The Besieged Polis

Citizen Insecurity and Democracy in Latin America

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I dedicate this monograph to my daughter Annalena, with love and hope.

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On the Relationship Between Citizen Insecurity and Democracy

Introduction

The political dimension of citizen insecurity is central to understanding the current and future state of democracy in Latin America. Levels of violent crime in the region and widespread perceptions about them have clear effects on citizens' exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms, which go to the very heart of the notion of citizenship and the democratic system. Crime and perceived insecurity also jeopardize conditions that are essential to the survival of democratic systems, such as a strong social fabric and public support for the concept of democracy and its underlying values. Finally, in different ways, crime and fear pose real threats to the state's effective monopoly on legitimate coercion, a basic precondition for its viability.

This introduction will lay out the main hypotheses regarding the effects of citizen insecurity on democratic stability, links that will then be explored in detail in later chapters. Although this study focuses on the consequences of citizen insecurity for democracy, it cannot ignore the fact that there is also a relationship in the opposite direction: citizen insecurity is, in part, a reflection of inequalities, social exclusions, and limitations in access to fundamental rights for large segments of the population. These conditions in some respects are incompatible with the notion of citizenship and the democratic *ethos*.

This monograph will ultimately argue that the fates of citizen insecurity and democracy are intertwined, and that the best route to a safer society passes through the consolidation of a democratic system capable of guaranteeing a broad range of rights—not just political rights, but also social and economic rights—to everyone.

The text will begin with a brief disquisition on the concept of citizen insecurity, defining it from a democratic perspective—that is, as it relates to the exercise of and limitations on fundamental

rights. The next two sections will analyze the two-way relationship between citizen insecurity and democracy. They first will examine four possible ways in which citizen insecurity compromises the vitality of the democratic system and second, how faults in the democratic system may end up being reflected in the phenomenon of social violence. The last section returns to this monograph's central arguments and suggests that a commitment to human development—and to the democratic values and practices at its core—is an essential antidote to citizen insecurity.

What do we understand citizen insecurity to be?[1]

Citizen security is a limited but vital part of the broader notion of human security. In 1994, the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) indicated: "Human security is not a concern with weapons—it is a concern with human life and dignity." It thus proposed an expanded notion of security—conceived for a world that had left the Cold War behind—which would give central importance to the protection of people from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, whether in homes, in jobs, or in communities. The concept of human security came to denote the condition of being free from fear and want. This definition was later broken down into seven dimensions, in accordance with the nature of the threats people were facing: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.[2]

While human security addresses forms of vulnerability that compromise the enjoyment of human rights in general, citizen security refers to specific types of vulnerability—those caused by violence and dispossession—and to the protection of a "hard core" of people's fundamental rights.

Citizen security, then, is understood as the personal condition, both objective and subjective, of being free from the threat of violence or intentional dispossession by others. The concept of violence, in turn, denotes the use or threat of use of physical or psychological force with the intention of causing harm or breaking one's will. The notion of dispossession refers to the act of illegitimately, physically or legally depriving a person of his or her property.[3] The proposed definition includes both victimization, understood as the actual occurrence of acts of violence or dispossession (objective threat), as well as the perception of insecurity, understood as the probability assigned to the occurrence of such acts (subjective threat). While one would expect these two aspects to be related—particularly for victimization to affect perception—they do not necessarily correspond perfectly. Sometimes the relationship is not even close, as the following chapter of this monograph will demonstrate.

The above definition of citizen security has critical implications for its relationship to democracy. Since citizen security is a specific aspect of human security, what lies at the heart of the discussion is the effective enjoyment and protection of certain fundamental rights of persons, without which democracy cannot be understood. These include the right to life and personal integrity (physical, emotional, and sexual), as well as other rights inherent to one's personal sphere, such as the inviolability of the home, freedom of movement, and the enjoyment of property.

The link between this notion of security and the fulfillment of certain fundamental rights is suggested by the very semantic construction of the term which, by making reference to the notion of *citizenship*, invokes a whole range of rights protected by the legal system.[4] Furthermore, this concept is in keeping with the socially assigned meaning of the term. In fact, the evidence shows how in Costa Rica, for example, people primarily experience and understand citizen insecurity as a collection of rights that have been diminished. Asked about the meaning of citizen insecurity, nearly 57% of those interviewed for the National Survey on Citizen Security–Costa Rica 2004 (EN-SCR-04) spontaneously identified the term with everyday experiences of restrictions to their most basic freedoms: not being able to go outside without fear of being mugged (49.3%), not having peace of mind at home (3.8%), not being able to leave the house unattended (1.9%), and not being able to talk to just anyone (1.7%).[5]

Analyzing the concept of citizen security separately from the broader notion of human security arouses certain skepticism among some authors who have pointed to an alleged kinship between citizen security and "national security" or "public order," notions that have a somewhat authoritarian pedigree in Latin America. However, the specific concept of citizen security is not only defensible, it is also fully compatible with the defense of the broad array of rights implied by human security. Simply put, citizen security refers to certain particularly imminent threats to an individual's personal integrity. As the 2005 UNDP report on citizen security in Costa Rica states:

> "The forms of violence or dispossession that define the sphere of citizen security jeopardize, directly and with special intensity, a hard core of rights–beginning with the right to life and personal integrity—that not only have intrinsic value but are also instrumental in making it possible to exercise other rights and freedoms. As the UNDP Human Development Report 1994 notes, 'Perhaps no other aspect of human security is so vital for people as their security from physical violence.'"[6]

This does not mean the discussion on citizen security cannot involve a whole conjunction of rights that go far beyond that "hard core" of rights that are immediately compromised. As will be seen below, the deterioration of citizen security frequently involves acute forms of economic, political,

social, and family vulnerability that nurture and reproduce violence. Moreover, improving citizen security has the effect of reducing people's vulnerability to violence and making them better able to activate social protection mechanisms and participate constructively in building their own environments. Thus, both in terms of causes and solutions, the fate of citizen security depends on the presence or absence of broader forms of human security.

Adopting a definition of citizen security that revolves around the exercise of fundamental rights is the best way to give it democratic content, to ensure that security policies are anchored in the rule of law, and to prevent the authoritarian temptations that so often hover over this debate. At the end of the day, a policy geared toward protecting fundamental rights must include procedures that are equally respectful of human rights.[7]

As stated earlier, the relationship between citizen insecurity and democracy is a two-way street. On the one hand, it is possible to assert that deterioration in citizen security limits the exercise of fundamental rights and jeopardizes, in different ways, the sustainability of a democratic *polis*. On the other hand, it is equally clear that an increase in citizen insecurity is related to deficiencies in people's access to and exercise of citizenship rights, mainly those of a social and economic nature. These deficiencies, in turn, often lead to shortcomings in participation and political representation in a democracy.

The next section will analyze this argument in both directions.

How does the state of citizen insecurity affect democracy?

Although it is possible to imagine many ways citizen insecurity could have a weakening effect on democracy, four of them seem critical because of their direct effect not only on the quality but on the very viability of the democratic experience. First, citizen insecurity negatively affects the degree of support for democracy and the rule of law. Secondly, it has a corrosive effect on the collective relationships and values that sustain a democratic *polis*. Thirdly, it has consequences in terms of the state's monopoly on legitimate coercion. Fourthly, citizen insecurity has a limiting impact on the exercise of very basic individual liberties.[8]

The specter of authoritarianism

Citizen insecurity and the fear inherent in it can visibly erode support for democratic institutions and lead to the emergence of authoritarian tendencies that are deeply rooted in the political culture of Latin America.

Although this relationship has been assumed for a long time, the available substantiating evidence is surprisingly scarce and to some extent confusing. Reviewing this evidence carefully is one of the most important objectives of this study. The relationship between citizen security and democracy is manifested in three different ways: the levels of support for and satisfaction with democracy; the willingness to support authoritarian reversals; and, finally, the effect of insecurity on the erosion of guarantees of the rule of law.
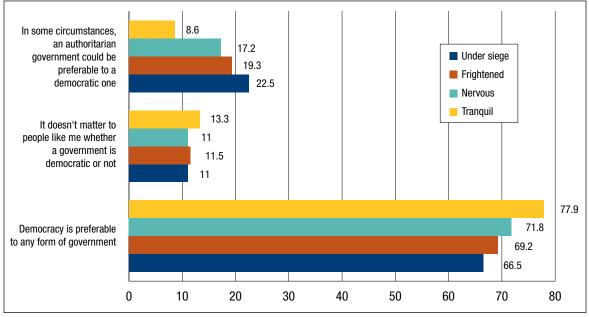
On the first point, Bateson (2009) found lower levels of satisfaction with democracy in Latin America among people who have been victims of some act of violence, a connection also detected by Seligson & Azpuru (2001) in Guatemala. In contrast, in his study of Guatemala and El Salvador, Pérez (2004) found no significant effect on support for democracy as a result of victimization, but he did find an effect as a result of the widespread perception of insecurity. Similarly, Cruz (2008) found that support for democracy as a system of government in Latin America and the Caribbean is more seriously affected by the widespread perception of insecurity and the assessment of the government's performance in fighting crime than by someone having been the victim of a crime.

Cruz & Córdova (2006) and UNDP (2006) found significant effects in the cases of El Salvador and Costa Rica, respectively, both in terms of victimization and in the perception of insecurity. As the following data show (see Table 1.1), degrees of satisfaction with democracy are lower among Costa Ricans who have been victimized in the recent past and among those who experience higher levels of fear. The balance of opinion toward satisfaction with democracy is more than 30 points higher in the least fearful group (tranquil) than in the most fearful group (under siege).[9]

Table 1.1 Relationship between dimensions of citizen security and degree of satisfaction with democracy in Costa Rica, 2004

	Degree of satisfaction with democracy (%)			
	Satisfied – very satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied – very dissatisfied	Balance of opinion [(1)]
Victimization in the last 12 months				
Victim of crime	18.8	50.6	28.7	-9.9
Not victim of crime	23.5	39.1	36.6	-13.1
Fear group				
Tranquil	59.4	16.9	22.9	36.5
Nervous	52.0	20.9	25.8	26.2
Frightened	43.6	20.2	34.4	9.2
Under siege	42.8	17.4	39.4	3.4

Notes: (1) Net difference after subtracting the sum of the "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" responses from the sum of the "satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.
Source: UNDP (2006), p. 428.

Equally clear is the correlation found in Costa Rica between abstract adherence to democracy as a system of government and the intensity of perceived insecurity. Preference for democracy clearly declines as fear intensifies, while at the same time authoritarian inclinations increase. The percentage of Costa Ricans with a high level of fear (under siege) who are willing to accept an authoritarian regime under some circumstances is nearly triple the percentage among those who feel low levels of fear (tranquil). (See Graph 1.1.)

Graph 1.1 Adherence to democracy in Costa Rica by levels of fear of crime, 2004

Source: UNDP (2006), p. 429

As UNDP (2006) cautions, this evidence suggests that "citizen insecurity is, in fact, one of the stitches that if torn, could unravel the democratic pact, even in a country like Costa Rica where that pact is enormously solid."[10]

This connection is reinforced when questions are asked about people's willingness to tolerate authoritarian reversals as a result of prevailing insecurity. Cruz (2008) finds that 47% of the Latin American and Caribbean population (53% in the case of the very violent countries of northern Central America) would be willing to support a military coup if that would solve the problems related to security. The threshold for abandoning democracy is much lower when it comes to the challenge of insecurity than with any other challenge faced by the region. Pérez (2009), for his part, finds that both victimization and high levels of perceived insecurity are significantly correlated with individuals' willingness to support military coups in Latin America and the Caribbean, a correlation Maldonado (2010) was able to establish only as regards the strong perception of insecurity and the presence of gangs in the community.

The existing evidence suggests, then, that the risks stemming from citizen insecurity are real, both in their objective and subjective dimensions, when it comes to democratic consolidation. This conclusion is neither new nor exclusive to Latin America. Nancy Bermeo (1997) has shown how the only consistent factor in explaining democratic disruptions in interwar Europe was the widespread perception that public order was on the verge of collapse. The dictators who assumed control of the failed democracies between the wars constituted a surprisingly heterogeneous group. What united all of them was their promise to restore order. Herein lies a word of warning which those of us who are concerned about the fate of democracy in Latin America would do well to offer: people tend to prefer dictatorship to chaos.

More ambiguous, however, is the evidence available on the effect of citizen insecurity on the "hollowing out" of the rule of law. Political pressures along these lines are increasingly evident in the region. Taken altogether, the evidence has yet to conclusively confirm the success of such pressures. Bateson (2009) did not find a clear and significant relationship in Latin America between victimization and support for "iron-fisted" solutions such as toughening prison sentences, suspending due process guarantees for crime suspects, or holding members of youth gangs in preventive custody. In the case of Costa Rica, UNDP (2006) found a significant relationship between levels of fear and the willingness to confront crime with truly extreme methods such as lynching or homicide to avenge the rape of a daughter or son. It did not, however, find a clear correlation between fear and the inclination to support highly repressive legal or regulatory solutions such as the death penalty, stiffer sentences, the adoption of legislation to keep immigrants from entering the country, or the widespread publication of the names of people who have committed crimes. While not insignificant, support for these latter legal measures appeared to be quite homogenous among different segments of the Costa Rican population.

The deterioration of social ties

Democracy is, among many other things, a way of life in which citizens, in the exercise of their rights, regularly participate in managing matters of collective interest. Democracy does not merely entail the exercise of a collection of individual freedoms, but rather the possibility that each citizen can participate actively in a civic sphere in which collective decisions, including those designed to protect individual freedoms, are made.[11] Democracy, then, can exist only in the context of a community. In general, the existence of a dense network of social relationships—seen in aspects such as mutual trust among citizens, their willingness to share experiences and spaces, and their wish to associate with each other to pursue common objectives—attests to the fact that members of a group of people recognize each other as equals, and that power relationships within the group are more "horizontal" than "vertical." These two factors are central to the existence of a democratic community.[12]

All of this matters because citizen insecurity can drastically transform social ties and erode values that are central to the collective experience, such as tolerance of differences. On this point, once again, the UNDP (2006) found interesting evidence of an inverse relationship between perceived insecurity and levels of interpersonal trust in Costa Rica, a phenomenon that was also found in Colombia, Guatemala, and Jamaica.[13] Likewise, the case of Costa Rica also shows that as levels of fear rise, people are less accepting of the social and spatial integration of those who are different.[14]

However, the same relationship is not seen between fear and people's propensity to participate in organized groups (associativity). The Costa Rican experience demonstrates that in many communities, insecurity has not translated into erosion of community ties, pure and simple. The tendency to associate could, in fact, be higher among those segments of the population that experience greater fear of violence, particularly when it comes to participating in groups organized to prevent or combat crime. Insecurity, then, allows for a curious coexistence of low levels of interpersonal trust with new forms of social cooperation. In Costa Rica, fear seems to have fostered an "associativity of distrust," based more on reasons of convenience—to fight crime—than on solidarity.[15]

In other, more violent contexts, the situation is far worse. As Moser & McIlwaine (2000) show in their study of communities beset by violence in Colombia, the largest segment of organizations present in the community seem to be linked to the violence.[16] The problem is that a great many of them do not prevent violence but *perpetrate* it. In communities devastated by mutual distrust, the "social capital" that emerges is often perverse in nature, taking the form of criminal organizations, which offer their members identity, protection, and economic opportunities.[17]

In general terms, then, there is a clear risk that insecurity will cause the deterioration of the collective social infrastructure that undergirds the functioning of democracy.

The weakening of the state and the rule of law

The third possible consequence of citizen insecurity for democracy is perhaps even more profound. The proliferation of social violence is a conspicuous sign of the state's inability to enforce the law. In that case, the widespread perception of impunity and the sense that basic rights are not being protected end up generating, as O'Donnell (1993) warned, a "low intensity" democracy and citizenship, incapable of inspiring intense devotion on the part of the governed. In a state of widespread anomie, it is not only the survival of democracy that is not guaranteed, but the very existence of the state as an entity that governs collective life.

In some regions of Latin America, there is doubt regarding the state's monopoly on legitimate co-ercion within its territory and the effectiveness of its legal mandates. As will be shown in Chapter 4, this is manifested radically in places ranging from certain *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro to rural areas of Mexico and Guatemala where drug trafficking organizations have become providers of essential social services and administrators of justice.

In other places, the erosion of the rule of law takes less radical forms. For instance, the growing tendency of citizens in some countries is to abandon public mechanisms available for security and justice, as they view activating such mechanisms as pointless or counterproductive to address insecurity. This abandonment can take different forms, ranging from people's reluctance to report crimes to the exponential proliferation of private security firms and, in the worst cases, the es-tablishment of lynching as a method to combat crime. Even more clearly, the rapid expansion and limited regulation of private security firms—which in some countries have six times more agents than public law enforcement—leave in question whether the state continues to have a monopoly on legitimate violence in the region.

The importance of this phenomenon cannot be ignored, linked as it is to very basic and longstand-ing issues in western political theory. A violent society is one in which the foundations of the polit-ical obligation that ties citizens to the state become significantly weakened.[18]

Crippled liberties

The fourth hypothetical relationship between citizen insecurity and democracy has to do with the way high levels of perceived insecurity visibly change the way people conduct their daily lives. Un-like the previous relationships suggested between insecurity and democracy, this one will not be the subject of detailed, empirical consideration in later chapters, as there is insufficient informa-tion available on a regional scale. For the moment, simply to lay out the problem, it will suffice to refer to evidence obtained in the context of Costa Rica, which reveals a significant phenomenon of self-limitation (or limitation by others, in the case of parents with regard to their children) of many basic types of conduct for safety reasons (see Table 1.2).

The same study found a very clear inverse relationship between the levels of fear experienced by individuals and their tendency to exercise their freedom of movement, their freedom to acquire and enjoy property, and their freedom to engage in recreation, all of which are essential for both personal fulfillment and for a social life. In addition, the study found that the intensity of self-limita-tion in the exercise of these freedoms was significantly greater among women than among men.[19]

Table 1.2 Some types of conduct people avoid for security reasons in Costa Rica, 2004

Taking into account what you do for your safety, to what extent do you avoid…	% responding always or almost always
…letting the children in your home play in the street?	71.0
…letting the children who live with you visit the homes of other children?	70.0
…going to places of entertainment such as bars, discos, etc.?	65.2
…leaving your house by yourself at night?	63.7
…going to places of recreation such as public parks, swimming pools, amusement parks, etc.?	53.5
…being home alone at night?	48.8
…participating in social events such as get-togethers or parties?	47.7
…buying things you like because they could be stolen from you?	45.4
…going out at night for activities such as studying or working?	41.7
…leaving your house by yourself during the day?	40.3
…taking the bus at night?	37.1
…being home alone at any time of the day?	37.1

Source: UNDP (2006), p. 555.

Perhaps the most eloquent fact provided by the Costa Rican example is that nearly 40% of women and 30% of men stated in 2004 that they avoided being home alone at any time of the day. This is an irrefutable indicator of the considerable limitations under which much of that country's population exercises one of the most basic freedoms of all: the freedom to enjoy the tranquility of one's home. It should be noted that, as we will see in the next chapter, Costa Rica is by no means one of the countries in the region with the worst levels of fear of crime.

If we start with the premise that democracy is defined, above all else, by the presence and effective existence of a whole array of fundamental rights and freedoms, then the serious limitations to—among many other things—the exercise of freedom of movement and enjoyment of property observed in the Costa Rican example constitute a clear weakening of the sphere of citizenship.

So far, this document has analyzed citizen insecurity as a condition exogenous to democracy, one that has potentially negative consequences for it. While that is the emphasis of this monograph and the subject of the following chapters, it also constitutes a simplification of the problem. The truth is that, in many ways, the deterioration of security is *endogenous* to democracy and clearly related to pathologies in the way democracy works. Therefore, it is worth pausing briefly to analyze the inverse relationship: the one in which the quality of democracy affects insecurity.

How does the state of democracy affect citizen insecurity?

The flip side of the previous arguments is that citizen insecurity is, in part, the product of multiple deficiencies in the exercise of social and political rights by a significant portion of the Latin American population. A democracy with full citizenship not only has intrinsic value; it also has an instrumental value in creating safer societies.

There is no question that over the course of the past generation Latin America has made enormous strides to expand the reach of political freedoms and, more recently, social rights. Just to give one example, due to a combination of sustained economic growth and effective social policies, the proportion of the population living in poverty in Latin America has decreased from 43.8% in 1999 to 28.8% in 2012.[20] This has been compounded by a region-wide push against income inequality, which has decreased in a majority of countries.[21]

While these trends are obviously welcome, they do not belittle the magnitude of the political, social and security challenges that remain. As we will see in the following chapter, the empirical relationship between citizen insecurity and socioeconomic inequality has been solidly established. It is thus no coincidence that Latin America—still the region with the most unequal income distribution in the world—has unparalleled levels of violent crime. The presence of profound socioeconomic inequalities is symptomatic of serious failures in universal access to basic social and political rights. It is symptomatic, that is, of a weakening of citizenship and, in the end, of the democratic *ethos*. One of the central missions of democracy is to provide a sphere of equality, defined by rights, capable of counterbalancing the power inequalities caused by a concentration of economic resources.[22] The excessive concentration of economic resources—of which inequality in income distribution is merely one symptom—goes against the express purpose of democracy, particularly in its liberal sense, of *distributing* power and preventing it from being concentrated in any form.[23]

Furthermore, the marginalization of a significant portion of Latin American youth—a key factor in understanding the levels of violence in the region—coincides with serious social failings and omissions in the state's actions, which continue in practice to deny access to fundamental rights and public goods for some individuals starting at a very young age. The inability of society and, in particular, of public institutions to create conditions that allow for young people to stay in formal education is just the most obvious indication of this problem. At the beginning of the last decade, 37% of Latin American adolescents dropped out of school before finishing their secondary education. Of those, nearly half left before finishing primary school.[24]

Underlying the syndrome of violence are deficiencies in access to social rights and to the basic public services that in practice represent the exercise of those rights. Here we find, once again, the argument suggested earlier: the roots of violence are related to the exercise of a "low intensity" citizenship by considerable segments of the population. Citizen insecurity and the social exclusions that precede it are, then, symptoms of frailties in the functioning of democracy.

For all the democratic progress made by Latin America, social rights have not been universalized or, in many cases, even recognized in the region. That is due to the fact that the exercise of civil and political rights by marginalized sectors continues to face very obvious barriers, which stand in the way of their participation, mobilization, and political representation.[25] These political barriers—which include, among many others, campaign financing, structures of ownership of the communications media, methods of recruitment of political elites, and the use by the elites of patronage and co-optation—tend to translate into serious difficulties in expanding the enjoyment of social rights.

In Latin America, the way political institutions function has rendered slow, incomplete, and tentative the task of building and financing a state that is able to guarantee the whole gamut of civil, political and social rights and is therefore capable of sustaining a complete citizenship.[26] As Norberto Bobbio has elegantly explained, there is a natural relationship between the expansion of democratic spaces and the creation of a welfare state:

> "When those who had the right to vote were just property owners, it was natural that they should ask the public authority to perform a single basic function: the protection of private property. This gave rise both to the doctrine of the limited state, the night-watchman state, or, as it is known now, the minimal state, and to the constitution of the state as an association of property owners for the defence of that natural right which was for Locke precisely the right to property. From the moment the vote was extended to the illiterate it was inevitable that they would ask the state to set up free schools, and so take on board a responsibility unknown to the states of traditional oligarchies and of the first bourgeois oligarchy. When the right to vote was also extended to non-property owners, to the have-nots, to those whose only property was their labour, it resulted in them asking the state for protection from unemployment, and in due course for state insurance schemes against illness and old age, for maternity benefits, for subsidized housing etc. So it was that the Welfare State came about, like it or not, as the response to demands emanating from below, demands which were, in the fullest sense of the word, democratic."[27]

In crucial ways, political systems in Latin America remain impervious to such demands. Most glaringly of all, those political institutions have been unable to transform the fiscal weakness that afflicts virtually all states in Latin America. The low and regressive tax burden that continues to plague the region[28] is at once: a faithful barometer of a severely skewed power distribution, a crucial obstacle to the universalization of social rights, and a significant roadblock to resolving the ultimate causes of violence. In Latin America, the forms of political exclusion that remain have the effect of reproducing the social exclusions that underlie the phenomenon of violence.

We have thus closed a circle. If it is possible to assume that citizen insecurity affects the state of democracy in many ways, it can also be assumed that the state of democracy, and particularly its limited ability to confront inequality and guarantee the enjoyment of social and economic rights, has a direct effect on citizen insecurity.

Where to now?

Citizen insecurity has become an unavoidable issue in the discussion about the current state and future of democracy in Latin America. This is the case, first of all, because of the simple magnitude of the problem, which—as we will see in the next chapter—has ended up dominating the public debate and the daily lives of citizens in much of the region. But it is also unavoidable to consider the issue for reasons that are less obvious but equally important. Citizen insecurity— understood as it relates to the exercise of a hard core of fundamental rights—can have multiple consequences for democracy, including the crippling of some individual liberties in practice; the erosion of the social ties that sustain civic life; the proliferation of authoritarian attitudes; and the gradual dissolution of the state's ability to back up its legal mandates, a fundamental condition for its existence. Citizen security, for its part, appears to be the result of the democratic system's ability to guarantee the effective enjoyment of a broader array of socioeconomic rights for everyone. Citizen insecurity is a particularly accurate reflection of the convergence of many forms of socioeconomic exclusion in the lives of real individuals and communities.

