstrating that the preponderance of physical power, if not actual monopoly of violence, lies with the state and its law enforcement apparatus.

Second, the government must realign the population's allegiance toward the state and away from the non-state criminal entities. To accomplish this goal, its presence must be not only robust, but also multifaceted and positive. In urban areas of inadequate state presence, high poverty, and social and political marginalization, large populations, numbering in the tens of thousands to over a million, are dependent on illicit economies, such as the drug trade, for economic survival and the satisfaction of their other socioeconomic needs. For many, participation in informal economies, if not outright illegal ones, is the only way to provide for their security and achieve social advancement, even as they continue to be trapped in insecurity, criminality, and marginalization. By sponsoring such illicit economies and using the proceeds to deliver otherwise absent socioeconomic goods and other public goods, non-state entities, such as criminal gangs, drug trafficking organizations, or urban militias, step into the stateless void. Paradoxically, these non-state entities often provide at least a modicum of security for the residents of the areas they control. They are the sources of insecurity and crime in the first place, but they often regulate the level of violence and suppress street crime, such as robberies, thefts, kidnapping, and even homicides. Their ability and motivation to provide public goods vary, of course, but such provision often takes place regardless of whether the non-state entities are politically-motivated actors or criminal enterprises.<sup>11</sup> This explains how even nonideological criminal

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<sup>11</sup> For some of the dimensions of how such delivery of public goods by non-state entities varies, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2009).

groups can obtain and gain a great degree of political capital.<sup>12</sup> The more they deliver order, security, and economic goods, the more they become de facto proto-state governing entities.

Gaining the trust and allegiance of the community is frequently a complex task that requires appropriate state policies and time. If the community has previously experienced primarily negative manifestations of the state—violent repression against criminal groups, suppression of illegal economies with no provision of legal livelihoods, or social stigmatization—it will be deeply mistrustful of greater state presence.

Therefore, efforts to pacify violent and neglected urban areas parallel many aspects of population-centric counterinsurgency. Drawing such a parallel can be very politically sensitive in Latin America, where allusions to counterinsurgency (COIN) policy can conjure up vivid and painful memories of the region's anticommunist counterinsurgency campaigns. However, the realization that some policies to combat urban violence mimic aspects of COIN policies does not imply that the state has failed. It does indicate that COIN and consolidation may nonetheless provide some important lessons.

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<sup>12</sup> For details, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Human Security and Crime in Latin America: The Political Capital and Political Impact of Criminal Groups and Belligerents Involved in Illicit Economies," *FIU Applied Research Center Series*, Fall 2011-Winter 2012, forthcoming.

# Bringing Rule of Law to Slums Previously Controlled by Non-State Entities

## Retaking Territory

In all the cases listed above—Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Jamaica—the government ultimately resolved to physically “retake” the problematic urban space from non-state entities. In many of the cases, the government adopted such a policy only after other measures had been applied, often over many decades, such as physically blocking off and then ignoring the festering areas, negotiating multiple iterations of *modus vivendi* with the non-state entities controlling the urban space, or buying them off with political handouts.

When retaking or clearing operations have been employed since the 1990s in Latin America, they have typically involved the insertion of special forces to supplement or temporarily replace regular police forces deemed too weak, incompetent, or corrupt to redress the levels of violent criminality. Such physical retaking of urban space may have different connotations in different urban contexts. In Rio de Janeiro, police were often physically blocked by the drug gangs from entering the *favelas* and, apart from highly violent raids into poor neighborhoods, remained altogether absent. In the slums of São Paulo, police were not as completely absent, but their presence consisted merely of sporadic and ineffective patrols. In the *colonías* of Ciudad Juárez, police, although present to some extent, were still ineffective and unmotivated to roll back the control of the DTOs.

### ***What Clearing Means: Arrests?***

The underlying concept of the clearing operations is that either military forces or SWAT-type police forces retake urban spaces from criminal groups and, after a period of suppressing local violent non-state entities, hand law enforcement responsibilities back to regular police forces.

To the extent that military forces are deployed, they must be deployed with a very clear operational mandate as to their specific task in the clearing operations. Are they supposed to merely protect police forces, with the latter remaining in charge of arrests and investigations? Are they to patrol

the streets, on the assumption that such patrols will reduce the violence, or are they mandated to capture designated high-value targets? Not specifying the military's role to such a detailed level limits the effectiveness of its operations and complicates interagency cooperation. Since 2006, Mexico provides ample examples of such problems with an underspecified mandate for the use of military forces in domestic law enforcement operations.<sup>13</sup>

A primary question that needs to be answered in preparing such a clearing operation is whether or not to announce the force insertion in advance. Announcing the raid in advance, as the government of Jamaica did when it arrested Christopher "Dudus" Coke, can be an important mechanism for mitigating violence levels, limiting collateral damage, and minimizing other harms to the community.<sup>14</sup> For example, advance warning can allow citizens to escape the crossfire by moving out of town for the duration of the operation. (Although, such population displacements, even when temporary, entail their own tough consequences and costs.) Prior announcements of clearing operations may also enhance the transparency of law enforcement actions, an outcome that can be a building block toward constructing community trust in the government. Such transparency can be particularly important in areas where previous police incursions have been highly violent and brutal. Furthermore, the early warning may deter criminal gangs from resisting the law enforcement's actions, once they appreciate the full scope and preponderance of state power they will face.

The takeover of Rocinha went particularly smoothly and with minimal violence (at least in its initial phases as of the writing of this paper) even though law enforcement forces deployed nearly 3,000 police officers and soldiers, armed vehicles, and several helicopters. But much of the local population appeared unfazed by the show of force and at least the initial phases of the takeover.<sup>15</sup> It needs to be emphasized, however, that by Rio's standards Rocinha was a relatively "peaceful" *favela* before the takeover; so much so that it had been experiencing a remarkable growth in local and foreign tourism for about a year before the November 2011 takeover.

However, such announcements come with costs. They can allow the criminal groups to dig in and develop defenses, preventing law enforcement forces from being able to capitalize on the element of surprise. Such surprise often facilitates the capture of key criminal group leaders. Rio de Janeiro's police were lucky (even to the extent that they received a tip-off and set up effective checkpoints at the exits from the *favela*) that they managed to capture Antonio Bonfim Lopes, Rocinha's key crime

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<sup>13</sup> See Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Addressing Organized Crime, Drug Trafficking, and Violence in Mexico: Lessons from Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Michoacán," section "Ciudad Juárez and the Evolution of Mexico's Security Policy," Brookings Institution, September 2011.

<sup>14</sup> See Arias, "The Impact of Organized Crime on Governance and State-building."

<sup>15</sup> Simon Romero, "Police Take Control of Strategic Rio Slum," *The New York Times*, November 13, 2011.



boss from the Amigos dos Amigos gang, as he tried to leave the *favela* in the trunk of a car before the announced invasion. Several of Lopes's top lieutenants were also captured. Frequently, however, crime bosses escape. That was the case in the December 2010 takeover of the Alemão *favela*, despite the fact that more than 2,600 officers of the Military Police Battalion for Special Operations (BOPE)<sup>16</sup> participated in the operation that left dozens dead.

Even worse, these announcements can induce members of the criminal groups to melt into the population or move to other areas while special forces are present. Government forces may find it extraordinarily difficult to sift through a population, identify criminal gang members, and locate reputed gang leaders—especially when gang members come from the community, enjoy a degree of its support, and have a superior knowledge of the local urban terrain. Because criminal organizations may have accumulated substantial political capital with the local population and because the population may fear violent reprisals for cooperating with law enforcement forces, the local population is often extremely reluctant to provide actionable intelligence that can lead to the arrest of key leaders. Thus, Brazil's BOPE forces—heavily-equipped and military-like—struggled to identify and arrest gang members during clearing operations in São Paulo and Rio, even though the BOPE tried to interrogate virtually every single male in some of the retaken shantytowns and impose other population controls. When the local population provides intelligence at all, it is usually in areas where a gang had previously alienated the community through the use of violence that surpasses typical norms in the area.

Accordingly, policymakers need to carefully assess, on a case-by-case basis, the extent to which *not* announcing an operation in advance will facilitate making arrests that critically weaken the criminal groups and can help anchor state presence in the community. Such assessments need to consider how easy it is for the criminal groups to generate new effective leadership and how much the government's own violent tactics will alienate the community from the state. The fact that someone is the Number One or Two or Three in a criminal group does not mean that arresting him (or in some cases her) would result in the collapse of the criminal group. Many so-called high-value targets (HVTs) should rather be thought of as high-visibility targets instead of having a real interdiction value in the sense that their arrests will severely limit the regeneration and leadership capacity of the criminal group. Historically, criminal groups have been able to replace their captured leaders rather easily, far more so than terrorist groups. Mexico has been learning this painful lesson over the past five years.

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<sup>16</sup> For details on the various police forces in Brazil, including their city, state, and federal units, see Luis Bitencourt, "The Security Challenges for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games," Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Center and FIU-Applied Research Center, July 2011.

## *Who Provides Intelligence?*

Frequently, intelligence flows during clearing operations come from rival criminal groups or militias. During military operations in Tijuana between 2009 and 2010, the Sinaloa DTO was allegedly effective in taking advantage of a government-installed hotline to provide information on its rivals.<sup>17</sup> In Medellín, in the early 1990s, the Cali cartel and Los Pepes, a militia precursor to the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) paramilitary forces, provided critical intelligence on Pablo Escobar's Medellín cartel and physically cooperated with Colombia's security forces in the Medellín cartel's destruction.<sup>18</sup> In a similar way, Medellín crime lord Don Berna cooperated with the Colombian military in destroying the presence of the FARC in the city in 2002. It would be foolhardy, of course, not to take advantage of such intelligence flows, especially as other criminal entities may have far superior knowledge of the targeted criminal group than the government.