At issue is not just that a democracy incapable of ensuring the everyday enjoyment of a hard core of basic rights—such as life, physical integrity, and the enjoyment of property—offers a diminished citizenship and is, in the end, less democratic. Also at issue is that a democracy incapable of ensuring the full exercise of social and economic rights ends up creating conditions that pave the way for violence to be generated and reproduced, which in turn weakens democracy. We have, then, a vicious circle: a diminished exercise of civil and political rights by excluded sectors translates into a limited recognition of their social and economic rights, which in turn, through violence, can further restrict the enjoyment of very basic civil and political rights.

The following chapters of this monograph will use the available evidence to analyze in detail some of the links between citizen insecurity and democracy laid out in the preceding pages, particularly those that show how high levels of violence affect the consolidation of democratic systems in the region. The first step is to determine, however briefly, the current state of citizen insecurity in Latin America, both in its objective and subjective dimensions. This will be the aim of Chapter 2. Chapters 3 and 4 constitute, to some extent, the heart of the text. Chapter 3 will look at the evidence related to the effects of citizen insecurity on support for democracy and the rule of law, as well as the quality of social ties. Chapter 4, for its part, will examine the erosion of the state's monopoly on the law and legitimate coercive power in Latin America, placing emphasis on the phenomenon of "failed spots" in the region and on the population's abandonment of public mechanisms for protecting security. The last chapter will identify some concrete steps that governments in the region and international agencies would do well to take to "armor" democratic systems in the region—particularly in some very vulnerable countries, such as those in northern Central America—against the onslaught of violent crime.

This study is driven by the conviction that the battle for the consolidation of democracy in Latin America necessarily entails a complex, sustained effort to reduce crime rates, which in turn requires guaranteeing the universal enjoyment of economic and social rights in the region. Reducing impunity and the deep social imbalances that still tear at Latin America is the *sine qua non* if the region is to avoid seeing the hard-won democratic progress of the last three decades slip away.

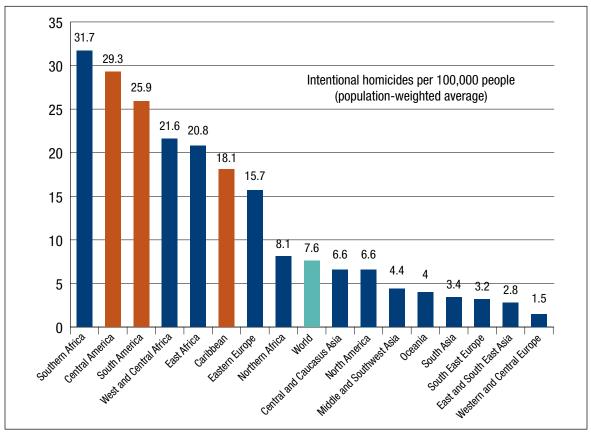# Anatomy of an Epidemic: Violence and Citizen Insecurity in Latin America

Introduction

Violence and insecurity are commonplace in Latin America. The region holds the dubious distinction of having some of the worst indicators of violent crime in the world. In the first decade of this century alone, approximately 1.4 million Latin Americans lost their lives as a result of violent crime, much of which was related to organized crime.[29] That is just the most acute and most visible human consequence of the problem. Every year, approximately 200 million Latin Americans—one third of the region's total population—are victims, directly or within their immediate family, of some criminal act.[30]

The following pages give an idea of the magnitude of the phenomenon of citizen insecurity in Latin America, both in its objective and subjective dimensions, through a careful review of the available statistics. While these show that the problem is unfolding in Latin America with an intensity unheard of in practically any other region of the world, they also suggest that the situation in the region is extremely complex. The first section will examine the criminal violence that affects the region, particularly in terms of rates of intentional homicide and proportion of households that are victimized. That section will show not only the considerable variations in violence across Latin America but also the relative stability, even improvement, in levels of violence in much of the region. The second section, meanwhile, will provide a quick overview of some of the main risk factors associated with the high levels of violence in Latin America. The third section will present information on the subjective dimension of insecurity, the state of which, in this case, is uniform and increasingly alarming throughout the region. The text ends by recapping the main findings derived from the evidence presented in these pages.

As we will see, although the challenge of citizen insecurity has understandably become a constant presence throughout Latin America, its description is much more complex than the simplistic and alarming versions that frequently dominate public discussion of the issue.

The objective dimension: crime and victimization

If we are to establish the gravity of criminal violence in Latin America, the murder rate is a good place to start. Despite some differences among sources, since the late 1990s the available figures have placed the rate of intentional homicides in the region at more than 20 per 100,000 inhabitants, practically triple the figure for the world as a whole. According to the most recent worldwide estimate, from 2004, only sub-Saharan Africa showed figures comparable to those of Latin America and the Caribbean. (See Graph 2.1.)[31]

Graph 2.1 Homicide rates in the world per region, 2004

Intentional homicides per 100,000 people
(population-weighted average)

Region	Rate
Southern Africa	31.7
Central America	29.3
South America	25.9
West and Central Africa	21.6
East Africa	20.8
Caribbean	18.1
Eastern Europe	15.7
Northern Africa	8.1
World	7.6
Central and Caucasus Asia	6.6
North America	6.6
Middle and Southwest Asia	4.4
Oceania	4
South Asia	3.4
South East Europe	3.2
East and South East Asia	2.8
Western and Central Europe	1.5

Source: Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008)

In the year 2000, the more than 140,000 homicides in Latin America and the Caribbean were equivalent to 27% of the world's total, despite the fact that the region had just 8.5% of the global population. Moreover, homicides in the region represented 4.4% of total deaths and 35.8% of deaths from violent causes, figures that are overwhelmingly higher than the worldwide numbers and even those from regions as conflict-ridden as sub-Saharan Africa.[32]

The indisputable gravity of these numbers should not, however, lead to two erroneous conclusions that are frequently repeated both within and outside the region. The situation is neither equally

serious in all countries, nor is it evolving uniformly in a negative direction. The reality is more subtle, as the following table shows (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Intentional homicide rates in Latin America, 1990-2008 (homicides per 100,000 inhabitants)

Country / Subregion / Region	Year					Difference 1990-2008
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2008	
Argentina	10	8	7	6	6	-4
Bolivia	–	17	37	7	8	-9 [a]
Brazil	19	19	27	29	30	+11
Chile	6	5	2	2	2	-4
Colombia	70	58	63	42	36	-34
Costa Rica	5	5	6	8	11	+6
Dominican Republic	13 [*]	13	13	26	25	+12
Ecuador	10	13	19	18	22	+12
El Salvador	58	92	72	62	52	-6
Guatemala	29 [*]	38	28	42	46	+17
Honduras	10	35 [*]	46	35	61	+51
Mexico	17	17	14	11	13	-4
Nicaragua	16	16	9	13	13	-3
Panama	12	14	10	11	19	+7
Paraguay	5	21	12	15	12 [*]	+7
Peru	3 [*]	13	5 [*]	3	11 [*]	+8
Uruguay	9	10	5	6	7	-2
Venezuela	13	20	33	37	52	+39
Southern Cone and Brazil Subregion [b] [c]	16	16	22	23	24	+8
Andean Subregion [b] [d]	32	31	36	27	30	-2
Central America and Mexico Subregion [b] [e]	18	21	18	18	23	+5
Latin America [b]	**20**	**21**	**24**	**22**	**24**	**+4**

Notes: (*) Nearest available year. (a) 1995-2008 difference. (b) Average weighted by population. (c) Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil. (d) Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia. (e) Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic.
Sources: See Appendix.

The numbers are surprisingly mixed. In 2008, some of the highest homicide rates in the world—such as those in Colombia, Venezuela, and, above all, in the northern region of Central America—coexisted with other, relatively low, rates in the Southern Cone countries. The homicide rate in Chile was, in fact, similar to that of the countries of Western and Central Europe, which have the lowest rates of violent crime in the world. The rest of the countries had intermediate figures, though still relatively high in an international context. Only three of the 19 countries included in the table (Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay) show homicide rates below the worldwide average (7.6 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004).

Equally varied is the behavior of murder rates over time. In the years between 1990 and 2008, homicide rates rose sharply in Venezuela, Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and, more recently, Panama. In the case of Costa Rica, the rise was moderate, though starting from levels that are relatively low for the region. A third group of countries, which includes Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, showed a positive trend, with Colombia being the only country in the region that experienced sustained, dramatic improvement throughout the period under study. The case of Mexico is unusual in that a sustained drop in the homicide rate over the course of nearly two decades, until 2007, gave way to a serious deterioration in the recent past, linked to the escalation in violence related to drug trafficking, which now brings the figures to a higher level than 20 years ago.[33] A last group of countries showed fluctuations throughout the period, ending with recent downward trends (Bolivia, Paraguay, and El Salvador) or increases (Nicaragua, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay). In the case of El Salvador, however, it should be noted that the fluctuations take place within an extraordinarily high range throughout the period.

The figures are still heterogeneous when the countries are grouped into subregions. While the Central America and Mexico region, as well as that of the Southern Cone and Brazil, generally experienced deterioration in the homicide rate in the two decades leading to 2008, the Andean region saw a slight improvement, with the very positive trend in Colombia increasingly offset by the severe setback in Venezuela.

This mixed picture—in which very different levels of violence and performance trends coexist—is summarized in the last line of the table. It shows a moderate increase in the homicide rate in Latin America since 1990—from 20 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1990 to 24 per 100,000 in 2008, the same rate as in 2000. This statistic should serve as a caution against the easy assumption that the region as a whole is experiencing an explosive increase in levels of violence.

In addition to affecting the countries of the region differently, homicide rates also impact various socio-demographic groups differently. Of note here is the high concentration of the region's homicide victims among men between the ages of 15 and 29; their homicide rate in Latin America and the Caribbean (89.7 per 100,000 inhabitants) has been calculated to be as much as five times the worldwide figure (19.4 per 100,000).[34] Even though femicide is a serious and possibly growing problem in the region, the most notable feature of violent homicide in Latin America and the Caribbean is the extreme disparity in homicide rates between men and women, which is without parallel in the world. While on a worldwide scale there were 3.4 male homicides for every female homicide in 2002, in Latin America and the Caribbean the ratio was nearly 11 to 1.[35]

Intentional homicides are only the most visible part of the problem of insecurity, and the part easiest to quantify. When other facets of the violence are examined, the regional outlook is equally or more dismal. In 2009, the proportion of households in which someone had been a victim of a crime in the previous year was around or above 30% in all Latin American countries (see Table 2.2). Unlike homicide rates, the regional victimization numbers are quite homogenous, with 12 of the 18 countries fluctuating between 30% and 40% of households affected per year. In 2009, only Ecuador and El Salvador were above 50%, a barrier broken at other times in the recent past by Mexico, Guatemala, and Venezuela. Such figures, in any case, are a far cry from those collected in the International Crime Victim Survey, conducted in 2004-2005 in 30 countries of Europe, North America, Oceania, and Asia, nearly all of them with high levels of human development. In that survey, the percentage of people who had been victims in the last year was just over 15% of the total.[36]

In the midst of such an alarming picture, however, the numbers provide some good news: the recent trend in victimization in Latin America is not what it is generally assumed to be. Of the 18 countries in the region, only Venezuela and the Dominican Republic saw a significant deterioration in levels of victimization for the 1998-2009 period.[37] Eight countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, and Uruguay) were practically at the same level at the beginning and end of the period, while in another eight (Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru) the rates went down, in some cases quite a bit. Although relatively high, as we have seen, the percentage of households victimized by crime in Latin America in 2009 was nevertheless lower than in 1998 (see Table 2.2).

As in the case of intentional homicides, victimization does not affect every group in the region homogenously. People who are more educated and have higher incomes (categories that are closely correlated) are more likely to be victims of crimes, along with young people and people who live in urban areas. With the exception of domestic violence, a subject that will be referred to later on, in Latin America the statistics on victimization of women are lower than those of men.[38]

The high rate of victimization seen in the region is closely linked to the prevalence of property crimes. Of those who said they had been victims of a crime in the Americas in 2010, 85% stated that they had experienced a theft, robbery, or extortion.[39] In the case of property crimes such as theft, the levels of victimization in Latin America are separated by a wide gulf from those seen in industrialized countries (see Table 2.3).

Besides intentional homicides and property crimes such as theft, robbery, and extortion, there are other types of violent behavior whose magnitude can only be guessed at but whose importance

Table 2.2 Percentage of households that have been victims of a crime in the last year, Latin America, 1998-2009

Country	Year				Difference 1998-2009
	1998	2001	2005	2009	
Argentina	50	46	42	41	-9
Bolivia	39	46	45	39	0
Brazil	42	36	45	41	-1
Chile	30	42	39	31	+1
Colombia	36	34	37	30	-6
Costa Rica	45	31	45	37	-8
Dominican Republic	–	–	31	43	+12 [a]
Ecuador	49	56	52	51	+2
El Salvador	71	36	34	73	+2
Guatemala	54	41	40	38	-16
Honduras	42	36	32	33	-9
Mexico	38	78	67	38	0
Nicaragua	49	41	37	32	-17
Panama	33	37	21	29	-4
Paraguay	32	39	39	31	-1
Peru	42	49	48	38	-4
Uruguay	33	30	39	31	-2
Venezuela	33	49	49	39	+6
Latin America (simple average)	**43**	**40**	**42**	**39**	**-4**
International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS)	**21** [b][d]	**–**	**16** [c][d]	**–**	**–**

Notes: (a) Difference 2005-2009. (b) 2000. Includes 17 industrialized countries. (c) 2003-04. Includes 30 industrialized countries, including Mexico. (d) The figures are not fully comparable. The ICVS figure covers individuals who were victims, not households.
Sources: Latinobarómetro; Van Kesteren et al. (2005).

to the region's security outlook is undeniable. Among those that should be mentioned are, on the one hand, some forms of organized crime and, on the other, the complex phenomenon of domestic violence.

Indeed, the levels of insecurity in Latin America and their social, economic, and political implications cannot be understood without referring to the extensive penetration of organized crime in the region, particularly drug trafficking. Despite the intense efforts to eradicate illegal crops and interdict drug trafficking, the region continues to be the world's main producer of marijuana and cocaine, and it is significantly increasing its participation in the production of opiate and synthetic drugs.[40] Whether they are drug producers, places for transit or storage, sites for laundering illicit funds, points of access to the U.S. market, or significant consumer markets in their own right,

Table 2.3 Levels of victimization by theft in selected countries and cities, over different years (*)

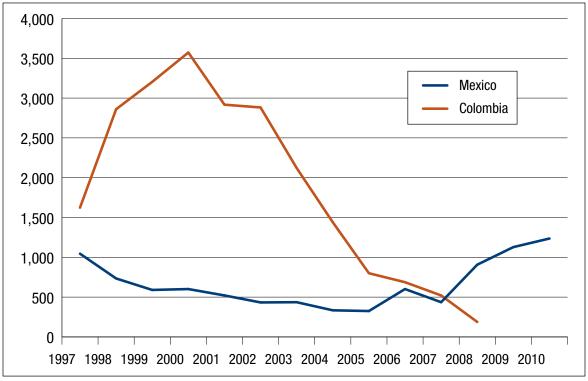| Country / Region	(%) [a]	Year	City [b]	(%) [a]	Year
Americas (34 countries)	7.1	2010	*Bahía (Brazil)*	22.1	1998
Ireland	2.2	2003-04	*San Salvador (El Salvador)*	20	1998
Estonia	1.6	2003-04	*Caracas (Venezuela)*	18.4	1998
England & Wales	1.4	2003-04	*Cali (Colombia)*	16.1	1998
Greece	1.4	2003-04	*Buenos Aires (Argentina)*	10	2001-04
Spain	1.3	2003-04	*Lima (Peru)*	7.4	2001-04
Poland	1.3	2003-04	*Santiago (Chile)*	6.9	1998
Belgium	1.2	2003-04	*San José (Costa Rica)*	6.1	2004
Sweden	1.1	2003-04	*São Paulo (Brazil)*	5.4	2001-04
New Zealand	1.1	2003-04	*Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)*	5.5	2001-04
Portugal	1.0	2003-04	Warsaw (Poland)	2.8	2001-04
Denmark	0.9	2003-04	London (United Kingdom)	2.6	2001-04
Switzerland	0.8	2003-04	Brussels (Belgium)	2.5	2001-04
Canada	0.8	2003-04	New York (U.S.)	2.3	2001-04
France	0.8	2003-04	Lisbon (Portugal)	1.9	2001-04
Norway	0.8	2003-04	Zurich (Switzerland)	1.7	2001-04
United States	0.6	2003-04	Madrid (Spain)	1.5	2001-04
Germany	0.4	2003-04	Paris (France)	1.2	2001-04
Finland	0.3	2003-04	Berlin (Germany)	1.2	2001-04
Italy	0.3	2003-04	Amsterdam (Holland)	1.1	2001-04
Japan	0.2	2003-04	Stockholm (Sweden)	0.7	2001-04
Average, industrialized countries (30 countries)	1.0	2003-04	Hong Kong (China)	0.4	2001-04

Note: (*) The sources used do not employ an identical definition of theft; thus, any comparisons must be made with caution. For the countries and cities included in the ICVS, the term "theft" was used. The figure for the Americas included the categories "armed robbery" and "unarmed robbery with assault." For the Latin American cities not included in the ICVS, with the exception of San José, Costa Rica, the category "armed robbery" was used. In the case of San José, Costa Rica, it was "robbery and theft outside the home." (a) Percentage of individuals, not households. (b) The cities in italics are Latin American cities.
Sources: Countries: 2010 AmericasBarometer (Americas); Van Kesteren et al. (2005) (all remaining countries). Cities: PAHO, Proyecto Activa (Bahía, San Salvador, Caracas, Cali, Santiago); UNDP (2006) (San José); Van Kesteren et al. (2005) (all remaining cities).

practically all the countries in Latin America participate in an illicit trade that mobilizes tens of billions of dollars every year. In Mexico alone, the estimates of funds derived from drug trafficking fluctuate between $11 billion and $36 billion per year.[41]

This enormous flow of resources and the sophistication of the criminal networks that support it have drastically transformed the political and security reality in the region. In a few cases, such as Colombia and Peru, drug trafficking has played a decisive role in financing and prolonging internal

armed conflicts. More generally, it has exposed the region's law enforcement, military, judicial, and political institutions to unprecedented risks of corruption, while contributing to a dramatic increase in violent crime in some countries.

The criminal networks supported by drug trafficking directly strengthen other forms of organized crime, such as kidnapping. It has been alleged that more than 50% of the world's kidnapping for extortion occurs in Latin America.[42] In 2006, five countries in Latin America, including Mexico, which topped the list, were among the top 10 in the world in terms of number of kidnappings.[43] In fact, the decline in the number of kidnappings in Colombia in the last decade has been partially offset by the increase in Mexico since 2007 (see Graph 2.2). It should also be noted that these statistics include only a small fraction of the kidnappings that have actually taken place. A wide gulf separates the 601 kidnappings reported to the authorities in Mexico in 2006 from an estimate, based on victimization surveys, which placed the real number at close to 78,000 kidnappings during the year, the majority of those in the form of "express" kidnappings.[44]

Graph 2.2 Kidnappings reported to the authorities in Colombia and Mexico, 1997-2010

Source: Colombia: Policía Nacional de Colombia; México: Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Publica / CONAPO

For its part, domestic violence—overwhelmingly experienced by women—constitutes one of the most serious and least visible spheres of the endemic insecurity that afflicts the region. Based on the available data, at the turn of the century between 30% and 75% of adult women (in a partner

relationship) in Latin America and the Caribbean had been victims of psychological abuse, and between 10% and 30% had suffered physical violence.[45] This phenomenon has been repeatedly corroborated by studies conducted in many countries of the region. In Costa Rica, for example, a 2004 survey showed that 58% of women over 16 years of age had experienced at least one act of physical or sexual violence, almost always perpetrated by someone in her closest circle.[46] In the Dominican Republic, meanwhile, a 1999 national census found that one third of women interviewed had experienced physical violence from their husbands or partners, a phenomenon particularly widespread among women who were separated or divorced (51%) or who lived in rural areas (39%).[47] In Uruguay, one out of every seven women states that she has been a victim of violence in the home.[48] Because it occurs in private, this type of violence is barely visible, and from the point of view of public policy, it is often looked down upon. That leads to the grave error—fraught with practical consequences—of considering the violence women experience in the domestic sphere to be a problem that is separate and distinct from citizen insecurity.

To summarize, then, the objective dimension of criminal violence in Latin America has features that separate the region from nearly every other region in the world. However, the region as a whole does not have a homogeneous violence problem, nor does it seem to be immersed in a downward spiral of crime. It is necessary to distinguish between cases. One simple way to do that is to propose a simple objective index of violent crime in the region, which combines in equal parts two of the most reliable indicators available: the rate of homicides and the proportion of households victimized by crime in the past year. Using the same indicators it is also possible to summarize the trend in the objective dimension of violence over the last decade. The calculation of both indices produced the following results (see Table 2.4).

The numbers corroborate the alarming levels of violence currently being seen in the "Northern Triangle" of Central America and Venezuela, as well as the less serious nature of the problem in the Southern Cone, particularly in Chile and Uruguay. Most noteworthy, perhaps, is the right side of the table, which shows that four of the six Central American countries, along with Venezuela, have seen the most serious deterioration in indicators of violence in the last decade. By contrast, cases such as Colombia, Bolivia, and Mexico have improved considerably. In this last case, however, the statistics should be viewed with caution, given that they largely reflect an abrupt drop in the abnormally high level of victimization seen in 2001 (78%). The numbers between the two columns correspond relatively closely, starting with the notable fact that El Salvador heads both lists. Using Spearman's coefficient to measure the consistency between ordinal lists produces a positive correlation of 0.62 between the two rankings.

Table 2.4 Indices of objective violence, Latin America

Country	Index of objective violence, 2009 [a]	Country	Index of change in objective violence (2000 decade) [b]
El Salvador	125	El Salvador	-17
Honduras	94	Guatemala	-15
Venezuela	91	Honduras	-14
Guatemala	84	Costa Rica	-11
Ecuador	73	Venezuela	-9
Brazil	71	Brazil	-8
Dominican Republic	68	Uruguay	-4
Colombia	66	Panama	-1
Mexico	51	Ecuador	2
Peru	49	Peru	5
Costa Rica	48	Nicaragua	5
Panama	48	Argentina	6
Bolivia	47	Paraguay	8
Argentina	47	Chile	9
Nicaragua	45	Colombia	31
Paraguay	43	Bolivia	36
Uruguay	38	Mexico	42
Chile	33	Dominican Republic	n.a.

Note: (a) Rate of intentional homicides 2008 + percentage of households that have been victims of a crime in the past year, in 2009. (b) Change in rate of intentional homicides, 2000-2008 (2000 rate – 2008 rate) + change in percentage of households that have been victims of a crime in the past year, 2001-2009 (victimization 2001 – victimization 2009). Negative numbers indicate greater deterioration.
Sources: Prepared by author based on data in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

At the very least, the table suggests that northern Central America and Venezuela correspond closely to the image of extraordinarily high levels of violence that are in a process of sharp deterioration. In the rest of the subcontinent the situation is more mixed, either because the levels of violence are lower (though comparatively high on an international scale) or because they are not getting worse, or both.

A look at factors associated with the objective dimension of insecurity

The levels of violence described in the preceding pages do not occur in a vacuum or at random. Thus, before analyzing the subjective dimension of insecurity it is worth pausing briefly to examine some of the factors that contribute to these levels. Identifying the range of causes behind the phenomena examined above, along with the relative importance of each of these, is a task that far exceeds the aims of this volume. The very notion of "cause" is problematic in the context of

criminality; the preferable term, commonly seen in the epidemiological literature, is "associated risk factor."[50] It is possible, at most, to identify several social and individual factors that are linked to crime rates with some statistical regularity. Even that, however, can lead to the illusion that it is possible to clearly isolate the factors that contribute to the proliferation of violent crime. The reality is much more complex. The behavior of the crime rate is a phenomenon that is difficult to explain, one that depends less on the isolated presence of certain social or individual characteristics than on the convergence and complex interaction of many factors. When it comes to crime, the effect of associated factors can be much greater than the sum of their parts.

On a worldwide scale, significant statistical relationships have been shown between intentional homicide and robbery rates and socioeconomic inequality, economic stagnation (low growth rates), low levels of schooling, high urbanization rates, and the presence of drugs in communities, among other variables.[51] At the Latin American level, Londoño & Guerrero (2000) found strong associations between homicidal violence and level of income, income distribution, the educational gap, and, to a lesser degree, poverty.[52] Similarly, in the case of Costa Rica's 81 cantons, UNDP (2006) found significant correlations between intentional homicide and robbery, on the one hand, and the percentage of urban population, population density, percentage of overcrowded households, and detention rates for possession of illegal drugs and weapons, on the other. Other quantitative studies tend to confirm these findings. Thus, a recent USAID report on gangs, or *maras*, in Mexico and Central America found that "gang members come from poor and marginalised urban areas, and are the product of an environment characterised by ineffective public services, social exclusion, weak social institutions, disintegrated families, and overcrowding."[53]

At the risk of giving an oversimplified view of a very complex phenomenon, it can be said that to understand the magnitude of violent crime in Latin America, one must take into account at least the following six key factors:

- *Latin America has the most unequal income distribution in the world.* The empirical relationship between socioeconomic inequality and citizen insecurity has been solidly established. After analyzing the effects of different socioeconomic variables on homicide and robbery rates in 39 countries, Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loaiza (2002) concluded that "income inequality, measured by the Gini index, has a significant and positive effect on the incidence of crime."[54] This relationship is stronger than that observed between insecurity and levels of income, poverty, years of schooling, or economic growth. In view of that evidence, it is no coincidence that Latin America has levels of violent crime that are unparalleled in the world. Despite some recent improvements, it is the region of the world that exhibits—and has for a long time—the highest levels of income concentration (see Table 2.5).[55]

Table 2.5 Income distribution by regions of the world

Region	Period	Cases	Gini coefficient [*]	Income ratio highest quintile / lowest quintile
Latin America	1948-1998	320	0.518	12.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	1914-1999	157	0.465	8.2
Middle East / North Africa	1944-1997	57	0.413	7.1
Southeast Asia / Pacific	1956-1998	87	0.398	7.4
Industrialized countries	1867-1998	495	0.361	5.7
South Asia	1950-1997	106	0.345	5.1
Former Soviet republics	1972-1998	125	0.340	4.8
Eastern Europe	1955-1998	191	0.316	3.5
East Asia	1953-1998	93	0.288	5.5
All regions	1867-1999	1392	0.383	6.9

Note: (*) Average per country, weighted by population.
Source: UNU-WIDER, World Income Inequality Database; adapted from Heshmati (2004).

- *Latin America's youth face serious problems of social reintegration.* As Kliksberg (2007) has shown, violent crime in Latin America cannot be understood without referring to the social marginalization of a significant portion of the region's youth. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) data, one out of five young people in Latin America neither studies nor works—a fact that eloquently sums up the seriousness of social exclusion for this demographic sector, so critical when it comes to security.[56] The situation is even more serious in the extremely violent countries of Central America. There, the percentage of young people excluded from the educational system and any type of employment amounts to one quarter. While young people between the ages of 15 and 24 constituted 20% of the population of Central America in 2008,[57] they made up 45% of the unemployed.[58] Not coincidentally, the Central American countries face a problem of juvenile violence that is unparalleled in Latin America. On the Central American isthmus, approximately 70,000 youth belong to juvenile gangs known as *maras*.[59] These gangs have a significant impact on the uncontrolled levels of violence and are increasingly participating in activities in support of organized crime.[60]

- *Latin America has high levels of urbanization.* The empirical connection between urbanization and crime—primarily property crime—is well-established, even if, as Londoño & Guerrero (2000) caution, the underlying explanations are not all that clear. One possibility is simply that city dwellers have more money and more goods that can be robbed; another is that cities tend to attract the migration of young men or other high-risk groups; yet another is that the possibility of arrest decreases in an urban environment. Whatever the explanation, the connection matters greatly in Latin America, since in 2010 the proportion of the

region's population living in urban areas was close to 80%, a higher figure than in any other region of the world, with the exception of North America.[61] Notwithstanding that there are still serious focal points of violence in rural areas in countries such as Colombia and Peru, criminal violence in Latin America is mainly an urban problem. In the majority of cases, homicide rates in the main metropolitan areas in Latin American countries are higher than the national average (see Table 2.6). Along the same lines, as was indicated above, victimization rates are higher in urban areas than in rural areas in the region, and the probability of becoming a victim of a crime increases with the size of the town or city in which a person lives.[62]

Table 2.6 Rate of intentional homicides by countries and major cities in Latin America, circa 2009

Country	Intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants	City	Intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants
Argentina	6	Buenos Aires	5
Bolivia	7	La Paz	3
Brazil	23	Brasilia São Paulo Rio de Janeiro	26 11 26
Chile	4	Santiago	10
Colombia	35	Bogotá Medellín Cali	18 87 80
Costa Rica	11	San José	15
Dominican Republic	25	Santo Domingo	27
Ecuador	18	Quito Guayaquil	11 19
El Salvador	71	San Salvador	83
Guatemala	46	Guatemala City	117
Honduras	71	Tegucigalpa San Pedro Sula	109 125
Mexico	14	Mexico City Monterrey Tijuana Ciudad Juárez	8 7 53 229
Nicaragua	14	Managua	15
Panama	24	Panama City	32
Paraguay	13	Asunción	11
Peru	5	Lima	7
Uruguay	7	Montevideo	6
Venezuela	49	Caracas	119

Source: See Appendix.

- *Latin America is a firearms bazaar.* Between 45 and 80 million small arms circulate legally and illegally throughout the region, according to a 2008 estimate.[63] While the proportion of homicides committed with firearms is 19% in Western and Central Europe, it amounts to nearly 70% in South America and 77% in Central America, the highest figures in the world.[64] In Venezuela, the most recent estimates place the percentage between 80% and an incredible 98%.[65] The sharp increase, for example, in intentional homicides in Central America in recent years is due entirely to the increase in deaths by firearm.[66] Many causes explain this type of disparity between regions, among them permissive or under-enforced laws related to gun purchases and ownership in much of Latin America; the legacy of internal armed conflicts in places such as Colombia and Central America; and the uncontrolled proliferation of private security firms, frequently with little state regulation, as will be examined in Chapter 4.

- *In Latin America there is serious distrust in police and judicial institutions.* The acute problems related to the effectiveness and integrity of law enforcement and the courts in the region are widely known. As the following table shows, the measure used by the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators to assess the effectiveness of the rule of law shows very poor results for the region, which is separated by a wide gulf from the countries of the European Union, as well as from the United States and Canada (see Table 2.7).[67]

Table 2.7 Effectiveness of the rule of law in Latin America and other regions of the world, 2009

Country / Region	Index (*)
Argentina	-0.66
Bolivia	-1.22
Brazil	-0.18
Chile	1.25
Colombia	-0.44
Costa Rica	0.56
Dominican Republic	-0.72
El Salvador	-0.78
Ecuador	-1.28
Guatemala	-1.12
Honduras	-0.87
Mexico	-0.57
Nicaragua	-0.83
Panama	-0.09
Paraguay	-0.98
Peru	-0.66
Uruguay	0.72
Venezuela	-1.59
Latin America (average)	**-0.53**
European Union (average)	1.05
United States	1.53
Canada	1.78

Note: (*) Index fluctuates between a minimum of -2.50 and a maximum of 2.50.
Source: Kaufmann et al. (2010).

In this area, there is a wide gap between Latin America and the developed countries. Even more significantly, with regards to the trust placed in the police and the courts, the region lags behind other developing regions of the world, such as Asia and Africa (see Table 2.8).

Table 2.8 Trust in police and courts in Latin America and other regions of the world, 2009

Country / Region	Police (*)		Courts (*)	
	Trust (%)	Don't trust (%)	Trust (%)	Don't trust (%)
Argentina	69	30	72	28
Bolivia	68	32	73	27
Brazil	73	27	82	18
Chile	89	11	76	24
Colombia	82	18	80	20
Costa Rica	72	28	85	15
Dominican Republic	59	41	78	22
Ecuador	79	21	60	39
El Salvador	74	26	82	18
Guatemala	56	44	70	30
Honduras	63	37	65	35
Mexico	62	38	70	29
Nicaragua	67	33	55	45
Panama	82	18	75	25
Paraguay	68	32	71	29
Peru	74	26	58	41
Uruguay	85	15	87	13
Venezuela	63	37	69	31
Latin America (average)	**72**	**28**	**71**	**29**
Sub-Saharan Africa (average)	78	22	85	15
Asia (average)	90	8	90	10

Notes: (*) For the totals for Latin America, sub-Sarahan Africa, and the Middle East/North Africa, the percentages add together the responses of those who stated that they trusted "a little," "somewhat," and "a lot" in the police and the courts. All these responses are included in the "trust" column in the table.Sources: Latin America: Latino-barómetro 2009; Middle East/North Africa: Gallup; Sub-Saharan Africa: 2008, 2009 AfroBarometer; Asia: 2008, 2009 Asian Barometer; United States: Gallup.

When all the varying degrees of intensity of trust in institutions are added together, the numbers in the table understate the deterioration in citizen trust in the region: only 7.5% of the population in Latin America expresses a lot of confidence in the police and 5.9% in the courts. The comparable figures for sub-Saharan Africa are 29% and 33%, respectively.

One predictable result of such a high level of distrust is the reluctance to report crimes, which in turn sets the stage for widespread impunity. In the case of Costa Rica, where levels of trust in the police and the courts are relatively high for the region, only 23% of crimes are reported to the authorities, similar to Mexico's rate of 22%.[68] Not coincidentally, in the case of Mexico, fewer than 2% of crimes that are committed result in a conviction, a similar proportion to that found in Colombia (2.6%) in the early 2000s.[69] In Venezuela, the problem is even more serious: only 2 of every 100 intentional homicides—the most serious type of crime—end up being solved by the authorities.[70]

- *Latin America has a severe organized-crime problem*. The statistics laid out in the first section of this chapter show that the most acute problems of violent homicide are concentrated in northern Latin America (Colombia, Venezuela, the Caribbean, Central America, and, increasingly, Mexico). This is precisely the geographical area most affected by international drug trafficking. Approximately 90% of the cocaine that enters the North American market moves through the corridor of Central America and Mexico.[71] Close to 45% of the intentional homicides that occurred in Mexico in the 2008-2010 period are directly related to drug trafficking, the same percentage as in Guatemala in 2009.[72] The widespread presence of drug trafficking and organized crime provides a backdrop to the violence that plagues much of Latin America. This organized crime, to be clear, goes beyond the "large-scale international drug trafficking" that routinely generates headlines. For one, there are other forms of organized crime in the region—notably, human trafficking—that rival drug trafficking in terms of profitability and whose activities, in many cases, make use of the networks and structures generated by the drug trade.[73] Moreover, it is critical not to lose sight of the effect on levels of insecurity produced by the creation of local illegal markets that are strengthened by the increase in narcotics consumption in drug-producing or transit countries.[74]

The preceding paragraphs offer just a quick sketch of what is an extraordinarily complex story, one in which demographic factors (for example, the proportion of young men in the population) and individual factors (such as alcohol or drug use) also come together. These risk factors converge with particular intensity in some contexts, leading to spirals of violence that acquire irresistible force. This is a critical point. The high levels of violent crime show a certain inertia: an increase in violence tends to extend over time, feed on itself, and become progressively more difficult to control.

With these background factors behind us, let us now return to the heart of the discussion, to analyze the second component of citizen insecurity: its subjective dimension. As we will see next, on this point the situation in the region is, if anything, even more alarming.

The subjective dimension: Fear and perception of insecurity

While the objective dimension of insecurity and its performance trend show significant variations in Latin America, the same is not the case with the subjective dimension. This chapter's most important finding is probably the extreme intensity of the perception of insecurity in the region and the way it has worsened, uniformly and severely, in every country. In 2010, one third of Latin Americans said they were always or almost always concerned about the possibility of being a victim of a violent crime, with 56% saying they are sometimes or only occasionally concerned. A mere 10%, meanwhile, said they never feared this possibility.[75]

All the available data are surprisingly conclusive in confirming the widespread fear felt on a daily basis by the population of Latin America—particularly by the region's women, who experience it more intensely.[76] In 2008, on average, 59% of Latin Americans seemed convinced that they lived in countries that were increasingly unsafe. The most noteworthy fact is that in a period of just five years, from 2003 to 2008, that perception rose by an average of 41%, and by even more in Argentina and Mexico, where the increase was close to 60% (see Table 2.9).

Table 2.9 Percentage of population that believes the country is increasingly less safe, Latin America, 2003-2008

Country	2003	2008	Difference, 2003-2008
Argentina	24	82	+58
Bolivia	14	53	+39
Brazil	26	64	+38
Chile	16	50	+34
Colombia	11	28	+17
Costa Rica	22	69	+47
Dominican Republic	--	55	--
Ecuador	10	42	+32
El Salvador	14	46	+32
Guatemala	23	73	+50
Honduras	13	68	+55
Mexico	19	77	+58
Nicaragua	7	39	+32
Panama	11	67	+56
Paraguay	42	59	+17
Peru	17	65	+48
Uruguay	5	49	+44
Venezuela	31	71	+40
Latin America (average)	**18**	**59**	**+41**

Source: Latinobarómetro.

The deterioration in perceptions of insecurity at the national level is replicated, with similar intensity, at the local level. In 2010, only 17% of individuals in Latin America said they lived in a neighborhood that was becoming safer. It is significant that a decade earlier, two-thirds of people in Latin America said they felt safe in their neighborhood. Although the second statistic is not entirely comparable to the former, it does suggest an abrupt drop in the level of safety perceived at the local level in all countries of the region, which is in line with the national findings (see Table 2.10).

Table 2.10 Perceived security in neighborhood, Latin America, 2000-2010

Country	How do you feel about your neighborhood? Do you feel safe or unsafe? (2000) (% who say they feel safe)	Can you say that living in your neighborhood is getting safer, as safe, or less safe? (2010) (% who say "getting safer")
Argentina	57	13
Bolivia	57	13
Brazil	57	23
Chile	72	12
Colombia	74	29
Costa Rica	79	17
Dominican Republic	–	10
Ecuador	60	7
El Salvador	51	7
Guatemala	63	31
Honduras	71	22
Mexico	70	14
Nicaragua	67	37
Panama	79	27
Paraguay	72	20
Peru	56	13
Uruguay	70	10
Venezuela	65	5
Latin America (average)	**66**	**17**

Source: Latinobarómetro.

Such perceptions of insecurity are separated by a wide gulf from those prevalent in other regions of the world. The following table shows that in Costa Rica—a country in which, we should recall, statistics on victimization and perception of insecurity are far from the worst in the region—not even the home offers a safe refuge for much of the population. The fear felt in a country such as Costa Rica is of a magnitude far higher than that experienced by the populations of industrialized countries (see Table 2.11).

Table 2.11 Percentage of people who indicate they are concerned about being alone at night, inside or outside the home, Costa Rica and 17 developed countries

Country	Are you afraid at night …	
	Outside your home	Inside your home
Costa Rica	64	49
Spain (Catalonia)	35	6
Australia	34	10
Poland	34	15
Portugal	27	10
England & Wales	27	6
Northern Ireland	23	6
Japan	22	9
Switzerland	22	-
France	22	6
Belgium	21	9
Scotland	20	3
Holland	18	4
Finland	18	4
Denmark	17	3
Canada	16	4
Sweden	15	4
United States	15	4
Average (minus Costa Rica)	**23**	**6**

Source: UNDP (2006), p. 164.

All these figures make clear why insecurity has become a dominant theme on the agenda of virtually the entire region. In Latin America, the percentage of people who consider crime to be the top national priority has tripled in less than a decade. Today it is 27%, which is far above the rate of people who consider unemployment (19%), and, in general, economic-related challenges, to be top national security priorities . Furthermore, with the sole exception of Nicaragua, this figure has gone up in every country. In some cases, such as Venezuela and Panama, it has increased dramatically (see Table 2.12).

The factors associated with this sharp and widespread deterioration in perceived security in the region are far from obvious. After all, as has already been discussed, the indicators of objective violence analyzed in the first section of this chapter do not behave uniformly and, with the exception of the northern region of Central America and Venezuela, have not significantly deteriorated in the recent past. In fact, the exercise of ranking countries in the region by intensity of perception of insecurity produces some surprising results. These show a very weak correlation with current levels or recent trends in the objective dimension of violence (see Table 2.13).

Table 2.12 Percentage of population that views crime and insecurity as the country's most important problem, 1996-2010

Country	1996	2001	2005	2010	1996-2010 difference
Argentina	2	9	14	37	+35
Bolivia	2	4	5	5	+3
Brazil	5	7	11	10	+5
Colombia	3	1	5	14	+11
Chile	14	9	27	22	+8
Costa Rica	8	10	10	38	+30
Dominican Republic	–	–	15	20	+5
Ecuador	6	4	5	24	+18
El Salvador	15	23	27	44	+29
Guatemala	13	20	41	35	+22
Honduras	7	14	24	25	+18
Mexico	7	16	25	35	+28
Nicaragua	3	3	2	1	-2
Panama	5	2	3	46	+41
Paraguay	13	6	20	22	+9
Peru	4	1	3	18	+14
Uruguay	5	3	3	28	+23
Venezuela	9	21	27	64	+55
Latin America (average)	**7**	**9**	**15**	**27**	**+20**

Source: Latinobarómetro.

Toward that end, this study looked at the overview of perception of insecurity presented by Latinobarómetro 2010, which includes, for each country, the percentages of respondents who stated that they live in a country or a neighborhood that is getting safer and never fear becoming victims of a crime. As the following table shows, this "safety summary" places Venezuela, El Salvador, and Ecuador as the countries in the region where the perception of insecurity is most intense. That is not surprising in the first two cases, but it is, to some extent, in the case of Ecuador, whose objective levels of violence are at an intermediate level in the region, even trending in a positive direction recently. At the other extreme, Nicaragua is the country where, by far, that perception is least intense, which is consistent with its relatively low levels of violence and with the virtual absence of crime on the list of national priorities. More noteworthy is the case of Colombia, whose favorable ranking on the perception scale is likely related to the significant progress of its violence indicators in the recent past. Guatemala's favorable outcome is, however, difficult to explain in light of the country's extremely serious levels of crime, which grew worse over the course of the decade leading up to 2010.

Table 2.13 Comparison between indices of perceived insecurity and objective violence in Latin America

Perception of insecurity 2010 (*)			Objective violence 2009			Change in objective violence 2000 decade		
Ranking	Country	Index	Ranking	Country	Index	Ranking	Country	Index
1	Venezuela	13	1	El Salvador	125	1	El Salvador	-17
2	El Salvador	14	2	Honduras	94	2	Guatemala	-15
3	Ecuador	16	3	Venezuela	91	3	Honduras	-14
4	Argentina	25	4	Guatemala	84	4	Costa Rica	-11
5	Peru	25	5	Ecuador	73	5	Venezuela	-9
6	Dominican Republic	26	6	Brazil	71	6	Brazil	-8
7	Bolivia	28	7	Dominican Republic	68	7	Uruguay	-4
8	Chile	29	8	Colombia	66	8	Panamá	-1
9	Mexico	31	9	Mexico	51	9	Ecuador	2
10	Uruguay	32	10	Peru	49	10	Peru	5
11	Costa Rica	37	11	Costa Rica	48	11	Nicaragua	5
12	Brazil	39	12	Panama	48	12	Argentina	6
13	Honduras	42	13	Bolivia	47	13	Paraguay	8
14	Paraguay	42	14	Argentina	47	14	Chile	9
15	Guatemala	54	15	Nicaragua	45	15	Colombia	31
16	Panama	59	16	Paraguay	43	16	Bolivia	36
17	Colombia	63	17	Uruguay	38	17	Mexico	42
18	Nicaragua	81	18	Chile	33	–	Dominican Republic	n.a.

Notes: (*) Sum of percentages of respondents who say they live in a country that is getting safer and a neighborhood that is getting safer and who never fear becoming victims of a crime. Higher figures indicate a greater perception of personal safety. Sources: Summary of safety perception: Latinobarómetro (2010), p. 92; indices of objective violence and change in objective violence taken from Table 2.4.

In reality, as suggested by the example of Guatemala but also other countries such as Peru, Argentina, or Chile, the most striking fact about the data is how little connection there is between the relative performance of the countries in the table's three columns. With very few exceptions—notably El Salvador, which heads two of the lists and ranks second on the third—virtually no country ranks the same on even two of the lists. Spearman's coefficient produces a weak positive correlation (0.27) between the rankings of perception of insecurity and current levels of violence, and an even lower correlation (0.14) between perception of insecurity and changes in crime levels over the previous decade. Clearly, objective violence alone cannot explain the endemic sense of insecurity in Latin America, which appears to have taken on a life of its own.

The factors underlying this phenomenon are not at all clear and must be studied further. It is possible, however, to try out some hypotheses, though exploring them systematically goes beyond

the aim of this volume. One possibility, proposed by UNDP (2006) in its analysis of the case of Costa Rica, is that the extremely high levels of perceived insecurity are related less to the trend in violence than to the widespread sense that the institutional mechanisms to guarantee citizen security are not up to the task. In other words, the fear has less to do with the perceived risk of assault than with the inadequate nature of public protection mechanisms. That analysis would be consistent with the exponential growth in the use of private security services in the region, as we will see in Chapter 4. Another possibility is that security problems may become more relevant to the public agenda as concerns about economic problems, such as unemployment or inflation, recede. This explanation would be consistent with the fact that, beginning in 2004 and despite the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, Latin America has experienced one of the most favorable cycles of economic expansion in the last half century, which in most of the countries has combined economic growth, poverty reduction, a drop in unemployment, inflation control, and even a reduction in inequality.

Whatever the causes of dissonance found between the two dimensions of insecurity, what is certain is that the obvious gap between them makes a public policy response much more complex. Perceptions not only produce independent effects, as we will see in Chapter 3, but they are not necessarily modified in response to a favorable change in objective levels of violence. Thus, if the pernicious effects of citizen insecurity on democratic stability are to be successfully controlled, a reduction in violence is necessary but not sufficient.

Findings and final reflections

The preceding pages suggest that while the situation of citizen security in Latin America is certainly alarming, it nevertheless allows for many nuances. The data, at any rate, show the following:

a. With very few exceptions, the rates of intentional homicide in the countries of Latin America are far above the worldwide average and are possibly comparable only to those of sub-Saharan Africa.
b. However, homicide rates vary widely in the region, ranging from cases that are at the level of very safe industrialized countries to cases in which violent homicide has reached endemic proportions and is practically unparalleled in the world.
c. Homicide rates in the region have unfolded very differently over the last two decades. It is possible to find cases of explosive growth, such as in some Central American countries and Venezuela, and cases in which there have been dramatic declines, such as Colombia. Surprisingly, the rate of homicides for the subcontinent as a whole has shown remarkable stability since 1990. It has suffered a slight, not dramatic, increase.

d. The proportion of households that have been victims of crime in the past year is comparatively quite high throughout the region, and there are relatively limited differences among countries.

e. The regional trend in victimization since 1998, however, is positive. Victimization has dropped for the region as a whole, and in practically every country it has remained stable or has decreased.

f. The high levels of victimization in the region are closely linked to the occurrence of property crimes, whose prevalence in Latin America is far higher than that found in other regions of the world.

g. The objective problems of violent crime in the region are particularly serious in the so-called "Northern Triangle" of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) and in Venezuela, while they are significantly lower in the Southern Cone, particularly in Chile and Uruguay.

h. The region has obvious vulnerabilities that seem to be associated empirically with the high levels of violent crime. These include considerable inequality in income distribution; a significant percentage of young people with no opportunities for social integration; widespread urbanization; the abundant availability of firearms; a severe lack of trust in police and judicial institutions; and a presence of organized crime—particularly drug trafficking—that is likely unparalleled in the world.

i. The perception of insecurity in Latin America is extremely acute, homogeneous, and on the rise, according to all available indicators.

j. In Latin America, concern about crime has grown rapidly in importance, to become the most pressing problem perceived by Latin American societies, above economic challenges.

k. The relative performance of countries in the region with regard to intensity of perception of insecurity bears virtually no connection to their objective levels of violence or to the change they have experienced over the last decade. Countries with levels of violence that are among the highest in the region have a perception of insecurity that is relatively low in the regional context, and the opposite also holds true.

The general picture described here is certainly mixed, but in general it contains little good news. Even in the best cases, the situation of citizen insecurity in Latin America is not promising, and in some countries it is truly catastrophic. A phenomenon of the magnitude and intensity described in the preceding pages—particularly when it comes to fear of crime—inevitably produces social, economic, and political consequences. The following chapter will explore the negative effect that high levels of citizen insecurity have on democratic coexistence.

CHAPTER 3

Can We Live Together? Citizen Insecurity as a Threat to Democratic Coexistence

Introduction

It has become commonplace to assert that citizen insecurity poses a threat to democracy in the Americas. The Declaration of San Salvador on Citizen Security in the Americas, approved in June 2011 at the 41st OAS General Assembly, recognizes as self-evident that "crime and violence impair the...political development of [our] societies."[77] The OAS Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza, has stated, "There is no doubt that the existence of criminal groups that are independent of society (and) not governed by our social pact must also be considered a threat to democracy."[78] Similarly, the report "Our Democracy," published recently by the OAS and the UNDP, states that public security problems are among the basic deficits of democratic governance in Latin America.[79] The region's political leaders have made this assertion a regular part of their political platforms. Hence, in referring to the challenge posed by organized crime in Mexico, former President Felipe Calderón stated that "what is at stake is the future of democracy."[80]

The following pages examine the empirical validity of these widely held views at the individual level. By revisiting and expanding on past efforts to characterize this relationship, which have already been referred to in Chapter 1, this chapter analyzes the effect of victimization and perception of insecurity on three dimensions that are critical to people's perception of—and support for—democracy: first, support for democratic institutions; second, the attitude toward the rule of law; and third, the quality of the social fabric. Drawing on data from the 2010 AmericasBarometer Drawing on data from the 2010 AmericasBarometer[81] regression, regression analysis shows that levels of victimization and fear of crime are consistently and statistically significantly associated with more favorable views toward authoritarianism. Beyond rhetoric and intuition, the real and perceived increase in insecurity has observable implications for people's perception of democracy and its institutions. If this pattern were to hold at the group-level, citizen insecurity could potentially unravel the region's hard-won democratic pact.