However, intelligence from such sources needs to be very carefully vetted. All too often outside forces fail to notice the biased-nature of the information, not comprehending that either "the population" or specially-cultivated intelligence assets provide selective information that privileges their ethnic or criminal group under the guise of reporting on criminals, insurgents, or terrorists. For example, since 2006, U.S. and Ethiopian forces in Somalia were repeatedly fed intelligence by allies in the Darod clan. The Darod militias supposedly identified al-Qaeda-linked Islamic Courts Union or al-Shabab terrorists, however, many of those identified were simply influential members of the rival Hawiye clan, whom the Darod sought to eliminate. This manipulation of the intelligence processes allowed the Darod militias to exert far greater control of Mogadishu, its political power centers, and its criminal markets than they had enjoyed before. Intelligence-provision in Afghanistan to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) forces has been similarly manipulated for political and criminal gains. Such inadvertent selective enforcement can undermine the entire project and ignite new ethnic or clan-based conflict in the city or warfare among its organized crime groups.

One easy mechanism to enhance intelligence is to develop good maps of the slum to be invaded or already invaded. Slums emerge and expand without urban planning; streets tend to be narrow; and property rights are highly unstable. Thus, government officials and police frequently lack a strong sense of their physical layout, let alone who lives where. Alleys often do not have names. Developing

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<sup>17</sup> See Vanda Felbab-Brown, "The Tijuana Law Enforcement Model and Its Limitations," section of "Addressing Organized Crime, Drug Trafficking, and Violence in Mexico: Lessons from Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Michoacán," Brookings Institution, September 2011.

<sup>18</sup> For details, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, "The Violent Drug Market in Mexico and Lessons from Colombia," Brookings Institution, March 2009, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/03\\_mexico\\_drug\\_market\\_felbabbrown/03\\_mexico\\_drug\\_market\\_felbabbrown.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/03_mexico_drug_market_felbabbrown/03_mexico_drug_market_felbabbrown.pdf).

an accurate map of the slum is a simple but important mechanism to enhance operational awareness and build up intelligence.

Beyond accepting intelligence from problematic sources, relying on or sanctioning actions of criminal groups or militias against other violent non-state entities tends to come with severe costs for the state and society. Both in Colombia and in Rio de Janeiro, where such groups emerged after 2003<sup>19</sup>, the militias' ability to deliver real security was limited. Closely connected to regular police forces, they often repressed the criminal or insurgent groups only as much as was necessary to minimally satisfy their state or business sponsors, but they turned out to be extremely abusive toward the community. They took over various forms of extortion and criminal activity and provided even fewer public goods and services to the marginalized community than did the criminal or insurgent entities they displaced. And while state or municipal authorities and business elite often found themselves less threatened by the new criminal order, the community in the marginalized urban space often suffered greater physical abuse and socioeconomic privation than before.

Moreover, apart from the inherent violations of the rule of law and citizens' human rights, the control of such actors presents a huge challenge to the state. Even after Don Berna was extradited to the United States in 2008, the remnants of his criminal militias have physically targeted ex-FARC combatants who have gone through the reintegration process sponsored by the Colombian government, de facto preventing them from living in Medellín and undermining the government's security policy.<sup>20</sup> In Mexico in the 1980s and 1990s, DTOs managed by the government's law enforcement agencies were able to corrupt and completely eviscerate these agencies. More often than not, places as diverse as Medellín, Ciudad Juárez, Mogadishu, and Karachi have learned that, over time, state-tolerated militias and criminal groups start disobeying their political and state overlords. At times, they even try to become the powerbrokers dictating the terms of business and politics.

### ***What Clearing Means: Displacement of Criminals?***

Displacement of criminal groups to other areas is also costly. The state often lacks the capacity to inject sufficient law enforcement forces to all areas. Instead of achieving a spreading ink-spot of security (with the zone of effective public safety steadily expanding), clearing operations may essentially amount to a shell game, with violent criminality and its associated social ills moving to other areas

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Paulo Jorge Ribeiro and Rosane Oliveira, "The Impact of Militia Actions on Public Security Policies in Rio de Janeiro," *Transnational Institute Briefing Series*, March 2010, <http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/CrimeGlobalization-paper.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Author's interviews in Medellín, January 2011.

of weak state presence. To a significant degree, such displacement is taking place in Rio de Janeiro under the current UPP policy, with violent criminal gangs and criminal enterprises relocating from the *favelas* near the city center to the southern outskirts of the city.

The state may prefer a relocation of criminals if the clearing operations retake a particularly strategic area, such as a city center. Since city centers tend to be areas where business elites operate and the city administrative functions are concentrated, the state may have legitimate reasons to prioritize them. If the urban business elite decide to move away, as is, for example, happening in Acapulco, such an exodus may lead to a brain drain and capital flight. That can, in turn, undermine both the administrative capacity of local authorities and the legal economy and hence job generation and fiscal revenues of the city. Insecure business elites who enjoy important political power may be particularly effective advocates of the use of heavy-handed, human-rights-insensitive crime suppression measures, such as the various *mano dura* approaches that have proliferated around Latin America. Business elites may also be highly motivated and tend to be well-positioned to sponsor illegal militias that go beyond private security companies. Such extralegal “anti-crime” groups generate their own criminality, deeply undermine citizens’ security, and weaken the state in the long run. Thus, enhancing public safety in the city center may well be an appropriate priority for the state. But without a credible plan to expand public safety for less privileged citizens and areas beyond the city center, merely pacifying the city center is insufficient. In the worst outcome, the government’s actions can spread violent criminality without achieving adequate improvement anywhere.

## Sustaining Security

The other serious consequence of allowing criminals to temporarily go to ground as a result of announcing clearing operations in advance is that when the heavily-armed police forces leave the retaken territory, the regular police forces may not be able to hold the territory. The regular police forces may be unable to cope with a highly violent effort on the part of the criminal groups to take the territory. For example, since the BOPE forces left Cidade de Deus, one of Rio’s famous *favelas* and one of the first to be treated to the UPP policy, and security there was transferred to the UPP community police, rumors have circulated several times that the Comando Vermelho gang was massing forces to push out the UPP police and reoccupy the favela. Although fortunately such a takeover has not materialized, the mere rumors have frightened the community sufficiently to limit extensive cooperation with the government.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Author’s interviews in Rio de Janeiro, January 2010.

Even if criminals are pushed out from the city center to the outskirts or if a *cordon sanitaire* can be established around selected strategic areas, the effects of insecurity in the outskirts, such as from extortion driving legal enterprises out of business, may leak back into the city center, undermining security achievements in the prioritized zones. Thus the selection of what problematic urban areas will be selected for law enforcement action needs to be guided by a strong focus on the sustainability of the security to be provided in those spaces, rather than, for example, on the basis of the intensity of violence in an area or its electoral significance.

The insertion of heavily-armed police regular military force almost always tends to be temporary—for two basic reasons: First, the state often lacks sufficient numbers of such forces to cover all the areas in-need with a sufficiently-high troop density to achieve preponderance of power. Second, the heavy-handed use of force has other important shortcomings—in terms of civil liberties and human rights protection, but also in terms of developing local intelligence. Even when actually subject to substantial human rights training, a rare occurrence for the heavily-armed police and military forces in Latin America, the SWAT forces are built specifically to project great force. For that reason and because their personnel are alien to the retaken community, they often have to struggle to establish trust, develop deep knowledge of the community, and generate local intelligence.

### ***Timing the Handover***

Timing the handover to regular police forces—ideally, community police—is complex. In some cases, such as in the São Paulo operations, the BOPE forces were inserted into the shantytowns with a specific timetable: they were expected to be present for about eight weeks after which law enforcement would be handed over to regular police forces. In other places, such as in Ciudad Juárez, the duration of the deployment of the military forces was not specified in advance. However, the departure of the military forces from Ciudad Juárez was driven far more by a negative reaction of Ciudad Juárez residents to the excesses of the military forces and by the failure of the military forces to reduce violence levels in the city than by their success in doing so. If the heavy forces are pulled out prematurely and the cleared area is again retaken by violent criminal entities, the ability of the state to generate trust in its law enforcement a second time around will be greatly undermined. Rather than operating on a predetermined handover schedule, a careful assessment of the criminal groups' strength remaining after clearing operations and of the capacity of regular police forces is likely to be a better guide for the handover. However, the goal should be to minimize the duration, extent, and lethality of the heavy forces as much as possible.

### *Establishing the Local Community's Trust*

Unlike heavily-armed law enforcement units, regular police forces, especially if designed as community police, are able to develop the trust of and support from the local population. Thus they potentially can move away from solely crime suppression (also known as incident-based policing, i.e. responding only after a crime takes place) toward crime prevention (i.e., developing policies to prevent the incidence of crime in the first place). However, for them to develop such capacity, they need to solve different intelligence problems than units designed for the capture of high-value criminal targets. Instead of consisting of vetted, insulated, small intelligence units needed for the latter, community police forces need to have a permanent and widespread presence within the community. They need to conduct frequent on-foot patrols; a permanent police station in an urban slum where the police play cards inside the station and rarely venture outside among the slum residents will not be able to develop much local knowledge and intelligence capacity.

Moreover, sufficiently robust patrol units need to be placed in designated beats for substantial amounts of time, often for at least over a year. Without a sufficient density of police officers per neighborhood, the beat patrols will feel vulnerable and may be tempted to retreat to the police station. Concentrating police forces, including police patrol presence, may well be politically difficult, but it is necessary.

In order to know whom the criminals are and discover the pattern of their activities, the local police patrols need to get to know the community and interact with it frequently in a nonthreatening manner. The UPP forces in Rio de Janeiro have been operating under such guidelines, and in at least some “pacified” *favelas* have been began developing the trust of the community.<sup>22</sup> However, the success has not been uniform, and although the UPP community police concept is at the core of the Pacification policy, UPP forces have not been deployed to some of the most significant retaken *favelas*. Because the effort has struggled to train sufficient numbers of UPP officers, as of November 2011, no UPP officers, for example, have been deployed to the Alemão *favela*. Yet for many reasons, Alemão represents a critical test for the effectiveness of the Pacification policy. It is one of the largest *favelas* where the population has historically been deeply alienated from the police forces and the state. Before the UPP takeover, gang control in the *favela* had been firm and the police used to be physically blocked off from entering. The *favela* has experienced a great deal of criminal and state-sponsored violence, and its takeover in December 2009 was rather bloody.