The next section describes the variables used in the analysis, followed by the specification of the models used. Then, the results are presented and discussed. Finally, the chapter's last section includes some thoughts on the findings' implications.

The variables and the model

Dependent variables

What follows is a description of the three groups of dependent variables in this analysis. The first examines support for democratic institutions and democracy as a concept (based on four variables), the second captures views on the rule of law (based on two variables), and the third measures the quality of the social fabric (based on three variables). These three dimensions provide a comprehensive picture of the quality and strength of people's perception of democracy in the region.

Support for democratic institutions

There are four variables that this study uses to capture people's support for democratic institutions: favorability toward democracy as a system of government, trust in government institutions, support for iron-fisted policies, and tolerance for military coups.

Abstract support for democracy is measured by asking citizens to what extent they agree that democracy is better than any other form of government. Most Latin American and Caribbean citizens show high levels of support for democracy as a concept. Nearly 33% of those sampled strongly agree with the phrase, while fewer than 5% strongly disagree. On a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree), the regional average is slightly over 5.

The second variable measures trust in institutions. A composite index has been prepared which measures respondents' levels of trust in various government institutions: the judicial system, the armed forces, the national congress, the central government, the courts, and the electoral system. On a scale of 0 (absolute lack of trust) to 10 (maximum trust) the data show a relatively normal distribution centered around the mean (5.1), with a standard deviation of 2.3. Approximately 68% of people fall within one standard deviation of the mean—in other words, between 2.8 and 7.4 on the trust scale.

The third variable measures people's inclination toward an "iron-fisted" government as opposed to one that relies on more participation. Slightly more than a quarter of adults in Latin America and the Caribbean support "iron fist" policies, while 72% think the government should resolve problems in a participatory manner.

The fourth variable captures the level of tolerance for military coups as a way to address serious challenges in society such as crime, corruption and unemployment. The percentage of the region's population that would be willing to justify a takeover of the state when there is a lot of crime (42%) is higher than the percentage that would do so if faced with a serious corruption problem (39.9%) or high unemployment (17.9%). Moreover, 48% of people in the region would be willing to justify a coup d'état for at least one of the three reasons and 15% would be willing to justify it for all three.

Attitudes toward the rule of law

The first rule of law variable summarizes the extent to which people in Latin America and the Caribbean accept pushing the limits of the law to address insecurity. Sixty percent of individuals in the region believe that authorities should always abide by the law; however, almost exactly 40% think crossing the line is occasionally justified when fighting crime.

The second dependent variable concerning the rule of law quantifies the level of approval or disapproval of people taking the law into their own hands when the state does not punish criminals. The majority of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean rejects the idea of people taking justice into their own hands. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being very opposed and 10 very in favor), the average acceptance of this practice in the region is 3.8. More than a quarter of the population, however, thinks that personally holding a criminal accountable is at least acceptable, a point explored in depth in the next chapter.

Quality of the social fabric

Levels of interpersonal trust, participation in local organizations and social tolerance are the three variables that capture the quality of the social fabric in this study. When asked about trust in neighbors, most respondents (close to 62%) think that people are at least somewhat trustworthy. However, nearly 38% of people believe that their neighbors are, at best, not very trustworthy. When asked about participating in problem solving efforts in their neighborhood, the majority of those surveyed reported never having done so, while 36% had done so at least once during the previous year. The measure of social tolerance came from the 2009 Latinobarómetro survey, which asked individuals to state their preferences for having certain groups of people as neighbors.[82] Similar proportions of the population responded that they would prefer not to have poor people (12%), illiterates (12%), blacks (12%), indigenous people (12%), and immigrants (14%) as neighbors. The figure was higher for homosexuals, with 29% of people wishing not to have them as neighbors.

Independent variables

This study has two independent variables drawn from questions related to victimization and perception of insecurity in the 2010 AmericasBarometer. The first question asks whether or not the person being interviewed has been the victim of a crime during the past 12 months. The results indicate that 19.5% of respondents reported having been a victim of some type of crime in the past year (2010), while 80% had not been.[83]

The second question measures the respondent's sense of safety in his or her neighborhood. This variable poses the following question: "Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe?" Slightly over 35% of people reported that they felt somewhat or very unsafe in their neighborhood, while 64% indicated they felt somewhat or very safe.

Control variables

The controls for this study are the size of respondents' locality of residence, sex, age, years of schooling completed, personal economic situation, and religion.[84]

Table 3.1 below summarizes the dependent, independent and control variables included in this study.

2.4 The model

The chapter estimates the individual-level relationship between reported crime victimization and each dependent variable on the list, namely support for democracy, attitudes toward the rule of law and quality of the social fabric. The main regression models applied to each dependent variable are:

$$DV_i = \alpha + \beta(\text{Victim})_i + \beta(\text{Size of residence})_i + \beta(\text{Female})_i + \beta(\text{Age})_i + \beta(\text{Education})_i$$
$$+ \beta(\text{Economic situation})_i + \beta(\text{Catholic})_i + \beta[\text{Country dummies}]_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad (1)$$

$$DV_i = \alpha + \beta(\text{Fear of victimization})_i + \beta(\text{Size of residence})_i + \beta(\text{Female})_i + \beta(\text{Age})_i +$$
$$\beta(\text{Education})_i + \beta(\text{Economic situation})_i + \beta(\text{Catholic})_i + \beta[\text{Country dummies}]_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad (2)$$

The first model (1) tests the following hypotheses on crime victimization:

- *Support for Democracy*
  - o Hypothesis 1: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are more likely to think that democracy may not be better than other forms of government.

Table 3.1 Variables used in the analysis

Category	Variable Name	Description	Survey
Dependent Variables			
Support for democracy	Concept of democracy	Democracy may have problems but it is better than any other form of government (Likert scale)	AB [a] 2010
	Iron fist	The government should resolve problems with an iron fist or everyone's participation (binary)	AB 2010
	Coup-crime	Would a military takeover of the state be justified when there is a lot of crime? (binary)	AB 2010
	Coup-corruption	Would a military takeover of the state be justified when there is a lot of corruption? (binary)	AB 2010
	Coup-unemployment	Would a military takeover of the state be justified when there is high unemployment? (binary)	AB 2010
	Trust in government institutions Index	Additive index of the answers to the following questions: To what extent do you trust the [insert institution]? Institutions included the judicial system, armed forces, national congress, central government, courts, and electoral system. (continuous)	AB 2010
Attitudes toward the rule of law	Compliance	In order to catch criminals, do you believe that the authorities should always abide by the law, or are they justified in occasionally crossing the line? (binary)	AB 2010
	Personal justice	When the government fails to punish criminals, should people take the law into their own hands? (Likert scale)	AB 2010
Quality of the social fabric	Trust in neighbors	Would you say that people in your community are trustworthy? (Likert scale)	AB 2010
	Participation	Have you tried to solve problems in your community? (Never, once or twice per year, once or twice per month, once or twice per week)	AB 2010
	Tolerance	Are there any groups of people you would not like to have as neighbors? (poor people, homosexuals, illiterates, immigrants, blacks, indigenous people)	LB [b] 2009
Independent Variables			
	Victim	Have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? (binary)	AB 2010
	Fear of victimization	How safe do you feel in your neighborhood? (Likert scale)	AB 2010
Control Variables			
	Size of residence	Whether respondent lives in the national capital; a large, medium, or small city; or a rural area	AB 2010
	Female	Female=1; Male=0	AB 2010
	Age	Age of respondents; range 16-98	AB 2010
	Education	Years of schooling completed; range 0-18	AB 2010
	Personal economic situation	Five-point ordinal scale: Very good, good, neither good nor bad (fair), bad, or very bad	AB 2010
	Catholic	Catholic=1; Non-Catholic=0, coded from the categorical variable "religion," where respondents could choose among various options, including no religion.	AB 2010

Notes: (a) AmericasBarometer. (b) Latinobarómetro.

- Hypothesis 2: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are more likely to prefer that the government solve problems with an iron fist.
- Hypothesis 3, 4, and 5: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are more likely to justify a military takeover of the state when there is [insert type of crisis]. Types of crises include high levels of crime, corruption and unemployment.
- Hypothesis 6: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are less likely to trust government institutions.

- *Attitudes toward the Rule of Law*
  - Hypothesis 7: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are more likely to think that government authorities are occasionally justified in breaking the law to catch criminals.
  - Hypothesis 8: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are more likely to believe that it is acceptable to take the law into their own hands when the government fails to punish criminals.

- *Quality of the Social Fabric*
  - Hypothesis 9: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are less likely to trust their neighbors.
  - Hypothesis 10: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are more likely to participate in their community to solve problems.
  - Hypothesis 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16: Individuals who report having been victims of crime are less likely to desire having [insert group] as neighbors. Groups include: the poor, homosexuals, illiterates, immigrants, blacks, and indigenous people.

The second model (2) tests the same hypotheses but the independent variable is *fear* of victimization rather than actual crime victimization.

Ordinarily Least Squares (OLS) regression is used to test the impact of reported victimization and fear of victimization on all the dependent variables, the results of which are presented in one table. Then, maximum likelihood estimation (MLE), specifically probit and ordered probit, is employed to estimate the magnitude of the effect of the two independent variables on the binary and ordinal-level dependent variables, respectively. Clarify[85] is used to interpret the MLE results, in order to measure the hypothetical effect of "becoming a victim" of a crime on the various dependent variables, and of "becoming fearful" of victimization on all the dependent variables. As will become apparent, all the results remain robust across the OLS and MLE specifications.

A word on the limits of this analysis is called for before presenting the results. There are important dimensions related to democratic coexistence that are not covered in the analysis. Unfortunately,

there are no data available on regional surveys detailing the impact of insecurity on individuals' freedom to move about, enjoy their property, and in general choose the life they wish.[86] Although it is possible that some endogeneity problems may exist in the analysis, these do not appear to be serious. It is not plausible that the various variables that measure support for democratic institutions and the rule of law, as well as the intensity of civic engagement, would have any bearing on whether a person has or has not been the victim of a crime, or on his or her perception of insecurity.

Analysis and results

The following two tables summarize all the OLS regression results.[87] *All* the coefficients are statistically significant and in the expected direction, thereby lending support to the hypotheses specified earlier (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

To illustrate the magnitude of the relationship between victimization and the various dependent variables, as well as between feeling unsafe and the dependent variables, all the main OLS regressions reported in the tables above are repeated with logit and ordered probit, depending on whether the dependent variable is binary or ordinal, respectively. Then the Clarify software is used to estimate how an individual's perception of democratic institutions and democracy as a concept, level of participation, and tolerance of neighbors (all the dependent variables) are likely to change after the person is victimized. The same process is completed with feeling unsafe as the independent variable. All control variables are held constant at their means or medians to conduct this analysis. The first differences are calculated by changing the value of victim from 0 to 1, and for the second main independent variable, by changing the value of perception of safety from feeling very safe to feeling very unsafe. The results from the OLS regressions are robust to the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE)—specifically, logit and ordered probit—specifications. The MLE results show that even though some coefficients are small (they range from 1 to 29 percentage points, though most are in the 1 to 3 range), the percent change of most is quite sizable. The one exception is the impact of feeling unsafe on civic participation, which essentially shows no effect—a coefficient that is very close to zero.

The effects of victimization

Controlling for all the socio-demographic factors mentioned earlier, being the victim of a crime over the past 12 months has a small but consistent negative impact on support for democracy. It reduces marginally (by approximately 1%) the probability of thinking that democracy is the best form of government. Although the result is statistically significant, and in the expected direction,

Table 3.2. Crime Victimization and Control Variable Coefficients from the Main OLS Regressions by Dependent Variable

Dependent Variables	Coup Crime (d)	Coup Corruption (d)	Coup Unemployment (d)	Trust in Government	Iron Fist (d)	Democracy	Abide by Law (d)	Personal Justice	Trust Neighbor	Participation
Victimization (main IV)	0.0648***	0.0537***	0.0298***	-0.0278***	0.0320***	-0.00797***	0.0870***	0.0414***	-0.0523***	0.0451***
	-0.00655	-0.00651	-0.00518	-0.00302	-0.00556	-0.00631	-0.00631	-0.0043	-0.00385	0.00368
Size	0.00203	-0.00206	-0.00593***	-0.0102***	0.00475***	0.000802	0.00678***	-0.00293**	-0.0217***	-0.00888***
	-0.00182	-0.00181	-0.00144	-0.000861	-0.00155	-0.00103	-0.00176	-0.0012	-0.00107	-0.00103
Female (d)	0.0191***	0.0057	0.00401	-0.00661***	-0.00891**	-0.0176***	-0.0185***	-0.0148***	-0.0207***	-0.0322***
	-0.0051	-0.00508	-0.00404	-0.00239	-0.00434	-0.00288	-0.00492	-0.00335	-0.003	-0.00287
Education	-0.00983***	-0.00779***	-0.00611***	-0.00367***	-0.0102***	0.00672***	0.000528	-0.00552***	0.00374***	0.00638
	-0.000675	-0.000671	-0.000534	-0.000317	-0.000576	-0.000384	-0.000652	-0.000445	-0.000399	-0.00038
Age	-0.00346***	-0.00339***	-0.00171***	0.000499***	0.000683***	0.00202***	-0.00162***	-0.00262***	0.00196***	0.00202***
	-0.000176	-0.000175	-0.000139	-8.30E-05	-0.00015	-9.99E-05	-0.00017	-0.000116	-0.000104	-9.90E-05
Catholic (d)	0.0242***	0.0204***	0.00494	0.0102***	0.00525	0.00121	0.0185***	0.00926**	0.00103***	0.001293
	-0.00589	-0.00586	-0.00467	-0.00278	-0.00498	-0.0033	-0.00564	-0.00385	-0.00345	-0.00329
Personal economic situation	-0.0113***	0.0193***	0.01000***	0.0505***	-0.00541*	0.00716***	-0.00707**	-0.00676***	0.0363***	0.0111***
	-0.00324	-0.00322	-0.00257	-0.001552	-0.00275	-0.00183	-0.00311	-0.00212	-0.009	-0.00181
Constant	0.810***	0.800***	0.380***	0.472***	0.341***	0.513***	0.416***	0.484***	0.433***	0.0295***
	-0.0196	-0.0196	-0.0156	-0.0091	-0.0168	-0.0212	-0.0191	-03013	-0.0116	-0.0111
Observations	35,829	35,632	35,335	30,895	38,235	37,253	38,236	37,701	38,350	38,754
R squared	0.052	0.052	0.024	0.14	0.085	0.061	0.043	0.058	0.091	0.048

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; regressions estimated in STATA 11; all regressions include country fixed effects; the dependent variables have been rescaled so that 0 represents their minimum value and 1 their maximum value; (d) indicates dummy variables; statistical significance: *** p <0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3.3. Feeling Unsafe and Control Variables Coefficients from the Main OLS Regressions by Dependent Variable

Dependent Variables	Coup Crime (d)	Coup Corruption (d)	Coup Unemployment (d)	Trust in Government	Iron Fist (d)	Democracy	Abide by Law (d)	Personal Justice	Trust Neighbor	Participation
Feeling unsafe (main IV)	0.0326***	0.0285***	0.0134***	-0.0234***	0.0153***	-0.0154***	0.0304***	0.0227***	-0.0997***	0.00444***
	-0.00287	-0.00286	-0.00228	-0.00134	-0.00246	-0.00164	-0.00279	-0.0019	-0.00163	-0.00163
Size	0.000604	-0.00336*	-0.00649***	-0.00872***	0.00414***	0.00213**	0.00599***	-0.00422***	-0.0128***	-0.00819***
	-0.00184	-0.00183	-0.00146	-0.000864	-0.00156	-0.00104	-0.00178	-0.00171	-0.00104	-0.00104
Female (d)	0.0143***	0.00199	0.0016	-0.00387	-0.0111**	-0.0159***	-0.0228***	-0.0173***	-0.0111***	-0.0340***
	-0.00511	-0.00508	-0.00405	-0.00239	-0.00434	-0.00288	-0.00493	-0.00336	-0.00288	-0.00288
Education	-0.0092***	-0.00728***	-0.00580***	-0.00395***	-0.0099***	0.00662***	0.00171*	-0.00512***	0.00346***	0.00672***
	-0.000673	-0.000669	-0.000533	-0.000315	-0.000575	-0.000383	-0.000652	-0.000444	-0.000381	-0.000381
Age	-0.0035***	-0.00340***	-0.00171***	0.000491***	0.00066***	0.00200***	-0.00165***	-0.0261***	0.00184***	0.00198***
	-0.000176	-0.000175	0.00014	-8.27E-05	-0.00015	-9.99E-05	-0.00017	-0.000116	-9.94E-05	-9.94E-05
Catholic (d)	0.0241***	0.0201***	0.00491	0.0102***	0.0047	0.000279	0.0176***	0.00885**	0.00876***	0.000933
	-0.00589	-0.00586	-0.00467	-0.00277	-0.00497	-0.0033	-0.00565	-0.00385	-0.0033	-0.0033
Personal economic situation	-0.0097***	-0.0173***	-0.00890***	0.0482***	-0.00379	0.00537***	-0.00444	-0.00460**	0.0249***	0.0109***
	-0.00326	-0.00324	-0.00259	-0.00152	-0.00276	-0.00184	-0.00314	-0.00213	-0.00183	-0.00183
Constant	0.749***	0.746***	0.353***	0.352***	0.352***	0.548***	0.361***	0.438***	0.659***	0.0295**
	-0.0208	-0.0207	-0.0166	-0.00959	-0.0177	-0.0118	-0.0202	-0.0137	-0.0118	-0.0118
Observations	35,755	35,560	35,254	30,829	38,162	37,188	37,185	38,625	38,281	38,666
R squared	0.053	0.053	0.024	0.146	0.086	0.063	0.041	0.06	0.168	0.044

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; regressions estimated in STATA 11; all regressions include country fixed effects; the dependent variables have been rescaled so that 0 represents their minimum value and 1 their maximum value; (d) indicates dummy variables; feeling unsafe is an ordinal-level variable ranging from very safe (1) to very unsafe (4); statistical significance: *** p <0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

it is of a lesser magnitude than the impact other factors have on the dependent variable, particularly the respondent's age and level of education. Trust in government institutions goes down by 3 percentage points if an individual has directly experienced crime, a smaller impact than that of education, place of residence and, above all, the respondent's economic situation. Meanwhile, when it comes to perceptions about the government using an "iron fist" to rule, being a victim of a crime is associated with a 4 percentage-point increase in thinking that heavy-handed and exclusionary methods are acceptable to solve national problems. This effect is lower than that of some other factors, such as age and, once again, education level.

Victims of crime are also 7% more likely to support a military coup to solve a situation of pervasive crime. The effect is also significant, although smaller, when democratic breakdowns are meant to redress a situation of uncontrolled corruption (5%) or high unemployment (3%). In all three cases, the impact of victimization is comparable in magnitude to that of the individual's economic situation; yet, it is lower than that of education and, above all, age.

The results also display a significant relationship between victimization and the willingness to support the use of unlawful methods to fight crime. On average, when all control variables are held constant, Latin American and Caribbean citizens who have been victims of a crime are 9% more likely to think that the authorities can break the law to bring criminals to justice, compared with those who have not been victims. This effect is by far larger than that of any other variable in the model. Victims are also 4% more likely to support the option of taking justice into their own hands when the state fails to punish criminals, a statistically significant effect that trails only the impact of age.

Crime victimization also affects the quality of the social fabric in multiple and somewhat contradictory ways. On the one hand, it appears to have a sizable detrimental effect on levels of inter-personal trust. Thus, being a victim of a crime is associated with a 5 percentage-point decrease in the probability of thinking that one's neighbors are trustworthy. Yet, it also increases in a non-trivial way the likelihood that people will engage in community affairs. The probability that a person will participate doubles from 1 to 2 percentage points for victims, an effect roughly comparable to that of education and age. It would seem contradictory that victims of crime would particularly distrust their neighbors, on the one hand, and be particularly likely to participate in community matters, on the other. However, that is not necessarily the case. These findings confirm those of UNDP (2006) in Costa Rica, mentioned in Chapter 1, on the presence of an "associativity of distrust," in which greater community participation is precisely linked to local efforts to combat crime. This finding needs more research and information than what is available here, but it points to a relevant conclusion:

crime and fear of crime do not, purely and simply, unravel the social fabric. Quite the contrary, under certain circumstances, they can help to create it.

Finally, the occurrence of crime also negatively affects levels of social tolerance, measured as the willingness to have as neighbors people who belong to different minority social groups or groups that have been stigmatized. On this point, as was indicated above, this study uses figures from Latinobarómetro 2009 and not the 2010 AmericasBarometer, which does not include a relevant question on the topic. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that this part of the analysis contains findings that are valid only for the 18 Latin American countries, as it leaves out the 6 countries from the English- and French-speaking Caribbean that are included in the analysis in the rest of this chapter. Using logit and controlling for respondents' personal economic situation, age, years of education, sex, and Catholicism,[88] it can be observed that victims of crime are more likely to reject as neighbors all groups on the list (poor people, homosexuals, illiterate people, immigrants, blacks, and indigenous people). As can be seen in Table 3.4, poor people are the group most strongly rejected by victims: it is 5% more likely that victims of a crime do not want to have neighbors who are poor. This probability is lower for all the other groups, particularly for homosexuals. All the results in the table are statistically significant. In the case of rejection of poor people, victimization is by a considerable margin the variable that has the greatest impact on the result.

Table 3.4 Impact of victimization on social tolerance

Victims would dislike having neighbors who are	Mean	Standard error	95% confidence interval	Sample size
Poor	0.05	0.007	0.034 − 0.063	20,127
Homosexual	0.02	0.009	0.001 − 0.035	20,127
Illiterate	0.044	0.007	0.03 − 0.059	20,127
Immigrant	0.04	0.008	0.021 − 0.051	20,127
Black	0.04	0.007	0.027 − 0.055	20,127
Indigenous	0.041	0.007	0.03 − 0.06	20,127

The effects of fear

The effects of fear of crime in undermining democratic institutions and values are equally statistically significant and in the expected direction, with a couple of exceptions. Generally speaking these effects are larger than those of victimization.

There is an inversely proportional relationship between feeling threatened in one's neighborhood and supporting democracy. Going from feeling very safe to very unsafe in one's surroundings reduces by 5 percentage points the probability that an individual will consider democracy as the best

form of government, a similar effect to that of age and education. Trust in government institutions goes down by 7 percentage points if a person feels very unsafe, an impact that is second only to that of the respondent's economic situation. "Iron fisted" methods to solve national problems get a boost from high perceptions of crime, as fearful individuals are 5 percent more likely to find them acceptable. Among the variables included in the model, only education has a larger effect.

Just as robust is the effect of fear of crime on the willingness to lend support to a coup d'état. Individuals who feel gravely threatened by crime are 10% more likely to go along with a military takeover in order to solve serious crime problems. They are also more likely to support an interruption of the democratic process in a situation of high corruption (8% increase) or high unemployment (3% increase). The impact of fear is greater on this front than that of any other variable in the model, except for age, which has a similar effect. It should be noted that it is also larger than the effect of victimization.

The implications of fear in undermining basic principles of the rule of law are also noticeable, statistically significant, and slightly larger than those of victimization. Feeling very unsafe in one's neighborhood increases the probability of thinking that it is acceptable for authorities to break the law to catch criminals by 9 percentage points. The effect is almost twice as large as that of any other variable. Similarly, there is a 7% increase in the odds that a person will support personal justice if he or she feels very threatened by crime. Only age has a comparable effect. These results suggest that although both victimization and fear erode support for the principles of the rule of law, their impact tends to translate more often into greater leniency towards abuses by the authorities than into greater propensity to deliver justice outside institutional channels.

Predictably, fearing victimization has a sizable detrimental effect on inter-personal trust. Feeling very unsafe is associated with a remarkable 29 percentage-point decrease in the probability of thinking that one's neighbors are trustworthy. This effect is much stronger than any other variable in the model. However, it should be noted that there may be an endogeneity problem in this section of the analysis. One would expect that people who feel unsafe in their neighborhood would mistrust their neighbors. But the opposite is also plausible: the conviction that neighbors are not very trustworthy contributes to a greater sense of insecurity in the neighborhood. In this case the direction of the causal relationship is debatable. Unlike in the case of objective victimization, feeling unsafe in one's neighborhood does not have an appreciable effect on political and community participation. The finding is statistically significant, but very close to zero.

Finally, Table 3.5 contains the results from measuring the impact of a high level of perceived insecurity on willingness to share one's neighborhood with different groups in society. Controlling

for all the aforementioned demographic and socioeconomic factors, a high level of perceived insecurity increases the likelihood of rejection in the majority of the cases studied, except in the case of homosexual and indigenous people. However, the results are statistically significant only in the cases of illiterate people and immigrants.

Table 3.5 Impact of high level of perceived insecurity on social tolerance

People who feel unsafe would dislike having neighbors who are	Mean	Standard error	95% confidence interval	Sample size
Poor	0.018	0.01	-0.002 — 0.04	20,127
Homosexual	-0.004	0.013	-0.03 — 0.021	20,127
Illiterate	0.023	0.01	0.003 — 0.04	20,127
Immigrant	0.03	0.01	0.008 — 0.05	20,127
Black	0.016	0.01	-0.04 — 0.002	20,127
Indigenous	-0.033	0.011	-0.002 — 0.035	20,127

Feeling afraid is correlated with greater social intolerance. However, the impact of fear on people's willingness to live beside these groups of neighbors is slightly lower than that of victimization. Immigrants appear to be the most affected group: citizens who are afraid of crime are 3% more likely not to want immigrants as neighbors. Feeling unsafe because of crime and being Catholic increase the likelihood of being more intolerant toward immigrants, while economic prosperity reduces that probability.

In short, the effect of a high level of perceived insecurity on the quality of the social fabric is not uniformly negative. It weakens interpersonal trust and levels of social tolerance, while its impact on participation in community matters is almost imperceptible.

Findings and final reflections

The preceding pages portray a very consistent picture of the negative impact of citizen insecurity on democratic coexistence in Latin America and the Caribbean. While it is not, fortunately, an apocalyptic picture, it is one that warrants attention. When levels of victimization and fear go up, democracy suffers in many ways: citizens become less attached to democracy as a system of government; support for institutions goes down; inhibitions about authoritarian solutions decrease; devotion to the law as the instrument to combat crime is eroded; and interpersonal trust and the willingness to create diverse, tolerant communities deteriorate. Beyond the question of whether these effects are more or less intense than those generated by other factors—something that

changes, depending on the circumstance—what is important here is the extent and the surprising regularity of these consequences. This is also a story in which, at its core, a high level of perceived insecurity again seems to have a greater effect than victimization. This we saw in Chapter 2 and has important practical consequences.

The main findings of this chapter—which, it bears repeating, are statistically significant, almost without exception—can be summarized as follows:

a. Although "abstract" support for democracy as a system of government remains at adequate levels in the region, nearly half of Latin American and Caribbean citizens are open to justifying a coup d'état in crisis situations; this includes 42% who would do so if that would help to address high levels of crime.

b. Nearly 40% of people in the region tolerate the idea of authorities' crossing the line of the law to catch criminals, and more than one fourth of them view positively the option of taking the law into one's own hands.

c. Victimization and, most of all, a high level of perceived insecurity are inversely correlated to abstract support for democracy. The impact of victimization is, however, very small.

d. Victimization and a high level of perceived insecurity reduce trust in government institutions and increase the likelihood that people will support "iron-fisted" solutions to national problems, although in both cases these factors have less of an effect than other socio-demographic variables.

e. Being the victim of a crime and, most of all, feeling high levels of fear visibly increase the likelihood of justifying military coups in situations involving different kinds of social ills (high crime, high corruption, high unemployment). The effect of a high level of perceived insecurity on willingness to support coups in situations in which there is a lot of crime is particularly strong.

f. Both victimization and a high level of perceived insecurity significantly increase the likelihood that someone will condone abuses by the authorities in the process of catching criminals. Also visible, though to a lesser extent, is the effect both independent variables have on the probability that someone will support taking the law into one's own hands. The effect of perceived insecurity on the willingness to accept the abuse of authority in fighting crime is stronger than that of any of the other variables used in the model.

g. Victimization and a high level of perceived insecurity apparently affect the degree to which people find their neighbors trustworthy. When it comes to fear, the effect is very powerful, although the variables used in the analysis could raise endogeneity problems.

h. While victimization increases people's propensity to participate in solving problems in their community, the impact of fear is nearly imperceptible in this regard.

i. In Latin America, having been a victim of a crime or feeling a high degree of insecurity both reduce people's willingness to share their community with certain minority groups or groups that are stigmatized. The effect of victimization on rejection of poor people is particularly strong.

There is little doubt, then, that citizen insecurity—both in its objective and subjective dimensions—undermines the consolidation of a democratic polis. It is possible, however, that its political effects in Latin America go beyond that, touching the very foundations of the social contract and the state's monopoly on legitimate violence. The following chapter addresses that issue.

The Wounded Leviathan: Crime, the State, and the Erosion of the Monopoly on Legitimate Violence

Introduction

The political consequences of citizen insecurity go beyond its ability to affect the quality of support for democracy, devotion to principles of the rule of law, and level of civic engagement. This is perhaps the most visible implication, but not necessarily the farthest-reaching one. As we will see in the following pages, citizen insecurity can compromise the state's viability as the entity that regulates community life. The proliferation of crime and of certain citizen responses to crime can, in different ways, severely erode the monopoly on legitimate violence claimed by the state, perhaps the most central of its attributes. As was cautioned in Chapter 1, a violent society weakens both the foundations of political obligation that bind citizens to the state and the state's exercise of its sovereignty. The consequences of this erosion for the legitimacy of political institutions are potentially quite profound.

Of all the manifestations of the state's diminished ability to enforce the rule of law in the region, three apparently unrelated examples are worth examining. First is the proliferation of private security firms, which are often protected by weak regulations or incubated in the chaos of informality. Second are continued incidents of lynching, a practice with ancestral roots in some countries of the region and one that many citizens in the region consider acceptable. Third is the growing importance of places—both in rural and, surprisingly, in urban areas—where the state's sovereignty is contested and where its authority, for all practical purposes, has ceased to hold sway and has come to be replaced by mandates handed down by criminal organizations, which are accepted and obeyed by the people. What characterizes all of these cases is the transfer—formal or implicit—of the police powers of the state, which has proven to be or is perceived as incapable of ensuring public order within the country. The most public of all goods—physical security and justice—are first provided by private actors, with or without the acquiescence of the public authorities. Of all these

manifestations, the exponential growth of private security firms is perhaps the most widespread in the region, although it is also the most benign, as it is often covered by a mantle of legality, however-er imperfect it may be. The other two phenomena, by contrast, take place outside the law and aim to replace it. Let us begin, then, with the least serious of these signs of erosion of state sovereignty.

The proliferation of private security services

Private security companies are not a new phenomenon in Latin America, particularly in countries where the levels of violent crime have long been high, such as Colombia. What is new is their accelerated proliferation throughout the region, which almost certainly has been faster than worldwide trends. Although the term "private security" denotes different phenomena, in general it is used to lump together for-profit companies that watch over and protect residences, businesses, and in some cases, public institutions; offer the transportation and safekeeping of valuables; and provide personal protection.[89] The porous boundaries of this concept, as well as the lack of information about this sector, make it necessary to exercise great caution when looking at statistics on its expansion. However, even taking into account these weaknesses, there is little doubt about the prevailing trend in the region.

The number of private security guards in Latin America is subject to conjecture. As we will see, much of the activity happens in the informal sector, about which very little is known. Frigo (2006), Betancourt (2007), and Dammert (2008) placed the regional total at approximately 4 million security guards, possibly half of whom operate on an informal basis. For their part, Murcia (2008) and Arias (2009) indicate, based on official sources, that the number of registered security guards came to 2.5 million in 2007, a significant increase from the 1.6 million just four years earlier, a figure in line with the one cited by Abelson (2006). According to the disparate estimates available, the sector's economic volume is at least $4 billion per year, with a recent annual growth rate in the 9-11% range.[90]

The bulk of activity is found in the three largest countries in the region: Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia. In the case of Brazil, the best available estimates calculate the number of private guards working in a formal capacity at around 570,000 to 580,000, with more than one million additional guards allegedly working in an informal capacity.[91] The state of São Paulo alone has more than 400,000 private security guards.[92] According to data from De Mattos-Ricardo (2008), today Brazil is the third largest market for private security services in the world. This industry has grown exponentially there in the last decade. In 2006, Brazil's Ministry of Justice disclosed that more than 2,500 private security firms were registered in the country and that the number of agents at these

firms doubled between 2000 and 2004, similar to the growth rate reported by the Federal Police of Brazil for the same period.[93] In the case of Mexico, it was estimated that as of 2008 there were already some 10,000 private security firms, 80% of which lacked legal permits, and that nearly 40% of the personnel they hired lacked any certification in security tasks.[94] In Colombia, according to Cafferata (2010), the private security industry quadrupled from 1994 to 2001. As of 2006, it was estimated that the sector employed between 150,000 and 170,000 people in armed security activities.[95]

Other interesting cases in the region include Chile, where more than 1,000 firms and more than 92,000 private guards had proliferated as of 2007, and the countries of northern Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador), where there are almost certainly as many as 200,000 private security guards in the formal sector.[96] Guatemala, which has been estimated to have at least 106,000, perhaps uses more private security services than any other country in the region and has the greatest disproportion between the size of the private industry and the public police forces.[97]

This last subject is critical to this discussion. What is relevant here is not simply the existence of a thriving private security industry, or its accelerated growth; these phenomena, in the final analysis, are hardly exclusive to Latin America.[98] What is more important is the degree to which the size of private security services in the region has come to rival, even overshadow, that of existing law enforcement structures.

Table 4.1 Private guards and police by population, selected Latin American countries, 2000 decade

A Country	B Population (millions)	C Number of private guards in formal sector	D Guards per 100,000 inhabitants	E Police per 100,000 inhabitants	F Police / private guard ratio (E/D)
Brazil	193.8	580,000	299	330	1.1
Mexico	109.6	450,000	410	390	0.9
Colombia	45.7	170,000	372	283	0.8
Argentina	40.3	150,000	372	549	1.5
Chile	17.0	92,000	541	201	0.4
Peru	29.1	50,000	172	316	1.8
Ecuador	13.6	40,000	294	293	1.0
Guatemala	14.0	120,000	857	139	0.2
Honduras	7.5	18,000	240	126	0.5
El Salvador	6.2	23,000	371	300	0.8

Source: See Appendix.

The figures in Table 4.1 are surprising. Even when the calculation includes only the number of private guards operating in the formal sector—which in some cases severely underestimates the true scope of the phenomenon—in 8 of the 10 cases included in the analysis, the number of security agents from that sector is similar to or greater than the number of public police forces. In the case of Guatemala, the disparity is astounding: private security firms are six times larger than the police forces.[99] One conclusion can be drawn immediately from this data: in the absence of proper regulation to streamline this sector's expansion, carefully limit its jurisdiction, establish its subordination to public authorities, and ensure minimum standards for providing what in many cases—such as the protection of homes—is a public good, the state monopoly on legitimate violence would seem to be seriously compromised in much of Latin America. Unfortunately, as we will see below, with few exceptions the controls that currently exist have serious flaws, including an inability to prevent the existence of a broad informal sector devoid of controls and standards but granted powers by society to prevent and repress violence.

The reasons for the expansion of the private security industry in Latin America are complex and have yet to be explored systematically. Two of them, however, warrant a mention. The first and most obvious concerns the extremely high and growing levels of perceived insecurity in the region, which were noted in the second chapter. As Frigo (2006) cautions, the demand for private security cannot be explained in terms of actual crime levels or how these have evolved recently. It is perception that seems to carry the most weight. That is the only thing that explains why Chile—one of the safest countries in the region, by almost any indicator—would have well over twice as many private guards than police, or why the state of São Paulo, Brazil, would have 46% of the private guards registered in all of Brazil, despite having experienced a dramatic drop in its homicide rates in the last decade.[100]

This perception seems to be less a function of crime rates and more a negative judgment on the ability of the police and judicial bodies to protect citizens. According to Latinobarómetro, in 2009, 65% of people in the region said they had zero or low levels of satisfaction with the performance of the police, a figure that was over 75% in Mexico, Venezuela, and Guatemala.[101] It can only be assumed that the explosion in private security services in Guatemala has to do with the fact that only 19% of that Central American country's population expressed at least some confidence in the judiciary and only 18% in the police, by far the lowest numbers in Central America.[102] But even in Costa Rica, the numbers are far from encouraging. There, the National Survey on Citizen Security, conducted by the Ministry of Security and UNDP in 2004, showed that only 15% of the population felt that the police did a good job controlling crime. The comparable figure in the United States was 89%.[103] When the survey was repeated in 2006, it found that only 18% of Costa Ricans believed

the police forces were made up of honorable people, and fewer than 20% felt protected by the presence of the police. Worse yet, in the case of both questions the results obtained for Costa Rican public law enforcement were far below those obtained for private security firms.[104] The growth in the latter would seem to be, at least in part, people's response to a perception of being unprotected by the public institutions in charge of safeguarding the basic core of rights at the heart of citizen security.

Add to this a second group of historical-institutional factors: the transformation of the region's military and security structures following the end of the Cold War and internal conflicts in some countries, particularly in Central America. These processes, which in some cases also included the demobilization of large insurgent forces, created a significant supply of manpower experienced in the use of weapons and, in the case of military officers, in counterinsurgency and espionage methods. Beginning in the 1990s, private security firms became a natural niche for military officers and troops and even former insurgents. In Guatemala, according to Dammert (2008), former military officials are owners, directors, or consultants in 75% of the private security companies. In the rest, former police officers fill the same roles. Something similar is happening in Honduras and El Salvador, where the press has reported widespread participation of active military and police officers in the business, whether under their own name or through front men.[105] In Colombia, meanwhile, the demobilization of thousands of paramilitary troops in recent years created a similar exodus toward job opportunities offered by private security companies. In some cases, companies in this sector have provided a veil of legality to activities involving threats and political reprisals against human rights activists and local leaders.[106]

The growth of the industry in the region has led to a profusion of regulatory efforts to control it that, in some cases such as that of Guatemala, date back to the 1970s. These efforts are contained in laws and decrees in practically every country on the subcontinent. As the terrific, detailed studies done by Dammert (2008) and Arias (2009) have shown, existing laws and regulations in the rest of the region continue to leave an enormous vacuum on a range of issues, including the following:

- *Failure to define the sector being regulated.* In countries such as Chile, Ecuador, and Guatemala, the legal structure in place fails to define the scope of the companies and persons that would be subject to the controls defined by the law. This problem exists despite the fact that in the case of Guatemala, the legal instrument in force surprisingly describes those who provide private security services as "private police," assimilating their punishment role into that of public law enforcement.

- *Insufficient requirements to obtain a license.* In some cases, such as in Mexico, the person providing the service is not required to have any insurance (life insurance or for work-related risks or damages) that would cover the provider himself or third parties against risks and damages stemming from this activity. In other countries, such as Brazil, El Salvador, and again Mexico, the legal framework does not require personnel to be covered by social security, leaving them exposed to all types of workplace abuse, an endemic problem in the region.

- *Lax requirements to become an agent.* Surprisingly, some of the rules in force do not even require someone to be of age in order to be a security guard (Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru), not to mention physical and psychological exams (Bolivia, Colombia, and Guatemala) or the lack of a criminal record (Colombia). In some cases, such as Chile, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the law does not stipulate that providing private security services is incompatible with belonging to the police or the armed forces. The phenomenon of public officials supplementing their income with private security activities—lawfully or unlawfully, with or without the collusion of their superiors—has become commonplace in much of the region.

- *Weak training.* Although in almost all countries of the region (Bolivia is an exception) regulations in force require the completion of a training course provided by competent authorities or schools that have been authorized for this purpose, in practically no case are a minimum number of hours required (Argentina, Chile, and Peru are exceptions), and in few cases is it required that the curriculum include some subject related to human rights.

- *Ambiguity in the relationship with the police.* Although in most countries it is understood that the functions of private security firms complement those of the police, the subordination of the private firms is not established explicitly in the text of the law in many cases (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru). In other examples, such as Bolivia and Brazil, no obligation has been established for private security firms to collaborate with public law enforcement officials at their request.

- *Ambiguity in terms of powers.* Only by exception (Costa Rica and El Salvador, for example) are explicit limitations set out with regard to private security companies' authority to encroach upon personal liberty—for example by detaining people, interrogating them, conducting searches, or intercepting communications of third parties.

- *Weakness in the enforcement structure.* In the majority of cases, existing laws and regulations fail to establish specific punishments for violating them. In the case of Mexico, for example, punishment is left to the judgment of the Public Security Secretariat, which operates within certain parameters.

This last point suggests what is perhaps the most serious problem. Whatever regulations may exist, the instruments established to enforce them and to control in practice the activities of private security firms are, in almost all cases, weak. The authorities with jurisdiction to oversee this sector are almost all within the sphere of the executive branch, whether under the aegis of the ministry of public security, interior, or justice. Arias (2009) concludes in her report that "the lack of technical and economic capacity and human resources on the part of state bodies to control private security services are factors that affect the growth of legal companies and facilitate the proliferation of illegal ones in several countries. In the face of weak controls and supervision, these companies can turn into parallel power structures, governed basically by the rules of the marketplace."[107]

The harmful consequences of the existing regulatory vacuums, and even more so of the failure to enforce existing law, are many. The first is that something that seeks to address a lack of public security turns into a threat to security. The lack of regulation and effective oversight of the sector, as well as notorious problems related to its operators' lack of training, lends itself to wholesale abuse. The experience of Colombia has already been noted. But in the northern region of Mexico as well, private security companies have been involved in serious human rights abuses, including the murder of several women in Ciudad Juárez by guards whose job was to protect property perimeters.[108] In Brazil, for its part, cases have been documented in which security guards have been involved in "social cleansing," meaning the extrajudicial execution of individuals considered undesirable, in some cases with the acceptance or assistance of the police authorities.[109] Even in Costa Rica, numerous cases have been reported in which the actions of private security agents, particularly in the informal sector, victimize rather than protect citizens.[110]

A good many of the problems of abuse stem from the precarious legal balancing act under which many private security services—particularly those that guard homes and businesses—operate, fluctuating constantly between public and private spaces. Added to that is their presence in environments that constitute a somewhat gray area in which private property and public freedom of movement converge. The example of the shopping mall comes to mind. In all these cases, the ambiguity inherent in the operation of companies that provide security is seriously aggravated by a lack of norms that spell out as clearly as possible the legitimate parameters of their activity and the rules of interaction with, and unquestionable subordination to, public law enforcement. Turning over weapons to people who generally have little training, little outside supervision, and nebulous rules of the game does not, in fact, constitute a recipe that is comforting or conducive to preventing violence.

To be fair, based on the information available it is not possible to tell whether such abuses are more or less likely among private security guards than among members of the police forces, or

whether on balance private companies' contribution to citizen security is greater than the dangers they pose to the citizenry. At the very least it can certainly be said that the norms in place to establish liabilities and require compensation in case of a tragedy are less clear, almost everywhere, than those in effect for public law enforcement. Moreover, it can be said that the explosion in the number of private security guards is an additional avenue—as if one were necessary or appropriate—for the proliferation of firearms in the region. A minimum of 2 million armed individuals (the number of registered guards in Latin America, not counting the informal sector) is no small thing in a region where the propensity to use firearms in homicides is higher than in any other part of the world, as we saw in Chapter 2. It is not obvious that those 2 million firearms would end up circulating anyway by less transparent means, nor that they will remain in the possession of the companies once their employees for whatever reason are no longer in their employ.

On top of all that is the obvious potential for conflict of interest and corruption stemming from the presence of police personnel performing private security functions, a common phenomenon in practically the entire region, quite aside from whether or not it is legal. This overlap does not occur only at the operational level but also in management. The administration of President Oscar Berger (2004-2008) in Guatemala offers a particularly conspicuous case, in which at least four businessmen with ties to security companies were appointed by the president to high-level government posts linked to public security and intelligence.[111] What matters here is not only the perverse incentives, but rather the access to privileged information with an extremely high commercial value.

Last, but not least, are the distributive consequences of the expansion of private security services. Whatever the net effects on reducing insecurity, the growing dependence on security and protection services creates a differentiated access to the most basic of public goods. The 2004 figures from Costa Rica show that, as is obvious, groups with higher incomes are much more likely to procure their security through private means, including paying for surveillance and protection services.[112] In the case of Costa Rica, the evidence shows that low income is not, however, an insurmountable obstacle when it comes to buying these services, which offer different options at the most modest extreme of the market. There, it is common to have informal private providers who operate under very precarious conditions. Overall, the rule among low-income sectors continues to be dependence on public law enforcement, for which they pay little and expect little in return.

The growing socioeconomic segmentation of protection services leads to an adverse situation in terms of improving public security institutions—not unlike the situation that prevails in the region when it comes to education or health. The migration of high-income sectors and, little by little, the middle class toward private security services makes it all the more uncertain that any effort

by government leaders to try to raise new taxes to strengthen state security policies would be successful. Typically, clients of private companies resist any attempt to raise their contribution for the provision of a service that they are buying for themselves in the private sector. Indeed, it is increasingly less likely that such attempts would even be made. As in other areas of state activity, the ultimate effect of segmentation is that the social and political elite have no interest in improving a public service whose deterioration, strictly speaking, affects them less and less. This logic hits a limit, of course, when violent crime reaches intolerable levels that demonstrate the limitations of private security mechanisms or jeopardize the dynamics of production. The willingness of the Colombian elite to pay a tax on wealth to finance the democratic security policies of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), or the growing calls by the business sector in Monterrey, Mexico, for greater federal government intervention to stem the terrible spiral of violence beginning in 2009, are tangible examples of this. But beyond those limited situations in which the elite stand on the edge of an abyss, political rationality would indicate that the growth of private security services almost certainly will translate, in the long run, into a lesser provision of this public good for those who are unable to buy it on the private market. In short, the growing dependence on for-profit protection services works against the democratic nature of security.

In the best case, the appearance of a robust sector of private security companies is a less than optimal solution to real or perceived problems with public institutions' performance in the area of security. It is what political theorists call a "prisoner's dilemma," in which the triumph of individual rationality leads, fatally, to a result that is undesirable from a collective point of view.[113] It is, above all, a solution fraught with undesirable consequences for the democratic system. This is in the best of cases. But the situation in almost all Latin American countries is not the best of cases. The problem in this subcontinent is more serious. The explosion in private security services clearly constitutes a grave delegation of state sovereignty under precarious regulatory conditions and, in many cases, in a situation in which the state has an overwhelming numerical disadvantage. A 2007 United Nations report on the case of Honduras—a situation that is different in degree, but not in substance, from the rest of the region—expressed this in similar terms: "All these indicators point to an alarming situation in which the State of Honduras has ceded part of its sovereignty in respect of internal security, and apparently continues to do so. In the Working Group's opinion, the State has shown negligence in so delegating its own powers."[114]

This indication of loss of confidence and weakness of the state's sovereign powers is at least, as we have seen, imbued with the law, however imperfect that may be. That is not the case when it comes to the next point.

The persistence of lynching

In a region where in 2009 more than one third of the population did not accept the proposition that people must always obey the law, it is not exactly surprising that the practice of people taking justice into their own hands has survived.[115] The extent of lynching—understood as punishment inflicted by a crowd on one or more individuals suspected of violating a social norm or committing a crime[116]—is very difficult to establish on a regional scale. Only a few countries keep records on lynching cases, and definitions of the crime are not always comparable. In some countries, however, the phenomenon has received considerable attention, to the point of leading to questioning and even interventions on the part of some international institutions. The cases of Guatemala and Bolivia stand out here.

Even in the worst cases, the scope of this phenomenon is limited and fluctuating, and in general it does not suggest a rising trend. For example, police statistics in Guatemala show that the number of fatal victims in lynching cases has evolved unevenly over the last decade (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Victims of homicides by lynching in Guatemala, 2001-2010

Year	Men	Women	Total
2001	21	0	21
2002	20	0	20
2003	16	0	18
2004	7	0	7
2005	15	0	15
2006	12	1	13
2007	20	0	20
2008	17	0	17
2009	47	2	49
2010	31	2	33

Source: Office of the National Civilian Police of Guatemala.