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<sup>22</sup> Author's interviews in the Babylonia *favela* in Rio de Janeiro. See Juliana Barbassa, “Police Occupation Allows Carnival into Rio Slums,” *Associated Press*, March 8, 2011.

Colombia too has been unveiling an urban policing plan built upon principles of frequent nonthreatening interaction with the local population and problem-oriented policing (analyzing where, when, how, and why particular types of crime occur and employing best-practices responses to address the problem),<sup>23</sup> called *Plan Nacional de Vigilancia Comunitaria por Cuadrantes*. But it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the policy.

Ideally, the police will not only get to know the community, but actively involve the community in identification of crime, through methods such as community-based crime mapping,<sup>24</sup> and in developing responses to crime. Such community-based and problem-oriented policing tends to be particularly effective. Bogotá, a Latin American city that has experienced some of the most dramatic reductions in homicides as a result of a range of well-designed anti-crime policies was, for example, very effective in employing such community-based and problem-oriented policing approaches. It has to be noted, however, that Bogotá never adopted the heavily-armed force takeover model and that much of its crime reduction took place outside of the slum areas of the city. Rather, the public-safety policies, initiated by mayor Antanas Mockus and sustained and expanded during the administration of Enrique Peñalosa, involved restoring mayoral influence and developing good relations with the police in the context of nation-wide U.S.-assisted police reforms and professionalization; it included training civil society and public safety experts, restoring parks where many crimes took place and expanding public spaces, closing bars during hours of high crime, and expanding the public transportation system. As a result, the homicide rate fell from 80 to about 20 per 100,000.<sup>25</sup>

As the effectiveness of community-oriented policing have become increasingly appreciated in the United States and its adoption promoted in police reforms around the world, many different police forces around the world are now claiming that they practice community-based policing. Yet there is great variation in what the police forces actually do even though they choose to label their policies as community-oriented policing. In the United States and United Kingdom, the term denotes a proactive approach that prioritizes crime prevention by building relations with the population and producing a new order based on close ties between the police and the community.<sup>26</sup> In other countries, including

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<sup>23</sup> For details on problem-oriented policing, see United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Introductory Handbook on Policing Urban Spaces*, [http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/11-80387\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/11-80387_ebook.pdf): 19, 26, and 28.

<sup>24</sup> For one South African example of the effective use of crime-mapping based on input from the local community, see Susan Liebermann and Justine Coulson, "Participatory Mapping for Crime Prevention in South Africa: Local Solutions to Local Problems," *Environment and Urbanization*, 16(2), 2004: 125-134.

<sup>25</sup> For details, see María Victoria Llorente and Angela Rivas, *Case Study: Reduction of Crime in Bogotá—A Decade of Citizens' Security Policies* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> UNODC: 27.

across Latin America, the term has been applied to a variety of law enforcement practices, some of which are quite removed in spirit from the U.S. community-based approaches.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, community-oriented policing should not be confused with vigilantism. Although widely practiced in the slums of many parts of the world, including in Latin America, and although frequently accepted as legitimate by some local populations and tolerated or even encouraged by official police forces, such community militias and “watch groups” often are the source of much indiscriminate violence, extrajudicial killings, ethnic cleansing, looting, and other forms of crime. They rarely truly reduce crime—often merely replacing one form of criminality with another—while they further undermine the rule of law and sever the bonds between citizens and the state. Many cities in sub-Saharan Africa are particularly notorious for such vigilante violence.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Standing Up Police Forces and Advancing Police Reform***

Standing up police forces takes time. In the United States, regular police officers, for example, receive at least six months of training. In Mexico, where police reform is a major component of the security overhaul, many police officers receive only eight weeks of training. The quality of training—from how to handle a weapon to respect for human rights—also matters critically as does the post-training standard operating procedures and leadership of the units into which new recruits are placed. Even under auspicious circumstances, effective police reform often requires a decade: essentially a generation of officers needs to be promoted from beat cops to key leadership positions and commitment to police reform needs to be sustained during that period at all levels of the police hierarchy.

Conducting police reform during times of intense and highly violent criminal activity tends to be particularly problematic. Law enforcement becomes overwhelmed and its energies preoccupied with responding to crime (sometimes even hanging on for dear life) and diverted away from reforms. Thus, if some urban areas register a decline in violent crime, the state needs to take advantage of such

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, John Bailey and Lucía Dammert, “Public Security and Police Reform in the Americas,” in John Bailey and Lucía Dammert, eds., *Public Security and Police Reform in the Americas* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006): 1-23.

<sup>28</sup> For sub-Saharan Africa’s vigilante groups and their emergence in the absence of effective state policing, see, for example, Bruce Baker, “Protection from Crime: What is on Offer for Africans?,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 22(2), 2004: 165-188; Bruce Baker, *Taking the Law into Their Own Hands* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); David Pratten, “Introduction to the Politics of Protection: Perspectives on Vigilantism in Nigeria,” *Africa* 78(1), 2008: 1-15; Makubetse Sekhonyane and Antoinette Louw, *Violent Justice: Vigilantism and the State’s Response*, Monograph Series No. 72 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2002); Loren Landau and Tamlyn Monson, “Immigration and Subterranean Sovereignty in South African Cities,” in Anne Clunan and Harold Trinkunas, eds., *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010): 153-174; Loren Landau, “Urbanization, Nativism, and the Rule of Law in South Africa’s ‘Forbidden’ Cities,” *Third World Quarterly*, 26(7), 2005: 1115-34; Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999); and Jean-Francois Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Beatrice Hibou, eds., *The Criminalization of the State in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).



opportunities to deepen and strengthen police reform. Such an opportunity should not be missed even if such a decline in criminal violence comes as a result of a truce among the criminal entities.

### ***Establishing Oversight Mechanisms***

Apart from having a sufficient density of police officers and sufficient intensity of nonthreatening interactions with the community, establishing the trust of the local community also requires setting up oversight and accountability mechanisms of police forces. Such mechanisms include establishing uncorrupt internal affairs divisions within police forces as well as joint citizen-police boards that allow experts and community representatives to provide input to law enforcement, and mandating reporting and careful examination of violent police actions. In Great Britain or the United States, for example, police officers often have to file a report every time they discharge their weapon.

### **Holding and Tackling “New” Crime**

Apart from preserving and enlarging the security generated by suppression of the previous criminal groups of the marginalized urban areas, the regular police forces also need to be able to suppress the street crime and new organized crime that are likely to emerge in the “pacified” areas. The destruction of the previous criminal order does not necessarily mean that a benevolent crime-free order emerges in its wake.

Often, criminal groups function as security providers (suboptimal as they are), regulating theft, robberies, extortions, rapes and murders and dispensing their rules and punishments for transgressions. The removal of the criminal gangs often results in a rise of street crime that can become a critical nuisance to the community and discredit the presence of the state and its law enforcement. That has in fact been the case in both Medellín in the post-Don Berna order as well as in the pacified *favelas* of Rio.<sup>29</sup> Especially in areas where police have been trained as light counterinsurgency forces (in Latin America, unlike South Asia, this is more often a problem in rural areas rather than in urban spaces) they may be undertrained, under-resourced, and not focused on addressing street crime. Even community-policing forces may have little capacity to undertake criminal investigations that lead to meaningful prosecution yet police units specialized in criminal investigations may continue to be too far away and have limited access to a pacified urban space to conduct investigations that reduce street crime. Providing training to community police forces for tackling at least some street crime and streamlining and facilitating the presence of specialized criminal investigation units, such as homicide squads and prosecutors, are of critical importance for improving public safety for the community and for anchoring state presence in the pacified areas.

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<sup>29</sup> Author’s interviews in Rio de Janeiro, January 2010 and Medellín, February 2011.

Moreover, tackling street crime often is far easier than tackling organized crime. Solutions are often fairly easy if problem-oriented policing approaches are undertaken. For example, understanding that street lights reduce criminality and bringing in electrification often is a policy not terribly difficult to undertake. Keeping parks maintained and hedges trimmed to enhance visibility can go a long way to increase citizens' sense of security and reduce crime. Similarly, realizing that most criminal activity in a locale takes place within a particular hour and maximizing most patrols during that hour may significantly reduce criminality and increase citizens' perceptions of safety.<sup>30</sup> Bogotá's success in reducing homicide levels benefited to a great extent from combating street crime via such relatively simple measures.<sup>31</sup>

Targeting street crime not only increases the legitimacy of the newly-present police forces, it also simplifies their job. If problem-oriented strategies toward street crime reduce its prevalence, even if they only reduce "incidental" crime driven by easy opportunities (such as the presence of many dark places in a city with vulnerable targets and overwhelmed police forces), they enable police forces to concentrate on more difficult crime problems, including organized crime and entrenched violent criminal gangs. Thus reducing incidental and street crime greatly enhances intelligence gathering and analysis needed to combat organized crime by increasing intelligence flows from the population and by reducing "noise."

Such street-crime-related initiatives can also involve weapons collections drives. While the evidence is complex and mixed regarding the effects of weapons prevalence on organized crime and strategic warfare among organized-crime groups, there is compelling evidence that the reduction in firearms availability has great potential to reduce unpremeditated murders and undirected street violence, such as the escalation of street disputes into shooting encounters. Such repeated weapons collections drives were, for example, a highly successful part of the efforts to bring the state to São Paulo's shantytowns. Spearheaded by a São Paulo NGO—Sou da Paz,<sup>32</sup> the effort mobilized entire communities within the shantytowns and did have an important impact on reducing violence on the street, once the state had retaken the spaces previously controlled by organized crime groups. Reducing the prevalence of weapons in a community, including the way police use and carry firearms, also has helped decrease homicides by 40 percent and gun crimes by 29 percent in the city of San Martín, El Salvador in the early part of this decade.<sup>33</sup> (Reducing killings by police also helps to reduce the aggregate levels of violence; indeed, it was an important cause of the reduction in Rio de Janeiro's

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<sup>30</sup> For details, see UNODC.