In the case of Bolivia, although press reports refer to thousands of lynching cases, a United Nations report identified 71 cases of lynching in 2009, 15 of which resulted in fatalities. This last figure, however, represented a significant increase from the year before.[117] Police reports in Peru, meanwhile, suggest a more widespread problem: the number of lynchings that were attempted or carried out in the decade from 1995 to 2004 in that Andean country was 1,993, nearly 700 of them in the city of Lima.[118] In his analysis of lynch mob executions in the Brazilian state of São Paulo, Clark (2004) asserts that between 1980 and 1997 the proportion of lynching cases fluctuated between 0.03 and 0.20 per 100,000 people, with an average of 23 victims per year throughout that period in a

district of more than 30 million people.[119] In the case of Mexico, 268 cases were reported over the course of a decade, between 1992 and 2001.[120] In this last case, however, the adoption of lynching practices by communities under siege from violence in northern Mexico could be on the rise, as reported by the international media.[121] Finally, in the past decade, the Dominican Republic has seen lynching appear as a spontaneous, frequent, and growing response to sexual violence.[122]

More important than the magnitude of lynching in the recent past—which is very difficult to establish—is perhaps what is suggested by its recurrence and by its surprising degree of popularity in some countries.[123] Despite repeated analyses of the subject by anthropologists and sociologists in the context of Latin America, the factors behind this phenomenon continue to be disputed. In Guatemala and Bolivia, much has been made of the practice's ancestral roots among native cultures, as a simple manifestation of community mechanisms for dispensing justice.[124] In the case of Bolivia, the danger of making lynching legally legitimate was the focus of discussion in 2010—in the context of the debate over enactment of the new Judiciary Law—in order to provide indigenous communities with the opportunity to resolve internal conflicts, hand down judicial decisions, and punish perpetrators in accordance with their own norms and customs and with greater autonomy from the national courts, a right already recognized by the 2009 Constitution. While those promoting the law were saying that traditional community justice did not include homicide and torture, the approval of the legislation was preceded by a wave of lynchings in indigenous communities, some of whose leaders defended the practice, pointing out the supposed virtues of lynching as a quick and restorative system.[125] In Guatemala, some studies have flatly denied that the origin of the practice is rooted in the common law of the Mayan peoples. Quite the contrary, they place its origins in the *erosion* of traditional mechanisms for administering justice among indigenous peoples and in the tradition of brutality and impunity left by the occupation of indigenous lands by the army. Snodgrass-Godoy (2002) argues that if lynching is more common in the indigenous communities of the Guatemalan *altiplano* it is precisely because they were the scenes of the fierce genocidal violence unleashed by the army during past civil conflict.[126]

What all the studies agree on is that, whatever the cultural origins of lynching, at the heart of why this phenomenon persists is the age-old abandonment of indigenous communities by the state, both as regards the provision of any type of welfare service as well as the administration of justice itself. Some researchers view lynching in the context of indigenous peoples as an affirmation of the sovereignty of the community administering it, and at the same time a powerful challenge to the sovereignty of a state that exists only in its absence. For Guerrero (2000), in rural communities of Ecuador lynching became an expression of resentment over the lack of state services, the abysmal disparities in the quality of urban and rural life, and the withdrawal of public institutions. This same resentment would help to explain the presence of the phenomenon in marginal urban areas

as well. In analyzing the case of Brazil, Clark (2004) suggests that lynching is carried out only in those settings in which the government's legitimacy has become severely weakened. The state's failure to provide comprehensive police services and guarantee access to justice ends up leading to forms of vigilante justice, imbued with the intent to subvert a social contract that has collapsed. "In this micro-revolution model," Clark argues, "lynching is a form of social protest and serves the communities by demanding the State maintain its social contract with the people. This model is grounded in Hobbesian beliefs of a social contract between the State and civil society where the civil society members give the State exclusive right to the use of violence in exchange for services and support by the State." Through lynching, Clark writes, the community "files moral complaint against the inadequacy of the State; challenges State legitimacy; and redefines ideas about law, justice, and citizenship."[127] Along the same lines, in presenting his report on the lynching situation in Bolivia in 2010, Denis Racicot, the representative of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Bolivia, noted that the prevalence of lynching in marginal urban areas was a symptom of the deep dissatisfaction over widespread impunity and the poor performance of police forces.[128] In short, lynching appears in several countries of the region as a form of summary justice, not only against the person who is lynched but against the state for its inability to provide basic rights of citizenship, beginning with justice. A public opinion survey conducted many years ago in Rio de Janeiro summed up the prevailing opinion of nearly half of Rio's population on the subject of lynching: "If justice doesn't work, people have to *make* it work."[129]

It is in that opinion—a mixture of contempt for the rule of law and for human life—where the greatest danger lies. By 1996-1997 the data showed a considerable difference between prevailing attitudes toward lynching in the region and those found in Spain, as can be seen in the following table. Additionally, the figures suggested that support for lynching is generally proportional to the levels of violent crime in the respondent's community (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Attitudes toward the right to kill someone who instills fear in a community (lynching) in seven cities in Ibero-America, 1996-1997

City	Approve (%)	Reject (%)
Madrid (Spain)	6.9	64.5
San José (Costa Rica)	14.4	41.7
Santiago (Chile)	19.7	36.2
San Salvador (El Salvador)	21.8	30.6
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	25.9	32.5
Caracas (Venezuela)	32.6	12.2
Bahía (Brazil)	34.9	31.1

Source: Briceño-León et al. (2006), p. 303.

Things do not seem to have improved since then, and in some places they have gotten worse. As was seen in the previous chapter, 26.5% of those interviewed in Latin America and the Caribbean by the 2010 AmericasBarometer showed favorable attitudes toward people taking justice into their own hands. UNDP (2006) summarizes the results of a similar question asked in Costa Rica in 2004, which showed that nearly 40% of the population is in favor of lynching criminals who are caught.[130] In Cochabamba, Bolivia, meanwhile, a recent survey showed that nearly 3 out of 10 citizens believe that lynching is an effective measure to combat insecurity.[131] Statistics from Mexico, for their part, seem slightly better than earlier ones, though they are far from being comforting. In 2008, nearly 24% supported citizens taking the law into their own hands, a figure slightly higher than in 2006, but well below that seen in 2004, which reached 30%.[132]

When in the most favorable cases one quarter of the population expresses support for an activity that obviously goes against basic liberal democratic principles and even against the foundations of civilized life, it is clear that the risks posed to the rule of law in a situation of rising crime are not inconsiderable. The idea of due process as a dispensable luxury and taking the law into one's hands as an acceptable recourse can easily lead to even more ominous phenomena, such as deliberate social cleansing by groups of "anonymous vigilantes." As is well known, there is a longstanding tradition of "social vigilantism" in the region's large cities, a phenomenon that in some cases enjoys surprising support from society: one of every six residents of San Salvador and Bahía, as well as one of every five Caracas residents, expressed open support for exterminating "undesirables" in 1996-1997.[133] This is also not just popular support, but political support as well. For example, in June 2011, the Guatemalan police arrested a mayor who was accused of inciting a lynching in the community of San Juan Cotzal, in Quiché.[134]

The survival of the practice of lynching, and of a broad reserve of societal support for it, is thus a symptom of the state's weakness in enforcing the rule of law. It is not the worst symptom. In some cases, symptoms of state weakness go far beyond the decisions made, spontaneously or deliberatively, by small groups of citizens to punish criminals. In other cases, it is a much broader phenomenon, one in which state mandates have been substituted by those issued by other para-state authorities. In that case, the substitution of state sovereignty is radical and profound. There are numerous examples of this in Latin America, as we will see next.

Areas of contested sovereignty

Are there failed states in Latin America? No, or at least not yet. With the possible exception of Haiti, so far there are no other cases in the Western Hemisphere in which the state's ability to exercise its authority within its territory and provide public services has collapsed in a way that is widespread and extreme.[135] To assert that, however, is not the same as to say that the full and effective exercise of state sovereignty is guaranteed in all cases. The region does not have failed states, but it does have *discontinuous* states, in some cases seriously so. As O'Donnell (1993) has argued, the states in the region are heterogeneous and show a juxtaposition of areas with high, medium, and low state penetration in terms of the state's functions and its ability to enforce the law. Organized crime, in particular, has contributed decisively to the appearance in the region of what some authors have called "black spots," or spaces where the law of the state has been completely or partially substituted by an alternative system that the population is forced to support and, in some cases, accepts as legitimate. These "black spots" are not, however, "quasi-states," as they have no wish to secede; nor are they "ungoverned spaces," as there is a power structure in place, which challenges and compromises the exercise of state sovereignty.[136] A few regional examples will suffice to show the various manifestations of this phenomenon in the region, as well as its ominous implications and the enormous difficulties involved in reversing it.

The fact that "black spots" exist and are exploited by organized crime has long been recognized in Colombia. The explosive growth in the cultivation, processing, and trafficking of illegal drugs beginning in the 1970s came to both reflect and exacerbate the traditionally weak presence of the state in a large part of the country and the persistence of a multifaceted phenomenon of insurrection.[137] By the end of the 1990s, the uncontrolled levels of violence and the expansion of insurrectional and criminal activities, as well as the overlap between them, raised serious doubts about the Colombian state's ability to effectively exercise sovereignty over its territory. The state's historical weakness had led to something much more alarming: a coexistence among various de facto powers exercising effective territorial sovereignty;[138] an effective breakdown in the state's monopoly on legitimate coercion; and the state's apparent inability to enforce the law throughout the country. As we will see further on, the situation has improved considerably since then in Colombia.

Other cases in the region, notably Mexico and Guatemala, may be moving in the opposite direction. In 2008, the Joint Command of the United States Armed Forces pointed out the following in its annual report: "In terms of worst-case scenarios for the Joint Force and indeed the world, two large and important states bear consideration for a rapid and sudden collapse: Pakistan and Mexico.... [The Mexican] government, its politicians, police, and judicial infrastructure are all under sustained assault and pressure by criminal gangs and drug cartels.... Any descent by Mexico into chaos would

demand an American response...."[139] That statement sparked angry reactions from Mexican government officials, who flatly denied that their country was on the verge of being ungovernable.[140]

Although their reaction was largely justified, there is no doubt that Mexico has long had serious problems in enforcing the rule of law in much of its territory, problems that the spiral of violence unleashed in 2006 has intensified in many cases. In fact, from the beginning former President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) described his decision to order a military escalation against the powerful drug-trafficking organizations that had established themselves in the country as an attempt to reestablish the state's authority in some areas of the country in which it presumably was no longer in control.[141] The combination of a sporadic presence of state institutions and the takeover of local institutions through coercion or bribery often translates into power structures that are under the almost total control of drug traffickers. These power structures are deeply rooted in society, making them very resistant to periodic attempts by federal authorities to break them up. In Calderón's own home state of Michoacán, one interviewee described the power of the local crime organization, *La Familia,* in the following terms: "They're a second law.... Maybe the first law. If you need to collect a debt, you go to them. They'll charge you a fee, but you'll get your money. The police work for them. When they arrest people, they don't take them to police headquarters but to La Familia."[142] Similar situations are seen in rural areas in the states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Durango, and Sinaloa, among others.[143] In the last case, in particular, the total lack of state presence in remote areas has for decades made Sinaloa a hotbed of illegal activity and the cradle of large-scale drug trafficking in Mexico.[144]

Something similar has happened in the case of Guatemala, where the widespread presence of organized crime is making the profound weakness of state institutions ever more obvious. For a long time, this Central American country has been a critical transit point for drugs headed north—especially cocaine coming from South America, but also amphetamines imported from India and Bangladesh. This role owes much to the country's geography and institutional set-up. In northern Guatemala, the dense jungles of Petén, which cover much of the nearly 1,000 kilometers of Mexico's southern border, offer ideal cover for drug trafficking activities; these are often carried out in complicity with security forces with a long history of corruption and impunity, exacerbated during the civil conflict.[145] It has become increasingly clear that the Mexican government's efforts to confront drug trafficking organizations in that country have led the organizations to expand their operations across Mexico's southern border. The widespread presence of the Sinaloa cartel and the Zetas in Guatemala, as well as the territorial disputes between them, is well documented.[146] There are few barriers standing in the way of this penetration: Guatemala today is a weak state by almost any indicator, including having one of the lowest tax burdens in the world (10.9% of GDP in

2010).[147] It is not entirely surprising that according to some estimates, by 2010 as much as 40% of Guatemala's territory was under the effective control of criminal organizations.[148]

Contrary to what might be inferred from the preceding description, which includes only some of the most conspicuous cases, in Latin America the substitution of state authority by illicit power structures is not confined to remote areas located beyond the reach of state institutions, nor is it simply the result of the poor territorial integration that continues to affect many countries in the region. In fact, one of the most noteworthy phenomena created by the expansion of organized crime in Latin America is the appearance of "black spots" in the middle of cities. The prototypical case, though hardly the only one, involves large urban areas in Brazil. As is widely known, many *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro have engendered an alternative power structure built around local criminal organizations, a structure in which the state has at best a secondary role in providing public goods and services to the community. Garzón (2008) described the situation in Bangú—a place on the outskirts of Rio with a population close to a quarter of a million people—like this: "Drug traffickers are the ultimate authority in this area. They establish the rules of behavior and have a high level of social control.... Using a complex network, the *comando* [the local criminal organization] tries to ensure that there are no incursions into the area either by police or by enemy factions. Since government authorities are not present in these areas, the criminals have been able to establish a parallel justice system enforced by the use of violence.... In these hotbed communities, crime structures are a form of social organization and they take on government functions."[149] This last point is particularly true when it comes to providing security, a task that ends up in the hands of the only coercive power that really counts: that of the local drug traffickers. Garzón continues: "According to the residents [of Parada de Lucas, another Rio neighborhood], things had been calm until a few months ago when the police decided to launch an incursion. Paradoxically, the population feels 'safe' with the drug traffickers and sees the police as their real threat. People are used to being around the drug traffickers in daily life; they are their neighbors, their family members, their childhood friends... The alarming thing is that in the *favelas*, the authorities are perceived as the threat while criminal groups provide social order."[150]

In other areas the situation is even more tangled because of militias, which are typically made up of retired or even active police who organize themselves to expel drug traffickers from the neighborhood and protect the community from them—in exchange, of course, for a payment from the families who live there. In many cases these militias have for all practical purposes ended up replacing the criminal gangs they have expelled, including when it comes to providing basic public services to the community.[151]

The experience of Rio de Janeiro—which is repeated, with different nuances, in parts of Guatemala City or San Salvador or Ciudad Juárez or Medellín—suggests two critical points. First, the absence

of violence in a particular district does not necessarily mean that the rule of law has successfully been established. In many cases, security is the result of the consolidation of power in the area by forces acting outside the law. Likewise, a fragmentation of or challenge to this power can give rise to serious spirals of violence. Two recent, clear examples come to mind. First is the dramatic disruption of the symbiotic relationship between the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas, which had made it possible to have low levels of violence in Monterrey, Mexico. Today these levels, unfortunately, have been reversed. Similarly, the extradition of the paramilitary leader Diego Murillo Bejarano, "Don Berna," which ended his monopoly on organized crime in Medellín, paved the way for a visible increase in the levels of violence in that Colombian city, despite the valiant efforts of the city government.[152] The problem is that the provision of security as a result of the consolidation of monopolies on illicit activity is capable of garnering citizen support, if people come to see that state-imposed order—even when it is aboveboard and lawful—can disrupt a stable equilibrium. However undesirable from the point of view of the law, a *pax mafiosa* is often an attractive alternative to chaos.[153] The drop in Mexican citizens' support for former President Calderón's efforts against the drug cartels in the course of his term offers a reminder of that.[154]

The second point that can be drawn from the experience of Rio de Janeiro is that the substitution of state authority is not merely the result of the state's lack of penetration in the territory. That can hardly be said to be the case in an urban context. In practically every case, the appearance of a para-state system is less the result of the state's absence than the takeover of its institutions by organized crime. Under pressure of threat or inducement of bribery, the official authorities often agree to withdraw the state from spaces dominated by organized crime. The penetration by drug trafficking in police and judicial institutions in Mexico—especially at the local level—is widely known and acknowledged by the Mexican authorities.[155] The recent experience of Guatemala is perhaps more serious. In the 2008-2011 period, the country had six ministers of interior and four chiefs of police, including several with alleged connections to drug trafficking.[156] It was in fact the urgency of responding to this type of penetration that led to the decision by the Guatemalan government and the United Nations to establish, in 2006, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), for the purpose of dismantling illegal groups that were operating within the country's security institutions. Ominously, however, in June 2010 CICIG Commissioner Carlos Castresana turned in his resignation, alleging that the government was reluctant to eradicate corruption in the police and judicial institutions, and that it was not providing support to the Commission's investigations in cases related to organized crime.[157] Castresana's disillusionment is grounded in several telling facts. According to estimates by the United States government, approximately 250 tons of cocaine move through Guatemala every year. However, in 2010 the Guatemalan authorities confiscated 1.5 tons of cocaine, a fraction of the seizures made in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, or Panama.[158] In

terms of the exercise of sovereignty, it is of little use to have state institutions within a territory if their main job is instead to protect the systematic violation of the law by criminal organizations.[159]

In the case of Rio de Janeiro, threats and bribery are just part of the story. The study by Desmond-Arias (2006) shows how the exercise of authority in the *favelas* flows through a complex triangulation among the established political powers, local criminal organizations, and community leaders, all of whom have incentives to work together outside the law. Arias shows how the politicians use the other two actors to ensure the electoral mobilization that enables them to win office in exchange for reducing the presence of the police and providing some services to the community. For their part, the criminal organizations are willing to work with the community leaders and politicians to reduce the risk of police operations in their territory and community cooperation with the police. Finally, the community leaders thrive between the other two players, obtaining benefits for the community and, through their mediation, protecting the political actors from the risk of dealing directly with the drug traffickers. The retraction of the state's authority is tolerated, then, by those who represent that authority, although it is contingent on the continuation of mutually beneficial negotiation. This type of transaction is reminiscent of the exchange of services between political parties and criminal gangs in the suburbs of Kingston, Jamaica, which some have analyzed as a "neo-medieval" model in which, in a context of fiscal constraint, the criminal organizations almost autonomously take on the provision of the community's goods and services, as well as the task of electoral mobilization, in exchange for a mantle of impunity and political protection.[160]

So, then, the substitution of state authority by organized crime, especially in the urban context, involves much more than the simple absence of institutions. There are frequently economic and political incentives that are extremely difficult to change.

This last point is perhaps the most crucial. Even when the political will exists at the highest level, getting rid of the "black spots" is a process that is extraordinarily expensive and brings uncertain results. In the case of Colombia, the democratic security policy of former President Álvaro Uribe, the accelerated strengthening of the Colombian military apparatus, and the implementation of Plan Colombia, with the support of the United States, have been able to reduce the levels of rural and urban violence and expand the areas where the authority of the Colombian state holds sway. They have done so, to be sure, in a way that is incomplete, controversial, and tremendously costly. The country continues to be one of the top two cocaine producers in the world, and in broad stretches of its territory the restoration of state authority is precarious and prone to setbacks.[161]

With all its imperfections, the case of Colombia shows progress toward the restoration of state powers. In the case of Mexico, by contrast, it is still a matter of intense debate whether or not

former President Calderón's strategy served to reestablish the rule of law, his declared objective. Since 2006, the country has witnessed a process that has combined the decapitation and fragmentation of the drug trafficking organizations, at a cost of an unprecedented increase in levels of violence in some parts of the country, both rural and urban.[162] In some places, notably Ciudad Juárez, on the United States border, the levels of violence have been comparable to those of a theater of war, defined by anomie and not by the rule of law.[163] Moreover, after a six-year offensive by the authorities, high levels of violence are no longer concentrated geographically and have come to cover an increasingly greater part of the country.[164] That reflects not just the fierce struggle over control of routes and positions between a larger number of criminal organizations and the state, but also a proliferation of types of crime that are not necessarily linked to drug trafficking but that operate under the cover of widespread instability and impunity that characterize the worst areas of the conflict.[165] Mexico's recent experience thus suggests that if the existence of "black spots" is incompatible with the rule of law, the will to eradicate them does not necessarily translate into a victory for the law and state sovereignty.

Meanwhile, the attempts made by Guatemalan institutions to reestablish their control over the country have had a limited effect. In December 2010, the government of former President Álvaro Colom—alarmed by numerous reports of villages being occupied by operatives from the Zetas, as well as rapes of indigenous women and murders committed with complete impunity—proceeded to declare a state of siege in the department of Alta Verapaz, a region with a long history of violence and little state presence. While the return of Guatemalan military troops to Alta Verapaz made the region breathe more easily, it was received with mixed feelings by the local population, which was aware that this area was the scene of some of the most horrific human rights abuses that occurred during Guatemala's long civil conflict. The operation, which lasted just over two months, resulted in some significant seizures of weapons and transportation equipment used by drug trafficking organizations. However, some observers considered it to be a public relations exercise designed to demonstrate to national and international audiences that the state of Guatemala has not irretrievably lost the ability to control its territory. Since the state of siege ended in February 2011, the situation in Alta Verapaz has largely returned to the former status quo. The drug-related execution of 27 peasants in the neighboring department of Petén in May 2011—the worst massacre to have taken place in Guatemala since the end of the civil war—offered a grim reminder of the precarious state of public safety in much of the country.[166]

For the state, recovering the "black spots" where organized crime is proliferating is a colossal undertaking, different only in degree from the task of recovering state sovereignty in a country that has seen it slip away, such as Somalia, Afghanistan, or Liberia. And it is a task that is even more

complex if the existence of a para-state system coincides with high levels of violence—something that is common, though not necessary, as we have seen. Many factors need to come together in this recovery process: First, a strong political leadership that makes this task a priority and that takes the risk of dismantling the corruption and patronage networks that contribute to the collapse of the rule of law—along with a leadership that is also flexible and patient in understanding that there are limits to what citizens are willing to tolerate to fully restore the rule of law in the short term. Secondly, the presence of the state in the territory must be constant—not just the coercive apparatus, but also the institutions that provide social goods and services to the population, with all of them working in coordination. Thirdly, the institutions responsible for enforcing the law must be strengthened, purged, and modernized so that their actions will be credible, aboveboard, transparent, and trustworthy in the eyes of the population. Fourthly, the community must organize itself and collaborate to establish institutional channels to convey people's demands to state institutions. Fifthly, legal, stable work opportunities that take people away from the powerful pull of illicit activities must be created.[167]

Fortunately, the recent experiences of Bogotá and São Paulo offer important insights into the feasibility of these types of complex, cross-sector interventions. In both cases, a sustained political commitment and a broad view of security—one that includes everything from the professionalization of the police to the overhaul of public transportation and the creation of job centers in conflict-plagued neighborhoods—have made it possible to bring about a dramatic, sustained reduction in levels of violence for over a decade and a half.[168] More recently, the introduction of Police Pacification Units in some particularly problematic *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro offers a path that is promising, though not free of controversy. There, a permanent police presence in the community (as opposed to episodes of violent intervention) is coupled with an effort to work closely with the community and improve the provision of public goods and services.[169] In some cases, however, the recovery of territory has required police-military operations on a large scale, causing dozens of deaths, which some critics have described as a prelude to a simple coercive occupation of the poorest neighborhoods.[170] It is still too early to evaluate the success and sustainability of the efforts underway in Rio de Janeiro to regain control of territories that had been ceded to organized crime.

What is clear is that successful models for intervention are extremely challenging for states that almost always fall short in terms of the resources and bureaucratic capacity needed to carry out complex, cross-sector operations. However, without such intervention the risk is considerable: consolidation and expansion of areas outside state control; a progressive loss of the state's relevance; and an erosion of the state's fundamental obligation, one in which citizens give the state the monopoly on legitimate violence in a territory in exchange for the protection of a hard core of basic rights.

There are no failed states in Latin America, but there are states with "failed areas." Whether these are tumors that must be excised or symptoms of generalized weakness in adherence to the rule of law is a question beyond the scope of this chapter. What is certain is that the "black spots" that are created by or used by organized crime are incompatible with the rule of law. And without the rule of law there is no democracy, no development, and no peace.

Findings and final reflections

The preceding pages have examined three different types of erosion of state sovereignty stemming from deterioration in the levels of crime or perceived insecurity in Latin America. All three cases—proliferation of private security firms, persistence of lynching, and emergence of areas where state sovereignty is in doubt—not only illustrate the state's weakness, particularly as regards its ability to enforce the law, but seriously exacerbate that weakness. They point to a vicious circle in which a state power that is weak, due to its own inability to enforce the law, ends up ceding sovereign prerogatives to third parties that operate legally, informally, or outside the law. This in turn makes the state even less able to protect citizens, ensure enforcement of the rule of law, and win legitimacy from the people for whom its mandates are intended.

If democracy requires a state capable of enforcing the law consistently and universally, it is obvious that the weaknesses laid out here cannot be taken lightly. With these weaknesses, the quality of democracy suffers; even worse, the survival of any system of government in the region—whose first requirement is the state's monopoly on coercive power to guarantee order—is no longer ensured. To the extent that the expansion of crime in much of Latin America and the expansion of fear of crime in *all* of Latin America represent serious state weaknesses, it is necessary to once again ask political questions that are far more basic and primary than those related to the consolidation of democracy in the region. It could be said, along the lines of the late political scientist Samuel Huntington (1968), that the form of government in Latin American countries is very important but their *degree* of government is equally or more important.

This chapter has shown that:

a. Private security companies are growing rapidly in Latin America and now probably employ some 4 million personnel, a significant number of whom are in the informal sector.
b. In nearly all cases, private security firms rival public law enforcement in size, and in some countries—notably Guatemala—they are considerably larger.

c. The regulation of private security firms in the region has many kinds of holes, from the training of agents to their nebulous subordination to state police, and is affected by the state's overall inability to properly monitor the sector.

d. The proliferation of private security firms in the region frequently engenders problems involving corruption, conflicts of interest among security authorities, and differentiated access by the population to security as a public good.

e. Lynching continues to be a way to address crime in many Latin American countries, although there are no reliable figures that make it possible to state how widespread the practice is and whether it is growing in the region.

f. Despite its ancestral origins in some countries of the region, there is evidence to suggest that the practice of lynching is an extreme response to the state's perceived inability to provide public goods and services to marginal populations—especially the state's inability to punish criminals.

g. Lynching continues to be popular in many countries, garnering favorable opinions from a quarter of the region's population and an even higher proportion in some countries, such as Costa Rica and Bolivia.

h. Latin America does not have any failed states, but it does have "black spots," which are found in both rural and urban areas, especially in countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil, in which the state's authority has been seriously compromised or substituted by forms of para-state authority.

i. In certain contexts in Latin America, organized crime is capable of generating a power structure that substitutes for the state, almost always by capturing state institutions or by negotiating with the political authorities for the state to retreat from a particular territory.

j. The cost and complexity of recovering "black spots" is substantial and—as suggested by the cases of Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil—the results are uncertain.