<sup>31</sup> Llorente and Rivas.

<sup>32</sup> For details on the work of Sou da Paz, including the weapons collection drives, see <http://www.soudapaz.org>.

<sup>33</sup> Carola Mittrany, "Menos Armas, Menos Mortes," *Comunidade Segura*, August 24, 2006, <http://www.comunidadessegura.org/pt-br/node/30075>.

homicide rate by nearly a half over the past decade to 25.8 per 100,000. Still, Rio police continue to kill hundreds of suspects every year.)<sup>34</sup>

Under some circumstances, law enforcement actions against the governing criminal entity may give rise to intense turf warfare among other criminal groups over the spoils of the criminal market. After Don Berna was extradited to the United States, for example, many criminal gangs in and around Medellín, including two large ones led by Sebastian and Valenciano, began fighting each other over smuggling routes, local drug distribution, prostitution enterprises, and protection rackets. The turf war triggered extensive violence, including homicide rates of over 100 per 100,000 in 2008-2009 and on par with those before the FARC was defeated in the city and Don Berna established his “narco-peace.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly in Mexico, law enforcement actions against established DTOs triggered intense violence among splinter groups and new gangs, such as in the state of Michoacán where interdiction operations against La Familia Michoacana have given rise to Los Templarios. That criminal gang has since been battling with Los Zetas, another of Mexican DTOs originating as splinter group, over control of criminal markets in the state. Such turf wars can compromise the physical and economic security of local communities far more than even the previous criminal order.

In some circumstances, an urban area to which state presence has been extended may even suffer a peace deficit. Along with or instead of the hoped-for peace dividend of legal businesses moving into the urban space and providing legal jobs and income, the new areas may be attractive as a source of new land to be taken over by nefarious land developers. Such demands for land in the newly “pacified” urban areas may generate new forced land displacement, instead of benevolent gentrification. In rural spaces, the cause of such new illegal displacement may be the presence of profitable resources, such as gold, coal, and others, or the agricultural potential of the land, such as for African oil palm plantations. In urban spaces, housing development and real estate speculation may well drive such illegal displacement. Competition over state resources inserted to “pacified” areas, such as for socioeconomic development, may generate new temptations of illegal behavior. Militias or new criminal groups seeking to set up new protection rackets and usurp the inserted state resources may well emerge. Many urban spaces in Colombia suffer from such old-new criminality today, as they have historically.

Local community forces, even while effective at keeping the old criminals out, may not have the capacity to prevent such nefarious activities cloaked as legal development. At the same time, criminal units specializing in white-collar organized crime and asset expropriation are often located in the city

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<sup>34</sup> Juan Forero, “Rio’s Slum Get Another Look Amid Economic Development,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Felbab-Brown, “Reducing Urban Violence: Lessons from Medellín, Colombia;” and Isacson.

center of a state capital far away from the “pacified” slums and may be paying little attention to such phenomena in the newly-liberated spaces. Moreover, since such land takeover and asset expropriation may well be linked to legal and politically-powerful developers, municipal authorities may lack the motivation to pay close attention to such criminal developments in the “pacified” urban areas.

Yet without diligent and concerted law enforcement actions against such new crime, the benefits of the complex and costly state interventions in the marginalized urban areas may be altogether lost. Instead of addressing the causes of illegal economies and violent organized crime by strengthening effective and accountable state presence, the state intervention may ultimately only alter the manifestation of illegality and displace existing problems to other areas. Not only criminality and criminal gangs, but also the marginalized residents of the urban shantytowns themselves may merely be forced out to other slums.

## Expanding Access to Official Justice

Even an effective extension of law enforcement to areas previously controlled by non-state actors amounts to an incomplete extension of the rule of law as long as local populations in the urban spaces continue to lack access to officially-sanctioned, speedy, and legitimate justice. Expanding the justice system to cover areas where previously no courts were present, however, often takes considerable time. Rarely is the planning on how to accomplish such an extension of the official justice system or other officially-sanctioned dispute resolution mechanisms an early part of the planning for the law enforcement actions to retake the slums.

As a result, a dispute-resolution vacuum often emerges immediately following the clearing operations. The criminals who had previously provided dispute resolution mechanisms—in some cases, like Rio’s *favelas* or Medellín’s *comunidades*, holding courts and meting out punishments for domestic violence, rape, murder, and other transgressions that they themselves did not commit—are no longer in a position to provide such public goods, suboptimal as they may be. The absence of such dispute resolution mechanisms and their enforcement is one impetus for the rise of crime and disorder in the post-clearing phase. If the rise of such street crime and disorder are intense, the population often sours on the presence of the state. In the absence of dispute resolution mechanisms, legal economies also struggle to take off since property rights are weak and transaction costs high. The need for the disbursement of justice may stimulate the emergence of new militia groups or criminal entities that, all over again, present themselves as providers of public goods, whether claiming to work alongside the state or outright against it.

Even where the official legal system is present in some form—some courts physically exist in the slums for example—if it is too slow and onerous in dispensing justice, the population may continue to seek out unofficial dispute resolution mechanisms provided by the remnants of the old criminal overlords or by new crime bosses who have emerged in their wake. Thus in Medellín’s *comunidades* today, many residents still prefer the unofficial rulings dispensed by Sebastian’s and Valenciano’s groups (two new large criminal associations). Many residents of Cúcuta, continuing to find the official justice system inaccessible, still go to the present *bandas criminales*.<sup>36</sup> To the extent that the official justice system is slow, onerous, and arbitrary even where present, the difficulties of extending it to the cleared slums in a way that satisfies the local population’s need for the dispensation of justice become all the more complicated.

Given the difficulties and time needed to build and expand the official system it may often make sense to look for other dispute resolution mechanisms that are officially-sanctioned by the state as a temporary measure. Such a move, however, is not without problems: In rural places, the temptation may be to resort to clan, tribal, or patron justice dispensation mechanisms. Such an approach, however, deeply underestimates the degree to which such traditional mechanisms may have been eroded—be it by wars, such as in Afghanistan or Pakistan, or by modernization without the full extension of the state, such as in Mexico. In urban spaces, such mechanisms may never have existed at all since demographic shifts from rural to urban areas do not closely coincide with tribal and clan structures. It is precisely the absence of both the traditional mechanisms and the state that allows criminal and armed groups unfettered opportunities to position themselves as providers of order and rules. Other dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mobile courts that visit an area once a month for citizens to lodge disputes, or Colombia’s *casas de justicia*, often prove more promising stopgap justice measures while the state is working to expand the official justice system to previously marginalized areas.

Expanding the rule of law is greatly enhanced by engaging civil society and the local community. The local community is not always unbiased; in fact, it can be highly discriminatory in its promotion of rules and public order and dispensation of punishments. A careful assessment of the “neutrality” of community leaders and their proxies, political and criminal entanglements of the local community, and social rifts pervading the local community is necessary in order to avoid promoting a highly discriminatory justice system. However, the local community and its civil society can be important sources for promoting the rule of law and reducing violence and conflict—by mobilizing for peace, supporting police measures, and resolving disputes before they escalate into violence or before they have to be adjudicated by official courts. One such example is the Peace Management Initiative in

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<sup>36</sup> Author’s interviews in Medellín and Cúcuta, Colombia, January 2011.

Jamaica, a government-civil-society collaboration in which negotiators visit communities at risk of conflict to negotiate settlements among rival groups.<sup>37</sup>

Overall, however, getting the justice element right is often the most elusive element in efforts to bring the state to urban spaces previously controlled by non-state actors.

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<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Aldrie Henry-Lee, "Poverty and Conflict Management in Jamaica," in Cedric Grant and Mark Kirton, eds., *Governance, Conflict Analysis, and Conflict Resolution* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2007); and Francine Jácome, Paz Milet, and Andrés Serbin, "Conflict Prevention, Civil Society, and International Organizations: The Difficult Path for Peacebuilding in Latin America and the Caribbean," Paper prepared for Focal, 2005, <http://www.andresserbin.com>.

# Building Up Legal Economies in Poor Urban Areas

## When and How to Suppress Existing Illegal Economies

One of the acute dilemmas that law enforcement forces in the retaken territory encounter is whether or not, how quickly, and in what form to suppress illegal economies that exist in the retaken territory. Often illegal economies—such as local drug trade and distribution in Rio’s *favelas*, production of pirated goods in the *colonías* of Tijuana, smuggling legal goods in Karachi, or production of synthetic drugs in the slums of Johannesburg—represent the mainstream economic activity of the urban slum.

In rural spaces where an illicit economy, such as the cultivation of illicit crops, intermeshes with conflict, military forces seeking to retake the territory are often tempted to destroy the illicit economy in the first place as a means of bankrupting the belligerents that profit from the illicit economy. The desired goal of physically weakening the belligerents is rarely achieved and the negative consequence of such an approach is that it thrusts the population dependent on the illicit economy into the hands of the belligerents.<sup>38</sup> Apart from the desirability of such an *a priori* destruction of the illicit economy, in urban spaces, such an approach is physically impossible. Unlike in rural spaces where the state may believe that aerial spraying will allow it to suppress the illegal economy even without territorial control, a systematic destruction of existing illegal economies requires extensive and firm state presence in the areas. Otherwise, the government is limited to conducting occasional raids against houses with hydroponic cultivation of marijuana and production of methamphetamines or limited arrests of local drug traffickers, but the illegal economy will recover from such limited disruptions rather speedily. Thus, it is often in the post-clearing phase when managers of the government’s policy really encounter the decision whether or not to disrupt local illegal economies.

There may be several reasons why the government would want to suppress the illegal economy, especially one as politically-sensitive as local drug trade. First, the government may consider it per-

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<sup>38</sup> For details, see Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up*.

nicious that the illicit flows from the marginalized urban space flow to another outside community, such as in the case of the cocaine distribution in Rio's *favelas* supplying Rio's middle and upper class residents in the rest of the city. Communities surrounding the consumer groups may be putting pressure on the government to suppress the flows. Even if the state is actually successful in disrupting the flows in a particular locale, as long as demand persists, the trade will simply relocate elsewhere.

Another reason for seeking to disrupt established illegal markets is the oft-repeated mantra that price-profitability is the most important motive for people participating in illegal economies. As long as the illegal economy brings more money than a local legal economy, the logic goes, people will not be motivated to abandon illegal enterprises. Yet there is much evidence that this logic does not hold. First, illegal economies do not always bring more profit than legal ones. Second, other factors, such as access to legal markets, are often more important decision-drivers than mere price profitability.<sup>39</sup> Frequently, low-level participants in illegal economies behave far more as risk-minimizers rather than profit-maximizers. Of course, if an extant legal economy does not generate sufficient income to assure at least basic livelihoods for the household and jeopardizes physical security of the household (such as if a household is threatened by paramilitary groups that seek to take over the land) people will not switch to legal economies.

Government officials may also seek to disrupt a local illegal economy in the taken-over urban slum because they fear that the presence of the illegal economy will pull violence back into the urban space. After all, it is precisely because the illegal economy cannot be officially regulated by law and the state that non-state regulators emerge. But since black markets lack strong enforcement of property rights and easy access to dispute resolution mechanisms, they are often pervaded by violence.<sup>40</sup> (Some violence is often present although criminal markets even in the same commodity, such as drugs, vary greatly in the intensity of violence).

The government may also fear that a policy of tolerating illegal economies will perpetuate the persistence of anti-social values, send wrong signals to the youth of the urban space, and prevent the slum community from internalizing the rule-of-law values of the rest of the society. Such logic is at the core of one of the driving concepts of criminal justice developed in the United States over the past thirty years, the so-called "broken windows" theory.<sup>41</sup> This approach argues that controlling

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<sup>39</sup> David Mansfield, "The Economic Superiority of Illicit Drug Production: Myth and Reality—Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan", Paper prepared for the International Conference on Alternative Development in drug control and cooperation, Feldafing, September 7-12, 2002, August 2001, author's copy.

<sup>40</sup> For details, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Rules and Regulations in Ungoverned Spaces: Illicit Economies, Criminals and Bel-ligerents," in Harold Trinkunas and Anne Clunna, eds. *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010): 175-192.

<sup>41</sup> George Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows," *The Atlantic*, 249(93), March 1982: 29-38.



crime depends on dealing with even minor crime disturbances, in order to communicate to society and potential offenders that a space is being effectively monitored and that police do have the capacity and will to enforce the law. In many Latin American countries, especially in reaction to public outcry against the rise of crime, this concept became transformed into zero-tolerance policies and *mano dura* approaches, although both have proven ineffective in the Latin American setting. Such a lack of prioritization of crimes diverts police focus from the most violent and serious offenses, while the sheer volume of crime overwhelms police forces and results in their becoming apathetic if not favorably-disposed to extrajudicial measures, including by vigilante groups and militias.

Suppressing local illegal economies in urban spaces, especially early on in the post-clearing or during the clearing phase, comes with significant costs. Since replacing entrenched illegal economies with legal ones take a long time and success is dependent on establishing security and providing dispute resolution mechanisms, disruption of illegal economies can produce massive drops in household income for marginalized populations. Such immense drops in income are all the more traumatic for populations of urban slums since they often barely make a living even from participating in illegal economies and since they cannot turn to subsistence farming. Thus, such moves early on before some alternative legal income can be generated will strongly alienate the local population from the newly-present state.

The extent of economic hardship resulting from the suppression of illicit economies in the newly liberated area of course varies. To the extent that the illegality amounts to essentially informality - the failure to obtain business permits and pay taxes—the state may well choose to simply legalize the informal business, as Rio de Janeiro is doing in the retaken *favelas*. Labor-non-intensive illicit economies, such as drug smuggling (as opposed to drug cultivation), will generate fewer job employment opportunities and their suppression may have a significant impact on the income of only relatively slum few residents. To the extent that the majority of the residents of the poor neighborhood work in the legal economy elsewhere in the city, they may be economically unaffected by the state effort to suppress a local illegal economy. Consequently, it will be less politically costly for the state to suppress such labor-non-intensive economies. Under the most auspicious circumstances, such a suppression policy may be welcomed by the community. Thus understanding the extent to which the population of the urban slum where the state wants to assert its presence is dependent on the local illegal economies for basic livelihood should be a key determinant of the timing and extent of state efforts to suppress such economies in the early post-clearing phase.

Furthermore, to the extent that law enforcement has failed to capture all of the gang members in the clearing operations—which is often the case, since clearing usually captures only some gang

members while dispersing others—the disruption of local drug distribution or pirate goods production will motivate criminals to seek other illegal ventures. One of the frequent and easily accessible replacement illegal enterprises is extortion. Mexico today provides a vivid example. Newly increased protection rackets may extend criminality to the business centers of cities or other areas previously not experiencing criminal violence. Or criminal gangs may turn to extorting whatever legal, informal, and illegal businesses exist in the slums, often undermining even a weak presence of legal economic activity in these poor communities. The population of the liberated slum may thus find the economic order far more detrimental to its economic survival than the previous criminal order.

Finally, disrupting illegal economies is a drain on law enforcement forces—whether they are the initial heavily-armed takeover forces or community policing forces. In the early phases of state presence in an area previously controlled by non-state entities, equally focusing on suppressing violence and disrupting all illegal economies will dissipate the capacity of law enforcement to prioritize and focus resources, in addition to alienating the local population from the law enforcement personnel. Especially in those early phases when state presence in the urban space is still new and not strongly anchored and the population support for the state is tentative at best, it makes good sense to prioritize eliminating the most violent gangs over a blanket law enforcement approach that focuses equally on all gangs and all forms of crime. Suppressing violence is especially critical since the violence eviscerates the association and organizational capacity of a community and since it hampers the establishment of legal economies.

Such selective prioritization of countering violence and the most violent gangs, along with building widespread support within the wider community and mobilizing non-state actors, such as church groups, for retaking the marginalized urban spaces, was in fact the core of one of the most successful law enforcement operations of this kind: Operation Ceasefire in Boston in the early 1990s.<sup>42</sup> Police officers made it a point to frequently and on a regular basis communicate with civil society in the poor neighborhoods in Boston where the Operation was undertaken. Civil society amplified calls for nonviolent dispute resolution among the youth gangs and violence reduction. Police officers also worked with civil society to develop extracurricular activities and work programs for youths at risk to keep offenders and potential offenders off the streets.

Operation Ceasefire became the model for other such operations around the world, including Rio's GPAA in 2000. Law enforcement efforts emulating Operation Ceasefire abroad, including its em-

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<sup>42</sup> For details on Operation Ceasefire, see, for example, Anthony Braga, David Kennedy, Elin Waring, and Anne Morrison Piehl, "Problem-Oriented Policing, Deterrence, and Youth Violence: An Evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 38(3), August 2001: 195-225. For a comparison of Ceasefire with other policing efforts against youth gangs, see Scott Decker, *Policing Gangs and Youth Violence* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2003).

phasis on prioritizing action against the most violent gang, have run into various problems. The problems have included scarcity of law enforcement and economic resources for such initiatives; a lack of credibility of police capacity and its ability to identify and eliminate the most violent gang; political sensitivities with respect to not suppressing drug dealing and other criminality while “merely” prioritizing a reduction in violence above all; the inability to maintain political support for the effort, esp. as city administrations have changed; the inability to mobilize civil society to oppose violence to the same degree that was achieved in Boston; and the persistence of police corruption continually undermining the effort.

Another Brazilian city, Belo Horizonte, was more effective in emulating Ceasefire and achieving dramatic reductions in violence. Belo Horizonte’s approach *Fica Vivo!* Privileged community mobilization against violence and emphasized less than Boston and Rio police prioritization of enforcement against the most violent gangs. Instead, the undertaken activities focused on crime-mapping and identification of crime hotspots (as part of problem-oriented policing) and providing new social and school opportunities for youths at risk.<sup>43</sup>

Taking cues from the local community as to what forms of illegality it finds most disruptive and most detrimental to its ability to embrace the state and a culture of legality should be an important guide to focusing law enforcement, especially in the early phases.

## Elements of Building Up a Legal Economy

Urban marginalized areas often suffer from a complex and multisectoral deficit of legal economic activity. Legal job opportunities tend to be minimal and infrastructure deficiencies acute—in the provision of roads, public transportation, internet access, and in some cases even electricity and water. Access to health provision, quality education, and post-school child care tends to be equally scarce.

Generating legal alternative livelihoods in urban spaces, like in rural spaces, requires that the economic development strategy addresses all the structural drivers of illegal economic production. Beyond providing for security and the rule of law, such a comprehensive approach requires that stable property rights be established, access to microcredit developed, access to education and health care expanded, and all infrastructure deficiencies be redressed. It is not infrequent for residents of Rio’s *favelas* to have to travel two or three hours one way to get to areas of Rio where they can find em-

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<sup>43</sup> Enrique Desmond Arias and Mark Ungar, “Community Policing and Policy Implementation: A Four City Study of Police Reform in Brazil and Honduras,” *Comparative Politics*, 41(4), 2009: 409-430.

ployment. The same is the case for residents of Tijuana's and Ciudad Juárez's *colonías*, who often also have to spend the same amount of time bringing their children to school, in addition to spending such time traveling to the *maquilas* where they work. Physically connecting a marginalized urban space to city centers and neighborhoods where education and job opportunities exist has been a key element of efforts to reduce violence in Bogotá and Medellín. Although both Bogotá's Transmilenio (a public transportation system extended to the slum areas) and Medellín's Metrocable have certainly improved the lives of the slum residents, their effects on violence reduction have varied. Despite the Metrocable and the increased access to places with legal jobs in the city, Medellín violence escalated again and Don Berna's narcopeace was disrupted. Bogotá's reductions in violence have held up far more robustly, but it is difficult to assess to what extent that has been due to an increase in access to economic opportunities outside of the slums and to what extent that has been due to reductions in street crime already discussed above (as well as due to reduction in violence stemming from successes against the FARC and the demobilization of the paramilitaries, both of whom used to operate in the slums).