The political challenges that citizen insecurity poses to the countries of Latin America are, therefore, very basic. They involve not just the consolidation of democracy but the state's viability as the entity that governs community life. Addressing the objective and subjective problems of insecurity in Latin America is a political task of the highest priority. The next chapter suggests some ideas about how to do that effectively, sustainably, and democratically.

CHAPTER 5

There is a Way Out: Some Proposals to Address Citizen Insecurity in Latin America

The preceding chapters constitute an experiment and a word of caution. On the one hand they attempt to probe, both conceptually and empirically, the many ways citizen insecurity affects the political development of Latin American societies. While the enormous economic and social costs that citizen insecurity imposes on the region are known, at least approximately, their political implications have not gone beyond the realm of speeches and generic assertions. In a region in which the adoption of democratic practices is, in many ways, recent and precarious, it is critical to establish clearly whether crime and fear of crime pose a real risk of authoritarian reversals or, at the very least, the erosion of some of the cardinal principles of democratic life.

It is in this regard that these pages offer a word of caution: that danger is real and verifiable. Not all countries are equally vulnerable to it, because the degrees of consolidation of democracy in the region vary widely, as does the intensity of the problem of violence in different countries. But everyone should be aware of this risk. In the earlier analysis, we saw how the perception of insecurity is extraordinarily high in *all* of Latin America, and how this is capable of producing autonomous political effects, quite aside from what might actually be happening in terms of violence. Whatever their level of democratic development, Latin American countries would do well not to forget the serious warning laid out in the study by Bermeo (1997) on interwar Europe: the perception that public order was unraveling was one of the key factors in the rise of authoritarianism and, in particular, of fascism. This is not a hypothetical question in a survey, as with the questionnaires we have examined in previous chapters. Rather, it is an ominously relevant historical lesson for a region that today combines precarious democratic traditions with an acute sense of threat.

In much of the hemisphere, crime—both in its more minor forms and when it is highly organized—not only jeopardizes the consolidation of democracy, but also the state's very viability. Citizen insecurity is endangering Latin America's most important achievement of the last three decades: sowing

the seeds of lasting democratic systems. With all their imperfections and weaknesses, these democracies have been infinitely better than the authoritarian disasters that preceded them. Having left behind a long night of political repression is a victory that must be preserved at all costs. That is why this discussion matters.

While the issue is urgent and in some ways overwhelming, it is nevertheless not impossible to solve. The first thing we must abandon in this discussion is fatalism. Such resignation is not warranted, because the last few years have certainly not brought only bad news in the hemisphere in the area of citizen insecurity. The region has had successes in reducing levels of violence, primarily at the local level, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. The violence that today suffocates a significant part of Latin America is not inevitable. The current predicament does have solutions—none of which, to be sure, are easy, fast, or cheap.

It is critical to emphasize this last point, as this epidemic of violence is putting enormous pressure on all governments and political actors in the region. As we saw above, the percentage of people in Latin America who place crime at the top of national priorities has tripled in less than a decade, and today crime ranks higher than economic challenges. It is not surprising, then, that the debate in the region, particularly during election periods, should revolve around ever more vociferous pledges to confront insecurity with an "iron fist"—in other words, with methods that make abundant and intensive use of mechanisms of state coercion, almost always with blatant impatience, if not disdain, for the guarantees of the rule of law. The Latin American population—as frightened as it is eager for order—is increasingly heeding and rewarding such appeals.[171]

That is unfortunate, as the track record for "iron-fisted" solutions to crime is not promising. On this point, the recent experiences of Honduras and El Salvador speak volumes. In Honduras, which since 2002 has adopted a succession of repressive anti-crime plans, nothing much has changed: the 56 homicides per 100,000 people that the country recorded in 2002 turned into 78 in 2010, the worst such figure in the world. The case of El Salvador is just as unfortunate. Neither the Iron Fist Plan (2003) nor the Super Iron Fist Plan (2004) kept the number of homicides in that country from doubling between 2003 and 2010.[172]

It is increasingly evident that the task of addressing the problems of violence in Latin America—and thus inoculating democratic institutions against the risks they face today—requires a comprehensive, complex approach that challenges the simplistic political discourse prevalent today. Making the necessary exceptions to accommodate various national realities, any plan should at a minimum incorporate the ten elements than will be examined next. All of them are widely known, and in some cases are already being put into practice in the region.

First: Reframe the discussion. This implies resisting the call to solve the problem through "iron-fisted" policies and the kind of twisted repressive populism that almost always fails to reduce crime rates but never fails to undermine the guarantees of the rule of law, with such a high cost to democracy. The only sustainable way to succeed in the struggle against crime involves putting in place effective strategies for social prevention and deepening the country's commitment to policies geared toward furthering human development, reducing inequality, and expanding the opportunities available to young people.

To be sure, social prevention policies must be calibrated with a sense of urgency and the acknowledgment that the robust use of state coercion, within the boundaries of the rule of law, is inescapable in the fight against crime. This is particularly true when it comes to fighting organized crime, which requires less social prevention and a greater use of intelligence and coercion measures. No matter how effective social prevention may prove in the long run, it is insufficient to address the political challenge that citizen insecurity poses for governments in the short term. The best examples of reducing crime levels show that the challenge consists of balancing "zero tolerance" for crime with "zero tolerance" for social exclusion.

It is also essential to moderate both the discourse and expectations. It must be said: there is no easy solution to the increase in crime, and it is necessary to prepare society for a long-term effort. We should beware of demagogues, quacks, and charlatans who, armed with the language of the "iron fist," offer miracle potions to cure our ills in short order. It doesn't work that way.

Second: Democratize the debate. In almost all developed countries, the government periodically publishes a "white paper" containing the broad outlines of its national defense policies. This is a practice that, little by little, has been spreading throughout Latin America.[173] This document is sent to the legislative branch and is presented for broad public debate, in which academia and civil society also participate. That debate makes it possible to contribute information and corrections during the preparation of a defense strategy that is genuinely national, and enhances the budget debate based on such a strategy. Nothing is keeping us from doing the same thing when it comes to citizen security, especially now that congressional committees on citizen security exist in much of the region.[174] If, in fact, security is to be something that belongs to everyone, it should be so in a way that is transparent, at every level and from the very beginning. That open debate would be an antidote to the worst of what is happening in citizen security in the region: the widespread feeling of confusion, the sense that nobody really knows what to do about the problem.

Third: Improve governance on crime policy. The urgency of the challenge of citizen insecurity creates incentives for two types of public policy responses: one is to increase resources to the security

sector, and the other is to toughen criminal laws. That may or may not be necessary, depending on the circumstances of each country. There is, however, another component that is equally central to security policy, which has to do with the institutional architecture in place and the coordination among the various actors. A successful strategy on citizen security requires:

- Coordination within the executive branch, particularly between the security measures *strictu sensu* and the different types of social policies—the type of coordination that has thus far been the exception and not the rule.
- Horizontal coordination between the various branches of government, particularly between police forces and the judiciary.
- Vertical coordination between different levels of government within the country, which implies a very clear division of security functions between national and sub-national authorities. While local government must play a vital role in preventing and controlling the most common forms of crime, fighting organized crime requires a level of sophistication that goes beyond even national governments.
- Finally, coordination between the state and other actors involved in the problem. Here again it is worth mentioning the widespread presence of private security firms throughout Latin America, a trend that at this point is irreversible. Like it or not, these companies play a central role in this story, sometimes as part of the solution and sometimes as part of the problem. As we saw above, it is urgent for the state to improve the regulation and oversight of these companies, one of the vast gray areas that exist today in the region. We must not forget that the regulation of private security firms involves a central problem of sovereignty.

The point is that no matter how much additional money we invest in security or how draconian we make our laws, if we do not fine-tune the mechanisms for coordination among all these actors, our efforts will have a very limited impact. When the police are asked to solve the problem of citizen insecurity, they are being asked for much more than they can deliver. What we have before us is a challenge that is too sensitive and complex to be placed solely in the hands of the police.

Fourth: Modernize law enforcement institutions and invest in information. With few exceptions, the police, judicial, and prison institutions in Latin America not only do not help solve the serious problems of insecurity, but they often make them worse. In many cases, these institutions must be rebuilt from the ground up. Here it must be said that the processes for judicial and police reform have had limited success in Latin America. Although criminal codes in the region have been updated, it is certainly the case that other critical aspects of crime policy—such as the training of police and prosecutors, the improvement of internal control systems to combat corruption, and the adoption of information and communication technologies in security institutions—continue to fall

short in every country. Just as weak is the development of civilian capacities in the area of security, particularly among the region's legislatures and civil society organizations.

Of all these modernization tasks, none is more important than investing in information systems. New York City did not see its crime levels plummet only because of the "zero tolerance" policies of former Mayor Rudy Giuliani. That was only a part—perhaps the most controversial part—of the effort. One of the central elements of this effort was the adoption of CompStat, the information system used to manage statistics and define objectives introduced by Giuliani's Police Commissioner, William Bratton. With that system, it was possible to track crime throughout the city, practically in real time. That made it possible to identify critical areas and spot trends, but even more importantly to define baselines, set goals, identify responsibilities for each police precinct, and reward successful performance.[175] All this may seem to be a pipe dream in Latin America and the Caribbean, where few security ministries even have periodic victimization surveys. According to a report prepared by the judiciary in Costa Rica a few years ago, nearly 40% of police reports done in that country are unintelligible, and a significant portion of judiciary offices are not able to establish in real time whether a perpetrator has a criminal record or pending cases in court.[176] As long as little is invested in the generation and intensive processing of crime data, we will continue to be condemned to security policies driven by the whims of policymakers and police captains.

Fifth: Improve relationships between law enforcement and the community. One of the keys to any strategy to reduce impunity in Latin America is to get citizens to report criminal offenses. As we saw in Chapter 2, the levels of trust in the police and the courts in Latin America are far below even those found in sub-Saharan Africa. The lack of trust in authorities' honesty and capability is one of the main reasons the vast majority of crimes are not reported and therefore not punished. The failure to report crimes is the most important factor that drives impunity. It is essential to improve internal control mechanisms within law enforcement, strengthen community policing, and introduce opportunities for community oversight of the police if citizens are to set in motion the institutional mechanisms that can protect them from crime.

Sixth: Increase the coordinated presence of the state in problem areas. We saw in Chapter 4 that one of the most serious security problems in the region is the emergence of "failed states" in which the state's authority no longer holds sway. This is true in almost every major city in the region—in Rio de Janeiro, but also in San Salvador, Guatemala City, and even in San José, Costa Rica. The most problematic areas in terms of violence require the massive and coordinated presence of the state, through task forces and in association with the community. These areas must be occupied (literally) by the police, but social investment must march right behind the police—infrastructure

improvements in schools and care centers, job training centers, sports facilities, etc. As was mentioned earlier, this is what made it possible to dramatically reduce violence in Bogotá and São Paulo. Recovering every one of those "failed micro-states" is necessarily a job not just for ministries of security but for the entire public sector, with managers who are responsible and have clear guidelines for action as well as resources—lots of resources.

Seventh: Regulate the purchase and ownership of guns. The percentage of homicides committed with firearms in Latin America is higher than that seen in any other region of the world. While evidence linking gun ownership restrictions and homicide rates in developed countries is controversial, assessments of the recent experiences of Bogotá, Cali, and São Paulo indicate that strict gun control marginally helps to reduce levels of violence.[177] What is important to understand is that gun ownership is one of the few factors associated with violence that is susceptible to being affected by public policy in the short term.

Eighth: Prevent teen pregnancy. One out of every eight households in Costa Rica is headed by a woman with children under 12 years of age.[178] The figures are similar or worse in most of Latin America. In the case of Costa Rica, these families are known to be socially vulnerable: they comprise more than one fifth of poor households in the country. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which is the fact that 20% of births continue to be to adolescent mothers.[179] The issue is critical for many reasons, including security. The probability that children who are brought up in these circumstances—in single-parent homes, or with teen mothers, or both—will end up breaking the law is much higher than the average. This has been established repeatedly by research in the United States and elsewhere:[180] a study by Katzman (1997) determined that two-thirds of young people prosecuted through the juvenile criminal justice system in Uruguay came from single-parent households. The implications of these numbers range from the urgency of improving infrastructure for childcare to the need to take sex education seriously. While there are many reasons Latin American societies would do well to leave prudishness behind, this is unquestionably one of the most important ones.

Ninth: Rethink anti-drug policies. Drug trafficking warrants a special mention. As was stated earlier, drug trafficking is at the center of the debate on security throughout the region, and it requires a multidimensional response, in which using police intelligence and the coercive power of the state play an essential role.

To lay out in detail everything that must be done to address this thorny problem goes far beyond the aim of this text. What is worth emphasizing is that in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, that multidimensional effort must include a vigorous diplomatic dimension, one that fosters

a true hemispheric dialogue on this issue. This is a conversation that is urgent to have, because Latin America and the Caribbean are paying a disproportionate share of the price of U.S. anti-drug policies, which until now have been centered primarily on controlling supply and demand through repressive measures. The implications of this focus for the entire hemisphere have, in general, been disastrous.[181] For the hemisphere to be able to make serious inroads against drug trafficking, the first step must be to end the ban on thinking about alternative approaches to public policy—that is, approaches geared more toward reducing demand and mitigating the harm done by drugs, which would complement the necessary and controlled use of state coercion.[182] This was laid out eloquently in the report of the Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy, coordinated by former Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico, and César Gaviria of Colombia, and published in 2009.[183] This report also raised the possibility of decriminalizing the possession of marijuana for personal use.

Fortunately, in the recent past we have witnessed the first stirrings of this crucial debate. The most remarkable achievement of the VI Summit of the Americas, held in Cartagena, Colombia, in April 2012, was that it allowed an unprecedented honest exchange on the state of counternarcotics policies among the hemisphere's political leaders. For the first time it was neither academics, nor civil society leaders, nor retired politicians, but active decision makers at the highest level that publicly made the same statements that, in many cases, they had made privately for a long time. Further critical pronouncements from the presidents of Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia and Uruguay, among others, have added to a sense of ebullience in the regional discussion about options to deal with the narcotics trade.[184]

It is impossible to know as yet where this discussion will lead or whether it will be conducted with an open mind and a true empirical vocation. We can only hope so. What is undeniable is that Latin American political leaders finally have begun to eradicate the prohibition to think that for decades marred anti-drug policies in the region. That is the start of a solution.

Tenth: Invest in opportunities for youth. At least one out of five young people in Latin America does not study or work. Among other things, this is a reserve army available for criminal activity. That is why increasing the amounts and effectiveness of public investment in education, public health, childcare, and job training for youth is essential for the future security of the region.

In stating this, we return to one of the main points of this story: investing in human development offers the surest route toward societies that are less violent, less fearful, and less insecure. The top 30 countries on the 2011 list of the UNDP Human Development Index—which includes no countries

from Latin America or the Caribbean—have an average homicide rate of 1.3 per 100,000 inhabitants (see Table 5.1). Of those 30, only one—the United States—has a homicide rate greater than 3 per 100,000 people. When it comes to citizen insecurity, this is the real story. The rest are mere details.

Table 5.1 Comparison between Human Development Index (HDI) and homicide rates in countries with high human development

HDI Ranking 2011	Country	HDI 2011	Intentional homicides per 100,000 people [*]
1	Norway	0.943	0.6
2	Australia	0.929	1.2
3	Netherlands	0.910	1.1
4	United States	0.910	5.0
5	New Zealand	0.908	1.5
6	Canada	0.908	1.8
7	Ireland	0.908	1.2
8	Liechtenstein	0.905	2.8
9	Germany	0.905	0.8
10	Sweden	0.904	1.0
11	Switzerland	0.903	0.7
12	Japan	0.901	0.5
13	Hong Kong (SAR of China)	0.898	0.5
14	Iceland	0.898	0.3
15	South Korea	0.897	2.9
16	Denmark	0.895	0.9
17	Israel	0.888	2.1
18	Belgium	0.886	1.7
19	Austria	0.885	0.5
20	France	0.884	1.4
21	Slovenia	0.884	0.6
22	Finland	0.882	2.3
23	Spain	0.878	0.9
24	Italy	0.874	1.0
25	Luxemburg	0.867	2.5
26	Singapore	0.866	0.5
27	Czech Republic	0.865	0.9
28	United Kingdom	0.863	1.2
29	Greece	0.861	1.0
30	United Arab Emirates	0.846	0.9
–	Latin America [a]	0,709	24.0 [b]
	Mean		**1.3**

Notes: (*) 2010 or nearest year; (a) 18 country simple average; (b) Weighted average, 2008.
Source: HDI taken from UNDP (2011). Homicide rates taken from UNODC, except Latin America, taken from Table 2.1 above.

None of this is free of charge. Almost all the public policy interventions needed to address citizen insecurity in Latin America are complex and costly. That leads inevitably to an issue to which Latin American societies—or at least some segments of them—have a profound aversion. If public policy is going to make universal access to social rights possible—something that is essential to reduce levels of violence—the region must undertake profound fiscal reforms. Furthermore, if we are to strengthen the state's ability to exercise control over its territory—without which it is almost impossible to combat organized crime—the first step is to collect and pay taxes. Indeed, the latter ought to be regarded as one of the crucial policy recommendations that flow from the previous chapters, notably Chapter 4. The average tax burden in Latin America today is slightly more than half that collected by the OECD industrialized countries.[185] Who can genuinely be surprised that the Guatemalan state has tenuous control over its territory when this is a country where tax collection amounts to barely over 10% of GDP? We must be clear about this: if we are to successfully address citizen insecurity in Latin America, we must start by exorcising some of the old demons that continue to condemn the region to underdevelopment. Criminal violence is where everything lacking in our development comes together. Citizen insecurity is not a security problem; it is a development problem.

That does not make the task any easier, but it should at least inoculate us against the miracle cures that have proliferated in Latin America, which offer a fleeting illusion of power to societies that grow more and more resigned. In terms of public policy, the "iron fist" is nothing more than a drug dose, one that provides an intense, ephemeral, and ultimately false satisfaction. The alternative to consuming this political narcotic is not, however, to give up and accept violence as the divine intent of inscrutable gods. To the contrary: there is a way out of this problem. It's just that it is more protracted, more complex, more expensive, and more demanding of us as citizens than we would like to admit.

Stating that with all the eloquence we can muster is the first step to ensuring a future for democracy in Latin America. We cannot afford to get this wrong. Because there is only one alternative to success—darkness.

Endnotes

1. This section is based on Chapters 1-3 of the Costa Rica National Human Development Report 2005, which was coordinated by the author. See UNDP (2006).
2. UNDP (1994).
3. For reflections on the concept of citizen security, see Arriagada & Godoy (1999), pp. 7-9; UNDP (2009), pp. 25-38.
4. Gutiérrez Gutiérrez (1989), pp. 105-113. For more on the relationship between the notion of citizenship and democracy, see UNDP (1994).
5. UNDP (2006), p. 39.
6. UNDP (2006), p. 30.
7. UNDP (2006), p. 39.
8. There are other, perhaps less direct, manifestations of citizen insecurity that go beyond the scope of this study. These include, for example, the influence of organized crime on elections and on corruption in public institutions, as well as the potential expansion of the armed forces' role in domestic security tasks, with scant civilian oversight.
9. UNDP (2006) classified those interviewed by the ENSCR-04 into four groups, in accordance with the intensity of their fear of becoming victims of many different types of violent conduct. Respondents were classified as "tranquil" (25.1% of the sample), "nervous" (36.6%), "frightened" (28.5%), and "under siege" (9.8%). See UNDP (2006), pp. 167-169.
10. UNDP (2006), p. 70.
11. Skinner (1993).
12. Putnam (1993).
13. UNDP (2006), p. 400; Moser & McIlwaine (2004); Moser & Holland (1997).
14. UNDP (2006), p. 407. On this point, the ENSCR-04 asked: "Do you believe your neighborhood should be made up only of people who are of the same nationality/social class/ ethnic origins or race/religion/political party?" Response trends were identical for all questions: the more fearful respondents were, the less likely they were to accept the social and spatial integration of different types of people.
15. UNDP (2006), p. 403. See Bateson (2012) for an excellent and broader discussion of this phenomenon.
16. Moser & McIlwaine (2004), p. 10.
17. Buvinic, Morrison & Orlando (2005), pp. 344-345.
18. Hobbes (1994 [1651]); Whitehead (2002), p. 182.
19. UNDP (2006), pp. 363-364.
20. ECLAC (2013), p. 53.
21. López-Calva & Lustig (2010), p. 3.
22. Schattschneider (1960), p. 119.
23. Huntington (1989), pp. 19 and 25.
24. ECLAC (2002).
25. This argument has a long history in democratic theory. See, for example, Schattschneider (1960) and Galbraith (1992).
26. The Spanish version of this text used here the term *'Estado Social de Derecho'*. This term, which more or less conflates the concepts of "rule of law" and "welfare state" and has wide currency in the Spanish-speaking world, has no equivalent in English.
27. Bobbio (1992), pp. 27-28.
28. ECLAC (2010, p. 229) puts the average tax burden in Latin America at 18.7% of GDP, including social charges. It stands at about half of the average tax revenue collected by OECD countries (34.8% in 2008, according to OECD Tax Database). While direct taxes, i.e. sensitive to income

and wealth levels, make up 37% of total revenue on average within OECD countries, the comparable figure for Latin American countries is 17.7% (OECD [2008], p. 7).

29. Estimate based on figures from WHO (2002).

30. Estimate based on Latinobarómetro (2010).

31. In the results from WHO (2002), the homicide rate in Latin America and the Caribbean (27.5 per 100,000 inhabitants) appears as the highest in the world, above sub-Saharan Africa (22). These are earlier numbers than those cited in the text. Moreover, as can be noted, the two sources aggregate the countries differently by region.

32. WHO (2002). It is worth noting that despite the availability of data on homicides generated by the Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008) and UNODC (2011), the study by WHO (2002), despite its time lag, continues to be the best source available on some issues, such as the distribution of homicide victims by age or the contribution of homicide to mortality rates in general or deaths by violent causes. It has the particular advantage that the regional aggregation of the data greatly facilitates the calculation of rates and percentages for Latin America as a whole. The other two sources include Latin America within a broader category of "the Americas" (UNODC [2011]) or break it down into subregional groupings such as Central America, South America, and the Caribbean (Geneva Declaration Secretariat [2008]).

33. Escalante (2011).

34. WHO (2002).

35. WHO (2002).

36. Van Kesteren et al. (2005).

37. The figures from the Dominican Republic cover only the 2005-2009 period.

38. Seligson & Smith (2010), p. 68.

39. Calculated based on LAPOP figures.

40. Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy (2009). Practically all the cocaine produced in the world comes from South America. Despite a significant reduction in the area of cultivation of coca leaves in Bolivia, Peru, and, most of all, Colombia, the total estimated production of cocaine in the region decreased only from 879 metric tons in 2000 to 845 metric tons in 2008, with some fluctuations in the intervening years (UNODC [2009], p. 64). Seizures of cocaine in Latin America, however, did increase dramatically in the same period, from 193 metric tons to 432 metric tons (figures from UNODC through 2008 and from the U.S. State Department in 2009-2010), which suggests that interdiction operations in the region have become more effective.

41. Farah (2010), p. 142. See also Naím (2005).

42. "La industria del secuestro esquilma a América Latina" ["The kidnapping industry impoverishes Latin America"], *El País* (Madrid), 2/17/2008.

43. IKV Pax Christi Netherlands (2008), p. 6.

44. IKV Pax Christi Netherlands (2008), p. 20. "Express" kidnapping refers to a form of short-term kidnapping, in which the victim is forced to go with the kidnapper to withdraw money from automated teller machines. This is often considered a special type of robbery and therefore is not included in official kidnapping statistics.

45. Buvinic, Morrison & Shifter (1999), pp. 2-4. See also: United Nations (2006), p. 53.

46. Sagot & Guzmán (2004).

47. CEDAW (2004).

48. CLADEM (2007).

49. The Spearman Coefficient fluctuates between 1 (identical rankings) and -1 (perfectly opposite rankings). A result of 0 indicates a complete lack of correlation between two lists.