Urban spaces frequently have very weakly-defined property rights, especially those pertaining to land, since houses and huts likely were erected without planning and without titles. Thus establishing an acceptable cadastre may be a very difficult, yet critical aspect of development and of anchoring security as new land displacement and speculation may set off a new crime wave within the retaken slum. Without mechanisms to assign land property rights and compensate property owners, infrastructure building may also become ensnarled in unending land disputes; many Indian cities and rural areas are pervaded by this problem even as existing infrastructure crumbles all around.

Still, with all these difficulties, establishing geographical and functional connectivity to the non-slum parts of the city is often the easiest aspect of economic development. Establishing access to markets or generating new legal markets within the slum and establishing value-added chains are frequently highly complex undertakings, especially if the slum neighborhood is located four hours from the business center of the city, as is the case in some of Mexico City's *colonías*.

Often the most complex problem for economic development to overcome is to develop legal sustainable jobs. Building infrastructure has the critical side-benefit of generating jobs. But many of these jobs will be short-lived and not easily recreated once the projects are finished. In some cases, such as paving a road in a *comuna*, the jobs may last only a few months. In places that are enjoying the expansion of economic activities, such as in the north of Mexico where the *maquiladoras* are expanding even despite the violence,<sup>44</sup> dealing with the problem of job generation will be considerably easier than in other areas. Often, however, generating sustainable jobs will be the most intractable problem.

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<sup>44</sup> Randal Archibold, "Despite Violence, U.S. Firms Expand in Mexico," *The New York Times*, July 10, 2011.

Much of the job generating activity will likely need to take place off-locale, outside of the slums, with people either commuting to work or moving out of the urban poor neighborhoods. Apart from the absence of the required transportation infrastructure, obtaining such jobs will be impeded if poor neighborhood residents suffer from a social stigma, and if simply the address of the poor neighborhood from which they would be commuting makes employers elsewhere in the city reluctant to hire them. Such discrimination in access to jobs is caused in part by the widespread perception that all residents of a poor neighborhood are criminals; and a social campaign to change such social attitudes is thus required. It can also result from fear on the part of potential employers that living in a poor neighborhood may make the potential employee unreliable in getting to work on time. Redressing infrastructure deficiencies may thus have another indirect but crucial effect of enhancing job opportunities for the residents of poor urban neighborhoods.

To the extent that people completely move to a new area to take advantage of job opportunities, such wholesale relocation needs to be purely voluntary and not dressed-up illegal or state-sponsored displacement for the sake of accessing newly-valuable land.

A particularly challenging problem is creating job opportunities for demobilized gang or insurgent members or members of organized-crime groups released from prisons. Integrating them back into a community and finding legal livelihoods opportunities for them often are essential to prevent recidivism and reemergence of violence. There are many challenges, however, exist to the achievement of such demobilization and social reintegration, including job scarcity, poor skill levels on the part of the rehabilitated criminals and insurgents, societal rejection of such policies or such individuals, or moral hazard problems. Thus in Colombia, despite receiving counseling, training, and salaries for several months, many demobilized paramilitary soldiers returned to violence and crime, joining, for example, *bandas criminales* since they struggled to find legal jobs and the community was intolerant of former perpetrators of violence. The reintegration of the FARC combatants has been undermined by the remnants of the paramilitary networks, which have prevented the demobilized FARC combatants from obtaining jobs and expelled them from particular areas, such as Medellín.<sup>45</sup> In Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*, the problem has been less social rejection or violence by rival groups as simply the paucity of jobs available to demobilized gang members.<sup>46</sup> In Afghanistan the effort to reintegrate Taliban fighters through offers of preferential access to jobs has generated community resentment;

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<sup>45</sup> Author's interviews with demobilized paramilitary soldiers, NGOs representatives, journalists, members of the military, and government officials in Antioquia, Catatumbo, Nariño, and Magdalena Medio, August and October 2008 and January 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Author's interviews with NGOs involved demobilization of gang members in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* and *favela* residents and gang members, January 2010.

it has also encouraged some otherwise unemployed men to “join” the Taliban, only to demobilize so as to obtain access to such jobs.<sup>47</sup>

Generating jobs in an urban slum and enabling the slum residents to access legal jobs elsewhere are ultimately dependent on the larger structural setup of the overall economy of the country. If the existing taxation system favors capital-intensive growth especially at the big-firm level and labor is taxed heavily, there may be real limits to what kind of economic development will be feasible in the urban slums. Some individuals within the slum may be able to join capital-intensive economies and become rich, but middle-level-firm growth and job generation may continue to be lacking, and so will be employment for the majority of the urban slum.

Inevitably, economic development takes a long time, often decades of sustained effort. Human capital growth, such as improvements in levels of education of the work force, is also a long-term endeavor. Thus managing the expectations of the residents in urban slums retaken by the state about the pace of economic development and preparing them that major economic improvements in their lives are unlikely to materialize quickly are essential.

It is also essential to involve the local community in the planned economic and social improvement projects and to be seriously responsive to the priorities of the local community. Involving the local community does not mean that outside technical expertise should be ignored. At times, communities may ask for what is not realistic or even economically appropriate for that locale. A community may also prioritize not disrupting existing power arrangements even at the cost of foregoing optimal economic development. Understanding the local politics and how they may be altered as a result of a development project is thus critical for effective solution. While involving a local community does not involve handing over all decisions to the local community, it does mean not imposing approaches on the local community, and systematically consulting with its leaders during both the development and implementation phases of the state economic intervention.

## Inadequate Approaches and Challenges

### *Isolated, Discreet Interventions*

Limited, isolated, discreet interventions, even when responsive to the wishes of the local community, are particularly ineffective in changing the socioeconomic dynamics in a marginalized space. Inter-

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<sup>47</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, “Negotiations and Reconciliation with the Taliban: Key Policy Issues and Dilemmas,” The Brookings Institution, January 2010, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2010/0128\\_taliban\\_felbabbrown/0128\\_taliban\\_felbabbrown.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/articles/2010/0128_taliban_felbabbrown/0128_taliban_felbabbrown.pdf).

ventions based on asking what a community desires most—an electricity generator, a school, or a clinic—and delivering that limited project may well improve the life of the community to some extent, but they do not have the capacity to alter the basic social patterns in the community, generate jobs, and thus reduce crime.

If such discreet handouts are disbursed without security being established, they may even lead to perverse effects, such as signaling that crime, and only crime pays. Such isolated projects, not integrated into a broader comprehensive development strategy, may also give the impression that in the absence of intense crime or instability, the state would not bother to deliver any service and development at all. Such a “crime-pays” mentality long characterized Medellín *comunas*, for example, at least until the more systematic development approach undertaken by Medellín mayors Sergio Fajardo and Alonso Salazar was adopted.

Yet resorting to such limited discreet handouts as a band-aid for comprehensive development may be very tempting for the state for several reasons. One is that systematic development takes a lot of resources, especially in places where minimal or no public investment took place for decades and that are inhabited by millions of people. The city’s or state’s fiscal capacity may be limited and hence compels such a limited handout approach.

Second, politicians may find it particularly convenient to turn limited handouts into patronage mechanisms, delivering only a part of a project and conditioning the rest on getting the votes of the community. Such a politically and violence-conditioned handout approach also allows local crime lords to position themselves as agents of the poor neighborhood, bargaining on their behalf with the state. Perversely, such agents may well have an interest in limiting economic development and not fully suppressing illegality, fearing that the absence of crime and hence state handouts would diminish their own usefulness in the eyes of both the poor population and the state. (Such a principal-agent problem is not a rare phenomenon. The *maliks* [tribal elders] in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and then the Northwest Frontier Province involved in bringing alternative livelihoods to areas of poppy cultivation in Pakistan in the mid-1990s, for example, similarly desired that not all poppy cultivation disappear, fearing that the state would then lose interest in bringing economic development projects to their areas and they would thus lose their pivot role in the two systems of patronage.<sup>48</sup>) This dual patronage system may give rise to mutually beneficial and deeply-entrenched negative equilibria, with local crime lords delivering both instability and votes in exchange for project delivery by local politicians.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> For details, see Vanda Felbab-Brown, “The Drug Economy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Military Conflict in the Region,” in Ehsan Ahrari, Vanda Felbab-Brown, Louise Shelley, and Nazia Hussain, *Narco-jihad: Drug Trafficking and Security in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, NBR Report, December 2009: 1-22.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Enrique Desmond Arias, “Trouble en Route: Drug Trafficking and Clientalism in Rio de Janeiro Shantytowns,” *Qualitative Sociology*, 29:4 (2006): 427-45.

A third reason for such a discreet handout approach is that systematic development often takes time, but populations long deprived of socioeconomic and public goods are often impatient for some rapid improvements in their lives. Thus the community itself demands quick-impact visible projects. Demonstrating in the newly retaken area that the state indeed intends to have a multifaceted presence, is determined to improve the life of the community, and to redress the neglect of long-term development may be critical for establishing trust of the population. Quick-impact projects, such as mobile clinics and dental services, for example, have been an important and effective element of São Paulo's Virada Social policy in the city shantytowns retaken from crime lords.

Such quick-impact projects, however, can become problematic if they prove ephemeral and if systematic long-term, sustainable development does not follow quickly on their heels. Problems arise if only half a road is built, and then the state loses interest. In some of Rio's retaken *favelas*, internet services were extended, but stopped functioning after six months and neither the business operators nor the state showed an interest in repairing the defective systems. Building a school may be important, but it accomplishes little if teachers are not available to staff it. Thus, to the extent that such a short-term, quick-impact, limited handout approach is undertaken, decision-makers need to think very carefully about what kind of political dynamics such an approach will set off, and establish early on a strategy to transition as soon as possible to systematic, sustainable, long-term development.

A somewhat different twist on the discreet handout approach is to thinly spread even considerable resources over extensive areas in a scattershot approach. Instead of addressing all the drivers of instability and illegality in any particular locale (sometimes as small as a neighborhood), such an approach consists of giving each community a piece of the action. This can involve expanding existing programs, such as enlarging the local hospital from 100 beds to one of 120 beds, or bringing in a new project, such as a stadium. The first year of the social policy adopted in Ciudad Juárez in February 2010 called *Todos Somos Juárez* often amounted to precisely such a city-wide scattershot approach.

What is needed instead is to concentrate resources in selected intervention areas so that all the structural drivers of pernicious social dynamics are addressed. Often that means co-locating economic resources with law enforcement and justice-sector resources all in the same neighborhood. If resource scarcity is an acute problem, such concentration of resources can be extremely sensitive politically as other areas will question why the selected target community deserves such multifaceted state largesse while other equally needy areas go lacking. Political incentives push toward the opposite approach of giving everyone a little bit, although such an approach can undermine and completely eviscerate the systematic development effort. Selecting low-hanging-fruit urban spaces where development can be accomplished, where cross-sectoral synergies can come together, and



which can serve as models for other areas makes sense in the first phase of intervention. However, to build the needed political support for such resource concentration, it is necessary for the state to indicate that it has a credible and viable strategy for expanding the areas of such multifaceted state intervention.

### ***Buying Love by Saturating an Area with Money and Short-term Fixes***

Saturating an area with money in order to buy the political allegiance of the population, however, produces neither sustainable economic development nor desirable social and political practices. In its most intense manifestation, such buying love through flooding an area with money was undertaken by the United States—not in an urban space per se, but in the rural and urban spaces of Afghanistan’s troubled provinces of Helmand and Kandahar where the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign against the Taliban was most intensely focused between 2009 and 2011. The vast majority of the \$250 million USAID Afghanistan budget for 2010 went to these two provinces.<sup>50</sup> In Helmand’s Nawa district, for example, USAID spent upwards of \$30 million within nine months, in what some dubbed “[the] carpet bombing of Nawa with cash.”<sup>51</sup> With Nawa’s 75,000 people, such aid amounts to \$400 per person, while Afghanistan’s per capita income is only \$300 per year. In another key-focus sector, Helmand’s district of Marja, U.S. Marines with access to a special economic fund for so-called economic-stabilization programs were at one point spending \$500,000 every ten days in a poor rural area of 250,000 people, handing out thousands of dollars after minutes-long conversations with vegetable-stall owners and shopkeepers.<sup>52</sup>

Such a massive infusion of cash distorts the local economy, potentially giving rise to inflation and the so-called Dutch disease whereby growth or increased rents in one sector lead to stagnation of other economic sectors, as well as speculation rather than productive investment. Handouts of excessive numbers of pumps can lead to depleting the water resources of the areas; handouts of generators can overtax a neighborhood’s energy production capacity. Such largesse can also undermine local administration, even if the money is channeled through it, by stimulating widespread corruption. Monitoring such large money flows may be very difficult, especially for outside monitors not familiar with the local crime-politics dynamics. Crime lords and speculators (new ones as well as the old crime lords who are able to continue operating either directly or through proxies) may be especially well-positioned to take advantage of such an influx of money, undermining accountability and the rule of law, and giving

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<sup>50</sup> Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “In Afghan Region, U.S. Spreads the Cash to Fight the Taliban,” *Washington Post*, May 31, 2010; and Karen DeYoung, “Results of Kandahar Offensive May Affect Future U.S. Moves,” *Washington Post*, May 23, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> “More Please, Sir,” *The Economist*, February 26, 2011.

rise to new crime economies. Moral hazard can once again become a problem, especially if compensation is provided for activity that the community would undertake anyway, such as street cleaning. Such money infusions are also likely to give rise to new protection rackets and attract private security companies to deliver their services against extortion (and sometimes to participate in it).

Few countries have the luxury of such a burn-rate of economic development disbursement. Less extreme versions, however, are not infrequent. A presidential directive guiding *Todos Somos Juárez*, for example, mandated that the entire \$300 million allocated for socioeconomic development in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico in 2010 be spent within one year in a city of 1.2 million inhabitants. Combined with frequent reporting requirements for line ministries, such a spending rate and project delivery tempo often precluded that on-the-ground needs and structural-driver assessments of any particular neighborhood be undertaken before intervention projects were selected. Instead, either existing line ministry projects were expanded in the neighborhood or a standard set of projects, such as parks or stadiums, were delivered, regardless of whether they were the most needed and optimal economic intervention.<sup>53</sup>

The effectiveness of the socioeconomic programs to reduce crime and violence in Rio's *favelas* too has varied greatly. Between 2008 and 2012, \$550 million projects will have been spent on socioeconomic projects in the *favelas*, such as Morar Seguro and Favela Bairro.<sup>54</sup> For Alemão alone, \$250 million were allocated for 2011, while \$60 million were allocated for Rocinha to be spent in the first three months since its November takeover.<sup>55</sup>

Bringing economic development in on the heels of law-enforcement clearing operations is often immeasurably more complex than the clearing operations themselves and operates on very different and longer timelines than law enforcement actions. The lack of alignment between the law enforcement actions and economic development are compounded if civilian capacity in the urban slum is weak. The law enforcement units may feel that they are left holding the bag on economic development, which will often push them toward short-term handout efforts, such as building schools and repairing clinics without a broader development framework.

## **Caveat Lector: The Political Effects of Social Development**

Just like outside economic aid, the internal economic development of marginalized urban spaces is rarely politically neutral. While strengthening marginalized communities, it has the potential to

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<sup>53</sup> For details, see Felbab-Brown, "Calderón's Caldron."

<sup>54</sup> "Slum Raids in Rio de Janeiro Impress, but What's the Impact on the Olympic City's Drug Trade?" *Associated Press*, November 14, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

undermine established powerbrokers, especially those who straddle criminal and official political worlds, by depriving them of their agent-patron role. Such powerbrokers, some of whom may well be established official and prominent local politicians or, at times, (as in Karachi, Pakistan or Kingston, Jamaica) entire political parties, will thus have an interest in hampering and limiting the extent to which the state is extended to the marginalized areas and the extent to which economic development takes place. Failing to develop a detailed understanding of such crime-politics linkages and of the political effects of the planned economic development and to formulate strategies to neutralize the political, economic, and criminal interest groups seeking to prevent the state-building efforts, may well result in failure of the whole effort.



## Coordinating Across Different Levels of Government and Across Different Lines—Ministries and Agencies

**T**he success of the strategy to a great extent depends on its coordination across different levels of government. And this will not happen without concerted effort. One reason is that city/municipal governments rarely control the military or police forces necessary for the takeover operations; and subsequent operations for maintaining security are predominantly controlled by the federal government (as in Mexico) or state-level institutions (as in the state of Rio de Janeiro). To the extent that municipal police forces exist at all, they are often an obstacle to the takeover operations, having neither the competence nor the integrity to meaningfully participate. Their reform is often necessary for long-term success.

The required coordination, however, is difficult to achieve. The various levels of the government may have different interests and priorities, all the more so if they are controlled by different parties. Rio's policing efforts historically suffered from such a split in governance structure and control of law enforcement assets, a problem compounded by two-year elections cycles. An incoming administration at the state or city level often had an interest in discontinuing policies of their predecessors and undermining efforts of the political opposition running a different level of the government. It was only the UPP policy and its early successes in Rio that broke this three-decades-old pattern of one level of government trying to subvert the policy of another level. Even when politically-motivated malevolence is not the root of the problem, to the extent that it is unclear who is responsible for citizens' security, the different government levels may prefer to pass the buck among themselves rather than to undertake costly and complicated policies to bring the state to the slum, or they may simply prefer to rely on limited handouts sufficient to secure votes.

Coordinating military and police forces across different levels is not simple either, especially when higher-state level police forces are relied on to arrest police forces at lower level for corruption problems. Although reforming the police is essential, lower-level police forces have few incentives to cooperate. Cross-level police and military problems have been acute in Mexico's campaign against its violent drug trafficking organizations, often with actual shooting exchanges between the Federal and municipal police, even in the highest priority areas, such as Ciudad Juárez. To the extent that

good cross-agency cooperation has been achieved there, such as in Tijuana between 2008 and 2010, it has often been the result of a particular constellation of personalities, not institutional synergies.<sup>56</sup>

Although essential, integrated planning may be difficult even when there is a commitment at the federal level to coordinate and even in somewhat lesser sensitivity areas, such as social development policies. City governments rarely have sufficient resources to address the socioeconomic deficiencies of their slums. Economic support from the federal level may be necessary. In the case of Ciudad Juárez's signature socioeconomic policy, *Todos Somos Juárez*, the policy was the brainchild of the federal level. But although the federal government sought to be responsive to the community's needs and coordinate with state and city authorities, the city felt that the federal government imposed its policies on the city, and both the city and federal government officials bemoaned the lack of responsiveness of authorities in the state of Chihuahua.<sup>57</sup>

A history of adversarial relations between city, state, and federal-level authorities will likely take special efforts to overcome. Early success may be a critical lubricant for meaningful cooperation as different-level authorities will not wish to be seen as undermining positive developments—yet another reason to concentrate resources to achieve some model successes.

Coordination issues also need to be resolved even within the same level of government among agencies responsible for socioeconomic development and law enforcement actions. Again, effective coordination is hard to achieve. A long-standing tradition in Latin America is that human security policies are regarded as distinct and separate from social policies writ large. Yet as this paper has argued, adopting a multifaceted response to slum areas plagued by criminality and underdevelopment is necessary and its success is critically predicated on cross-agency and cross-line-ministry cooperation.

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<sup>56</sup> For details on the coordination problems and achievements, see Felbab-Brown, "The Tijuana Law Enforcement Model and Its Limitations," and "Ciudad Juárez and the Evolution of Mexico's Security Policy," in *Calderón's Calderón*.

<sup>57</sup> Author's interviews with Mexican government officials in Mexico City and Ciudad Juárez, March 2011. See Felbab-Brown, "Socioeconomic Policies for Combating Organized Crime: The Case of Ciudad Juárez," in *Calderón's Calderón*.