50. See Londoño & Guerrero (2000), pp. 31-43; Morrison, Buvinic & Shifter (2003), pp. 102-107.

51. Fajnzylber et al. (1998).

52. Londoño & Guerrero (2000), pp. 38-43.
53. As cited by Kliksberg (2007), p. 23.
54. Fajnzylber et al. (2002), p. 25. Along the same lines: Blau & Blau (1982), Fajnzylber et al. (1998), Bourguignon (2001), Unnithan et al. (1992), Kennedy et al. (1998).
55. It is important to indicate that although socioeconomic inequality remains very high, from 2000 to 2007 it fell in 12 of the 17 countries in the region for which comparable data exist (López-Calva & Lustig [2010]), p. 3).
56. ILO (2010).
57. SIECA population statistics.
58. ILO (2008), pp. 40, 75-76. Data include the Dominican Republic.
59. Ribando-Seelke (2011), p. 5.
60. See UNDP (2009), pp. 106-114.
61. UNFPA (2007), pp. 10-11.
62. Seligson & Smith (2010), p. 68.
63. Stohl & Tuttle (2008).
64. Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008), p. 75.
65. UNODC (2011), p. 115; INCOSEC (2010), pp. 4-5.
66. UNODC (2011), p. 44.
67. This indicator gives an approximation of the effectiveness of compliance with contracts, the possibility that a crime will occur, and finally the quality of the police and the courts, as well as the trust people have in them.
68. INEC-UNDP (2008), p. 17; ICESI (2010).
69. Shirk (2010), p. 208; Londoño & Guerrero (2000), p. 45.
70. INCOSEC (2010), p. 19.
71. UNODC (2007), pp. 45-51.
72. For Mexico: author's own calculation based on Guerrero (2010), p. 27, and ICESI. For Guatemala: International Crisis Group (2010), p. 7. In some parts of the region not included in this analysis, the figures are even worse. In Puerto Rico, the proportion of homicides related to drug trafficking in 2007 and 2008 reached 72%, according to official data (Puerto Rico Police Department – Statistics Office). See also UNODC (2011), pp. 51-55.
73. According to figures from the International Organization for Migration, trafficking for sexual purposes alone generates more than $16 billion in business. See Ribando-Seelke (2011b).
74. The findings of UNDP (2006, pp. 321-327) for Costa Rica show a strong positive correlation between homicide, robbery, and theft rates and arrests for illegal possession of drugs in the country's cantons. See also: "El avance del narcomenudeo, una amenaza a la relativa seguridad del DF" ["The advance of the retail drug trade, a threat to the relative safety of Mexico City"], *CNN Mexico*, 10/17/2011.
75. Latinobarómetro (2010).
76. In 2009, 31% of those interviewed in Latin America said they were concerned all the time or almost all the time about the possibility of becoming the victim of a crime. The proportion rose to 33.7% in the case of women, while it was 28.4% in the case of men. For women between the ages of 41 and 60, it was 35.5% (Latinobarómetro [2009]).
77. See document at http://www.oas.org/en/41ga/.
78. "Inseguridad pública es un retroceso para la democracia: OEA" ["Public insecurity is a setback for democracy: OAS"], *Crónica de Hoy* (Mexico), 10/13/2010.
79. OAS-UNDP (2010).
80. "Calderón: Está en juego la democracia" ["Calderón: democracy is at stake"], *BBC Mundo*, 6/2/2009. http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/america_latina/2009/06/090602_2155_mexico_calderon_rb.shtml.

81. AmericasBarometer is a survey conducted by the Vanderbilt University-based Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), which covers 24 countries (18 in Latin America and 6 in the Caribbean) and includes 40,990 interviews conducted throughout the hemisphere. The countries from the 2010 questionnaire, on which this study is based, are: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Dominican Republic, Belize, Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname. The United States and Canada are included in the questionnaire but have been excluded from this analysis.

82. The Latinobarómetro 2009 figures have been used because the 2010 AmericasBarometer does not have a comparable question that could be used to measure levels of social tolerance. The two surveys differ substantially in many ways, including their geographic coverage. Latinobarómetro 2009 includes 20,127 interviews in 19 Ibero-American countries (Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and the Dominican Republic). This portion of the analysis uses data from all those countries minus Spain.

83. The divergence of the victimization data used in this section from the data reported in Chapter 2 is explained by the question asked in each case. This case involves results the 2010 AmericasBarometer obtained by asking the respondent whether he or she has directly experienced a crime. The Latinobarómetro data used in Chapter 2 report the level of victimization by asking the respondent whether someone in his or her immediate family had been a victim of a crime, which naturally increases the level of victimization reported.

84. For the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, see LAPOP's System for Online Data Analysis, available at http://lapop.ccp.ucr.ac.cr/Lapop_English.html. Even though the 2010 AmericasBarometer includes a variable that measures the respondent's self-described political leanings, from far right to far left, the range of different meanings attributed to the various ideological options makes it problematic to use this variable in the model. Therefore, the decision was made to leave this variable out of the analysis. Including it in the analysis does not significantly change the results.

85. Tomz et al. (2003). Available at: http://gking.harvard.edu/.

86. UNDP (2006) is, to the best of our knowledge, the only such study available.

87. For reasons of space most tables and graphs detailing the regression results have been suppressed from the text. Nonetheless, they can be obtained from the author at kevin_casas@yahoo.com.

88. The 2009 Latinobarómetro survey does not contain a variable that measures size of place where respondents live, nor does it have a more general variable for rural and urban areas. As a result, this factor is not included in the Latinobarómetro analysis. As in the rest of this chapter, individual victimization—when the respondent has directly experienced a crime in the past year—has been used as an independent variable. The perception of insecurity is measured using the following question: "How often are you concerned that you may become a victim of a violent crime?"(Possible responses: almost all the time, sometimes, occasionally, never.)

89. See Frigo (2006), pp. 4-5.

90. Betancourt (2007). Frigo (2006) estimates it at $6.5 billion.

91. Arias (2009), pp. 26-27; Frigo (2006), p. 17; Dammert (2008), p. 9. Other information sources place the number much higher, at more than 1.7 million legal security guards plus another 800,000 in the informal sector ("Para cada agente público de seguranca, há tres privados" ["For every public security agent, there are three private ones"], *Folha de São Paulo*, 2/16/2009).

92. Para cada agente público de seguranca, há tres privados," ["For every public security agent, there are three private ones"], *Folha de São Paulo*, 2/16/2009.

93. Dammert (2008), p. 9; Arias (2009), pp. 35-37.
94. Arias (2009), p. 54.
95. Arias (2009), pp. 48-49.
96. Arias (2009), p. 46; Dammert (2008), pp. 21-28.
97. Dammert (2008), p. 27.
98. Frigo (2006), p. 6.
99. See also, "Guatemala es primera en desproporción de agentes privados y policías" ["Guate-mala has highest disproportion between private agents and police"], *La Prensa Libre* (Guate-mala), 6/7/2011.
100. The homicide rate in the state of São Paulo dropped from 33.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 to 10.9 at the end of 2008 (IDB-FLACSO [2009], p. 6). Figure on number of guards in São Paulo taken from Dammert (2008), p. 9.
101. Latinobarómetro (2009).
102. Latinobarómetro (2010).
103. UNDP (2006), p. 182.
104. UNDP (2007), p. 88.
105. Dammert (2008), p. 22.
106. Amnesty International (2005).
107. Arias (2009), p. 131.
108. Lazala (2008).
109. Lazala (2008).
110. UNDP (2006), pp. 225-226.
111. Arias (2009), p. 53.
112. UNDP (2006), pp. 219-221.
113. See Poundstone (1993); Hargreaves Heap et al. (1992), pp. 98-99.
114. UN Human Rights Council (2007), para. 73.
115. Latinobarómetro (2009).
116. For more on the definition of lynching, see Fuentes-Díaz (2005), p. 8.
117. "Proponen al Gobierno un plan contra los linchamientos" ["Government presented with an-ti-lynching plan"], *United Nations Bolivia*, 3/25/2010.
118. Fuentes-Díaz (2005), p. 9.
119. Clark (2004), p. 2.
120. Fuentes-Díaz (2005), p. 13.
121. "In Mexico, a legal breakdown invites brutal justice," *Washington Post*, 12/9/2010.
122. Fuentes-Díaz (2005), p. 8.
123. This point is worth emphasizing. Including lynching in this chapter is in no way meant to imply that this phenomenon is reaching such a magnitude in the region as to place in doubt the via-bility of the state. As an indicator of the state's weakness to enforce the law, the endemic lev-els of violence in some countries and cities in the region are probably more telling. The point being analyzed here is a different one, and has to do with what is revealed by the persistence of lynching as a private appropriation of the state's power to punish, one that is viewed as legitimate by part of a considerable segment of the population. The broad acceptance of such an extreme situation shows that the foundations that support the state's monopoly on legiti-mate violence are relatively weak. High levels of crime do not necessarily represent a loss of confidence in the state's ability to enforce the law; it could well be that the law, even when it is presumed to be enforced, does not have a sufficiently dissuasive effect. The acceptance of lynching does reveal, though—almost by definition—an erosion of citizens' confidence in the state's ability to react appropriately when the law is broken. My thanks to Álvaro Briones for his perceptive suggestion that I make this clarification.
124. For more on lynching in Guatemala, see Mendoza & Torres-Rivas (2003).

125. See: "Se desata la alarma sobre la ley indígena en Bolivia" ["Alarms sounded on indigenous law in Bolivia"], *El País* (Madrid), 6/10-11/2010; "Linchamientos en Bolivia reabren el debate sobre la 'justicia indígena'" ["Lynching cases in Bolivia reopen debate on 'indigenous justice'"], *Bolivianpress.com*, 6/5/2010.
126. See also Rothenberg (1998), p. 5.
127. Clark (2004), p. 8.
128. "Proponen al Gobierno un plan contra los linchamientos" ["Government presented with anti-lynching plan"], *United Nations Bolivia*, 3/25/2010.
129. Bicudo (1994), p. 30.
130. UNDP (2006), p. 411.
131. "Sólo uno de cada 100 pide linchamiento" ["Just one of every 100 asks for lynching"], *Los Tiempos* (Cochabamba), 6/26/2011.
132. Zizumbo-Colunga (2010), p. 1.
133. Briceño-León (2006), p. 303.
134. "Capturan a alcalde prófugo de San Juan Cotzal, Quiché" ["Fugitive mayor from San Juan Cotzal, Quiché, captured"], *La Prensa Libre* (Guatemala), 6/26/2011.
135. The Failed States Index 2011, prepared by the magazine Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace, considers 12 variables as diverse as demographic pressures and the proliferation of state repression. By this measure, Colombia is the only Latin American country in the top 50, out of a total of 177. In general terms, the situation of the 17 countries in Latin America barely changed from 2006 to 2011 (from an average of 68.8 to 68.5 points, out of a possible 120), and in some cases, such as Colombia, it improved substantially. See: "The Failed States Index 2011," *ForeignPolicy.com*.
136. See Stanislawski (2008); Sullivan & Bunker (2002); Windmueller (2009).
137. See Marcella (2009); Kline (1999).
138. Some examples include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, for its Spanish acronym; the National Liberation Army, or ELN; the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC; and various paramilitary and criminal bands.
139. United States Joint Forces Command (2008), p. 36.
140. "México no es un estado fallido: Calderón" ["Mexico is not a failed state: Calderón"], *El Universal* (Mexico), 2/26/2009; "PGR rechaza 'Estado fallido'" ["PGR rejects 'failed state'"], *El Universal* (Mexico), 1/10/2009.
141. See, for example, the following statement by the former President, in early 2009: "The strategy is based on two time horizons: a very short-term horizon, which consists of repositioning the state's authority and power through the mobilization of law enforcement and the army. We cannot lose territories, federal entities in which the state's authority has been breached. But the key factor is the long term, and that implies a strategy for the complete reconstruction of institutions: not only police structures but public institutions themselves." ("El crimen es la mayor amenaza a los derechos humanos" ["Crime is the biggest threat to human rights"], *El Universal* (Mexico), 2/27/2009.
142. Finnegan (2010), p. 36. Despite the progress made by the Mexican government in dismantling *La Familia*, the more recent analysis of Felbab-Brown ([2011a], pp. 25-31) clearly suggests that the reestablishment of state authority in Michoacán is far from a done deal, in part because new criminal organizations, such as the so-called *Caballeros Templarios*, have emerged and replaced the previous structures.
143. Moore (2011).
144. Astorga & Shirk (2010).
145. See "Lawless roads," *The Economist*, 9/26/2009.
146. International Crisis Group (2010), pp. 14-17, and (2011), pp. 2-6; Brands (2010), pp. 14-19; Martínez (2011); Dudley (2011) and (2010), pp. 73-76.

147. ECLAC (2011).
148. Brands (2010), p. 2.
149. Garzón (2008), p. 68. Despite the progress made since then in reducing violence in the city of Rio de Janeiro, with the introduction of Police Pacification Units, the western part of the city, where Bangú is located, has not shown any improvement. In the first half of 2011, the number of homicides in Bangú was 90% higher than the year before. See: "Tráfico e milícia disputam poder na Zona Oeste do Rio" ["Traffickers and militia in power dispute in western Rio"], *O Globo*, 11/7/2011; "Bandidos invadem escola em Bangu para escapar de cerco policial" ["Criminals invade school in Bangu to escape police cordon"], *Jornal do Brasil*, 11/4/2011; "Pacification fallout: first journalist death (among many others)," *RioReal* (blog), 11/7/2011.
150. Garzón (2008), p. 71.
151. Rangel-Bandeira (2008).
152. In Monterrey, homicides related to organized crime increased by 614% in 2010-2011, since the rupture between the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas (Guerrero [2011], pp. 32-35, 49-50). In Medellín, meanwhile, the homicide rate went from 34 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2007 to 86 in 2010 (data from the Medellín Government Secretariat, available at http://www.medellin.gov.co). "Don Berna" was extradited to the United States in 2008.
153. See, for the case of Tijuana, Felbab-Brown (2011a), pp. 4-5.
154. In October 2010, only 33% of Mexicans thought Calderón's efforts against drug trafficking organizations were succeeding, a drop of 14 points when compared to March 2010 (Mexico United Against Crime–Consulta Mitsofsky–November 2010).
155. Guerrero-Gutiérrez (2011), p. 16; Benítez (2009). See statements by President Felipe Calderón in "Corrupción deja justicia al mejor postor: FCH" ["Corruption leaves justice to the highest bidder: FCH"], *El Universal* (Mexico), 5/24/2010.
156. "Guatemala: Arrestan a Jefe Nacional de la Policía" ["Guatemala: national police chief arrested"], *BBC Mundo*, 3/2/2010.
157. "Castresana renuncia a su cargo en la Cicig" ["Castresana resigns his post at Cicig"], *El Periódico* (Guatemala), 6/7/2010. For more on the role of Castresana and the CICIG, as well as the enormous complexity of the effort to stop the penetration of organized crime in Guatemalan institutions, it is worth reading the extraordinary story published by *The New Yorker* on the death of attorney Rodrigo Rosenberg in that Central American country. See: Grann (2011).
158. U.S. Department of State (2011).
159. This does not at all mean that all Guatemalan authorities act in complicity with drug trafficking. To the contrary, it is only fair to recognize the immense efforts and courage of public servants such as Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz and the Commissioner for Police Reform, Helen Mack, who in recent years have done a commendable job under very difficult conditions. See: International Crisis Group (2011), p. 1.
160. Rapley (2006).
161. For more on the democratic security policy of former President Uribe, see DeShazo (2007); Vargas (2009). For more on Plan Colombia and its effects: US-GAO (2008); Zuckerman (2009).
162. Guerrero-Gutiérrez (2011); Felbab-Brown (2011a); Casas-Zamora (2010).
163. According to figures from the Prosecutor General's Office in the state of Chihuahua, in 2010 there were 3,951 homicides in Ciudad Juárez ("11 homicidios diarios en 2010 en Juárez: Fiscalía" ["11 homicides per day in Juárez in 2010: Prosecutor General's Office"], *El Universal* [Mexico], 3/14/2011). In that year, the city's homicide rate climbed to an incredible 296 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. For reasons that remain unclear, homicide figures in Ciudad Juárez dropped precipitously in 2011 and 2012 (see for instance: "Homicidios dolosos bajaron 38% en Ciudad Juárez" ["Intentional homicides fell by 38% in Ciudad Juárez"], *El Universal* [Mexico], 12/28/2011). This decline ought to be put in perspective, however. After a carnage

that left more than 12,000 people murdered in the state in four years, in 2012 Chihuahua's homicide rate returned to the approximate level it had in 2008, a very high 59 murders per 100,000 people (figures taken from the Public Security National System at the Secretary of Governance in Mexico [2008-10], the Prosecutor General's Office in the State of Chihuahua [2011] and the Citizen's Observatory for Prevention and Security in Chihuahua [2012]).

164. Guerrero-Gutiérrez (2011), pp. 46-50; Casas-Zamora (2011a).

165. Escalante (2011).

166. See: "Zetas asesinan a 27 jornaleros en Petén" ["Zetas murder 27 day laborers in Petén"], *La Prensa Libre* (Guatemala), 5/16/11; "Detienen a cinco zetas por masacre en Petén" ["Five Zetas arrested over massacre in Petén"], *El Universal* (Mexico), 5/24/11. For more on the state of siege in Alta Verapaz, see Martínez (2011) and Dudley (2011). It is fair to say that in 2012 the security situation in Guatemala improved somewhat. According to the Guatemalan Police, there were 526 homicides less in 2012 than in 2011, thus bringing the homicide rate down to about 32 murders per 100,000 people ("Bajan homicidios en Guatemala en 2012" ["Homicides decrease in Guatemala in 2012"], *UPI*, 1/3/2013). The reduction was disproportionally concentrated in the capital city, according to information provided by President Otto Pérez Molina ("Pérez Molina resalta disminución de homicidios en 2012" ["Perez Molina emphasizes reduction in homicides in 2012", *Agencia Guatemalteca de Noticias*, 1/8/2013. Whether the reduction reflects a more robust presence of the state throughout the Guatemalan territory is an open question.

167. See study by Felbab-Brown (2011b).

168. See Buvinic (2008), pp. 47-48; Vargas & García (2008).

169. Cabral (2010), pp. 73-74.

170. "Brazil: The battle for Rio de Janeiro," GlobalPost, 11/30/2010. See also the opinion of Brazilian criminologist Vera Malaguti Batista, stated at the 9th National Conference on Drug Policy in Buenos Aires, Argentina: "Las llamadas policías pacificadoras son en realidad fuerzas de ocupación de las favelas" ["So-called pacification police are really *favela* occupation forces"]: *www.conferenciadrogas2011.wordpress.com*.

171. The election of retired General Otto Pérez Molina as President of Guatemala in November 2011 speaks eloquently to this trend. Since his first presidential campaign in 2007, Pérez Molina championed an "iron fist" discourse. In 2011, his position on crime was, however, more moderate than that of his second-round rival, Manuel Baldizón, who proposed a generous application of the death penalty and TV broadcasts of executions, among other measures. See Casas-Zamora (2011b).

172. Data from OCAVI (2007) and police sources in both countries.

173. See Pacheco Gaitán (2006) and García Gallegos (2007).

174. Legislative commissions with a specific mandate to address citizen security and organized crime exist in at least one legislative chamber in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

175. See Kelling & Bratton (1998); Croman & Mocan (2005). Karmen (2000) is much more skeptical about the effect of CompStat and, in general, the reforms in the New York Police Department.

176. UNDP (2006), p. 203.

177. The amount of relevant bibliographic material is enormous. For more on developed countries, see Kleck (2005) and Kates & Mauser (2007). For more on São Paulo: Dos Santos & Kassouf (2011) and Goertzel & Kahn (2009). On Bogotá and Cali: Aguirre & Restrepo (2010); WHO (2002), p. 52.

178. Statistics calculated based on INEC (2010).

179. 2008 data from the Costa Rican Demographic Association.

180. Commanor & Phillips (2002); Antecol & Bedard (2007).

181. Casas-Zamora (2009).
182. See OAS-UNDP (2010), pp. 195-196. Author participated directly in the writing of the report.
183. See Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy (2009) and Partnership for the Americas Commission (2008).
184. Nadelmann (2005) makes interesting and prescient reading in this respect: "[S]tart to act and think strategically within Latin America. I suspect that if someone convened a meeting of all the Latin American presidents and prime ministers and foreign ministers—past and present—who have thought, whispered or proclaimed that the drug war is a destructive sham, and that legalization or some other fundamental alternative probably makes the most sense, the room would be standing room only. Invite other cabinet ministers as well as leaders from the Caribbean, and you'd probably need an auditorium (...) Such a meeting would likely reveal that this viewpoint represents not a deviant, minority perspective but actually a majoritarian sentiment among regional leaders. There's often power, moreover, and courage, in numbers. It's one thing for the U.S. government to attack individual leaders who say the drug war is like the emperor's new clothes. It's quite another when the sentiment is expressed collectively. (...) I don't think much will change in Latin America until that meeting happens, but it could prove catalytic when it does" (p. 244).
185. Figures for Latin America taken from ECLAC (2010), p. 229. OECD figures from OECD Tax Database.

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Appendix

1. Sources, Table 2.1

- **National rates of intentional homicide:**

    Argentina - 1990: World Health Organization Statistical Information System (WHOSIS); 1995,
    2000, 2005, 2008: National Office on Crime Policy; Ministry of Justice, Security,
    and Human Rights
    Bolivia - 1995: Ombudsman's Office; 2000, 2005, 2008: National Statistics Institute
    Brazil - 1990: Ministry of Justice, National Secretariat for Public Security; 1995, 2000, 2005:
    Pan American Health Organization; 2008: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
    (UNODC)
    Chile - 1990: WHOSIS; 1995, 2000: UNODC; 2005, 2008: Ministry of Interior
    Colombia - 1990, 1995, 2000: UNODC; 2005, 2008: Presidential Human Rights Program,
    Government of Colombia
    Costa Rica - 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008: UNODC
    Dominican Republic - 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008: National Police
    Ecuador - 1990, 1995, 2000: WHOSIS; 2005, 2008: UNODC
    El Salvador - 1990, 1995, 2000: WHOSIS; 2005, 2008: Central American Violence
    Observatory(OCAVI)
    Guatemala - 1990, 2008: UNODC; 1995, 2000, 2005: National Civilian Police of Guatemala
    Honduras - 1990, 1995, 2000: General Office of Criminal Investigations; 2005: OCAVI; 2008:
    UNODC
    Mexico - 1990, 1995: National Institute on Statistics and Geography (INEGI); 2000, 2005, 2008:
    Citizens Institute for Studies on Insecurity (Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la
    Inseguridad, ICESI)
    Nicaragua - 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008: National Police of Nicaragua
    Panama - 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008: National Attorney General's Office
    Paraguay - 1990, 2000, 2005, 2008: UNODC; 1995: WHOSIS
    Peru - 1990: WHOSIS; 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008: UNODC
    Uruguay - 1990, 1995: WHOSIS; 2000, 2005, 2008: UNODC
    Venezuela - 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2008: Organization of American States

- **Subregional and regional estimates prepared by the author, using above sources for intentional homicides and the World Bank for population data.**

 2. Sources Table 2.6

- **National homicide rates: UNODC**

- **City homicide rates:**

    Buenos Aires (2007): UNODC
    La Paz (2010): UNODC and National Police
    Brasilia (2010): Federal District, Public Security State Secretariat 2010
    São Paulo (2009): UNODC and National Police
    Rio de Janeiro (2009): UNODC Rio de Janeiro Institute on Public Security
    Bogotá, Medellín, Cali (2008): National Institute for Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences
    San José, Costa Rica (2006): UNODC

Santiago, Chile (2010): Subsecretariat on Crime Prevention, Ministry of Interior and Public Security
Quito, Guayaquil (2008): UNODC
San Salvador (2009): UNODC
Guatemala City (2010): UNODC and National Civilian Police
Tegucigalpa (2009): UNODC and National Police
San Pedro Sula (2011): Citizens Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice in Mexico
Mexico City (2009): UNODC
Monterrey (2010): INEGI
Tijuana (2009): ICESI
Ciudad Juárez (2011): UNODC, Escalante (2011)
Managua (2009): *La Prensa* (Nicaragua), Police statistics
Panama City (2009): UNODC
Asunción (2006): UNODC
Lima (2010): National System for Citizen Security
Santo Domingo (2009): National Office of Statistics
Montevideo (2007): UNODC and Ministry of Interior
Caracas (2008): *Foreign Policy*

3. Sources Table 4.1

- **Population data: ECLAC**

- **Number of security guards in formal sector:**

  Brazil (2005-7): Arias (2009), p. 27; Dammert (2008), p. 9
  Mexico (2005-7): Arias (2009), p. 27; Frigo (2006), p. 17
  Colombia (2009): Arias (2009), p. 48; Dammert (2008), p. 18
  Argentina (2005-7): Arias (2009), p. 27
  Chile (2007): Arias (2009), p. 43
  Peru (2005-7): Arias (2009), p. 27
  Ecuador (2005-7): Arias (2009), p. 27; Dammert (2008), p. 14
  Guatemala (2005-7): Arias (2009), p. 27; Dammert (2008), p. 27
  Honduras (2006): Dammert (2008), p. 25
  El Salvador (2003): Arias (2009), p. 52

- **Police per 100,000 inhabitants**

  Brazil (2006): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory
  Mexico (2007): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory
  Colombia (2007): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory
  Argentina (2003): Centro de Investigaciones Estratégicas para México
  Chile (2007): UNODC
  Peru (2007): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory
  Ecuador (2007): UNODC
  Guatemala (2007): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory
  Honduras (2007): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory
  El Salvador (2007): OAS Hemispheric Security Observatory

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