## Conclusions

**S**everal key elements determine the capacity of law enforcement operations to effectively retake urban spaces governed by violent non-state entities: the ability to develop intelligence for arrests of critical operators of the criminal groups and evidence for their effective prosecution; the ability to develop trust of the local community, by, for example, minimizing violence and establishing community police units; the ability to effectively address street crime and new organized crime likely to emerge following clearing operations; and the ability to sustain security after the heavily-armed units depart. Apart from these modalities of the actual law enforcement operation, the success of increasing public safety in problematic urban neighborhoods cannot be divorced from the capacity to provide effective and speedy dispute resolution mechanisms and access to the justice system in the “pacified” spaces.

Ultimately, an effective state strategy toward organized crime is not merely one of law-enforcement suppression of crime. Law enforcement plays a critical and indispensable role; it is the founding block of establishing effective state presence. But an appropriate response toward dealing with marginalized urban spaces is a multifaceted state-building strategy that seeks to strengthen the bonds between the state and marginalized communities. Efforts need to focus on ensuring that peoples and communities will obey laws - by increasing the likelihood that illegal behavior and corruption will be punished, but also by creating a social, economic, and political environment in which the laws are consistent with the needs of the people and enhance their physical and socioeconomic security, so that the laws can be seen as legitimate and hence be internalized.

Socioeconomic policies to reduce marginalization and criminality and enhance security often take a long time to bear fruit. Although the need to develop trust between the newly-present state and the local population may at times encourage the adoption of short-term, quick-impact, high-visibility measures, such policies neither effectively generate support for the state in the long run nor generate sustainable, job-creating development. Instead, it is critical to address all the structural drivers of criminality, such as infrastructure deficiencies, human capital deficiencies, the lack of microcredit and land titles, and other weakly-defined property rights. The structural design of the overall econ-

omy of the country, including its fiscal policies, critically impacts the effectiveness of the localized urban efforts. Discreet limited interventions may slightly improve the life of the community, but they do not alter the basic social and security dynamics in the neighborhood. Instead they can reinforce complex official and criminal patronage networks and anchor in negative social equilibria. Similarly, saturating an area with money beyond the absorptive capacity of the urban space can fuel corruption and the rise of new crime economies. Instead, economic policies to reduce urban crime need to focus on long-term sustainable development and legal job generation.

Other measures not extensively discussed in this article, such as strengthening the associational capacity of a community by expanding safe public spaces, also play an important role. Involving a variety of the local community's actors in the design of the strategy and its implementation critically enhances the effectiveness of such programs. Local community ownership of the effort to reform the slum is as important as the willingness of the state to extend a multifaceted presence to areas that have been trapped in poverty, marginalization, and criminality.



## Recommendations

All crime, like all politics, is local. Policy effectiveness is highly contingent on local crime-politics dynamics and local cultural and institutional settings. Consequently, a policy can only be effective if it is based on extensive local data and is closely tailored to local conditions. Consequently, an article such as this one can only offer broad policy recommendations and guidelines. Many of the policy dilemmas and trade-offs, such as whether or not to announce a law enforcement action in advance, cannot be answered in the abstract and their resolution needs to be case-specific.

### Overarching Guidelines

- Bringing the state to the slum requires a long-term commitment. *Do not design law enforcement and socioeconomic interventions as short-term fixes, such as one or two-year efforts.*
- *Derive strategy and its implementation from detailed on-the-ground assessments of the local drivers of insecurity, criminality, and social marginalization.* Not every community needs to have a baseball or soccer stadium; the time of most intense policing and most extensive police deployment should vary with local crime patterns.
- *Continue performing basic assessments of the strategy's implementation on a regular basis.* Separate monitors from strategy managers and implementers, but give implementers the flexibility to suggest changes to strategy.
- *Involve the local community and civil society in the planning and implementation of the security policy, rule of law expansion efforts, and economic and social improvement projects and be seriously responsive to the priorities of the local community.* Such engagement can take place via joint boards of police officers, civilian experts in criminology, social sciences, urban planning, and public health, community leaders, and business community members.
- *Develop and sustain effective coordination across different levels of government and across different line ministries and agencies.*



- *Concentrate resources in particular neighborhoods where security can be established and an infusion of socioeconomic benefits can be maintained. Prioritize neighborhoods that can be connected with developed parts of the city.* Although such a policy may displace criminality to other areas and although resources may ultimately be lacking to address all areas in need, concentrating a comprehensive set of interventions in an area maximizes the chance that at least in this area, success will be achieved. The target area can later serve as a model when resources become available to expand the zone of security and development. Dissipating law enforcement and economic resources over large areas, and giving everyone just a little, has a very high likelihood that sufficient change in social dynamics and suppression of violent criminality will not be achieved anywhere, and the infusion of state resources and attention will be by and large wasted. The resource concentration strategy is politically difficult to sell, and to the extent that resources are not mobilized to treat other areas in need, it raises serious ethical questions. But in a situation of resource scarcity for difficult urban areas this suboptimal outcome may nonetheless offer the only possibility of at least some progress.

## Law Enforcement and Rule of Law Guidelines

- *Carefully specify the role and mandate of the military or heavily-armed forces deployed to replace or reinforce local police force.*
- *Minimize the use of force and employ lethal force only as a last resort.* When deciding whether or not to announce a law enforcement operation in advance in order to minimize casualties or maximize critical arrests and prevent crime displacement to other areas, consider the ease with which the targeted group will have a capacity to regenerate leadership. Many so-called high-value targets should be thought instead as merely high-visibility targets.
- *Cultivate intelligence sources in the slum and within criminal groups, but carefully vet all such intelligence to avoid targeting only a particular criminal group's enemies.*
- *Do not rely on or approve the physical actions of criminal groups or militias against other violent non-state groups. Do not tolerate vigilante groups.*
- *Even when deploying a sequential law enforcement approach that prioritizes the most violent criminal groups first, do not tolerate the rise of extralegal militias, and prosecute them with vigor.*

- *Especially when leakage and displacement of crime to new areas as a result of the law enforcement strategy cannot be avoided, or if state resources are acutely limited, prioritize strategic areas, such as city centers.*
- *Develop a credible plan to expand the provision of public safety to less privileged citizens and areas beyond the city center, in a way that connects and geographically expands the area covered by the law enforcement strategy as much as possible.*
- *Do not base the handover transition from heavily-armed forces to regular police forces on a predetermined schedule, but rather on a careful assessment of the criminal groups' strength remaining after clearing operations and of the capacity of regular police forces. With that in mind, seek nonetheless to minimize the duration, extent, and lethality of the heavy forces as much as possible.*
- *Plan early on, ideally during the law enforcement planning phase, how to extend officially-sanctioned dispute resolution mechanisms to the cleared areas. Under the best of circumstances, the preferred mechanism would be official courts. Before official court presence can be established, mobile courts or alternatives, such as *casas de justicia*, can serve as temporary measures.*
- *In order to maximize intelligence flows, develop trust by the community; and to enhance crime prevention capacity, deploy regular police forces back to the targeted neighborhood as soon as possible and establish community police.*
- *Adopt community-oriented and problem-oriented policing approaches.*
- *Maximize frequent, non-threatening interactions between resident police forces and the local community, such as on-foot patrols. Place sufficiently robust patrol units in designated beats for substantial amounts of time, often for at least a year, so they can develop an understanding of the local crime dynamics and strategies for crime prevention.*
- *Establish police oversight mechanisms, such as effective and honest internal affairs divisions and joint citizen-police boards.*
- *When necessary because the overall police forces are corrupt and ineffective, locate policies for violent urban spaces within a broader program of police reform. Maximize opportunities for pushing forward with police reform, such as at times and places where some urban areas register a decline in violent crime.*

- *Carefully monitor the rise of new crime in the taken-over areas. Develop analytical and effective response capacities to such new crime.* The new crime may include not only the rise of street crime, but also the emergence of complex new illicit economies around newly-valuable land, at times linked to legal businesses.

## Socioeconomic Policy Guidelines

- *Do not rush to suppress all illicit economies present in the taken-over slum early in the post-clearing period; it is important to avoid producing extensive economic hardship in the community before alternative livelihoods opportunities are in place.* Prioritize and focus enforcement on suppressing the most violent illegal gangs and the most violent illegal economies (in contrast to a blanket law enforcement approach that focuses equally on all gangs and all forms of crime). Target the forms of illegality that the community itself finds most pernicious. Base policy choices regarding which illicit economies to suppress on assessments of the extent to which the population of the urban slum is dependent on the local illegal economy for basic livelihood.
- *Promote job creation both in the slum and off-locale, such as in other parts of the city or other regions.* Any population relocation to areas of new job opportunities, however, needs to be purely voluntary. Addressing the structural design of the larger economy, such as the taxation system, may be critical for job generation in the urban slum and elsewhere.
- *Design economic development approaches to address all the structural drivers of illegal economic activity in the marginalized urban space.* Beyond security and the rule of law, stable property rights must be established, access to microcredit developed, access to education and health care expanded, and major infrastructure deficiencies redressed.
- *Concentrate economic resources in particular neighborhoods in a way that addresses all the structural drivers of marginalization and criminality in the neighborhood.* Do not adopt a limited handout, scattershot approach; do not merely expand programs already in existence in the slum. *Couple such economic resource concentration also with concentrating law enforcement and justice resources in the same area to achieve cross-sectoral synergies.*
- *Develop a credible and publicized strategy to expand such comprehensive state intervention to other areas in need.*

- *Carefully match resource flows with the absorptive capacity of the target area. Do not simply flood an area with money; and carefully monitor all resources flows to prevent corruption and the emergence of new crime economies around the new resource flows.*
- *To the extent that quick-impact, short-term, but unsustainable projects are adopted at all to generate support for state presence in the marginalized communities, limit their extent and transition as quickly as possible to long-term, sustainable projects.*
- *Develop a detailed understanding of the crime-politics linkages in the target area and of the political effects of the planned economic development. Develop strategies to neutralize the political, economic, and criminal interest groups seeking to prevent the state-building efforts.*

## About the Author

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