

Crime and Violence in an Urbanizing World

ELLEN BRENNAN-GALVIN

"[C]ivilian helicopter traffic in São Paulo has become the busiest on earth. The city currently boasts some 240 helipads, compared with 10 in New York, allowing the privileged to fly to and from their well-guarded homes to work or shopping or their country houses."

In diagnoses of contemporary threats to state stability, urbanization is inevitably included among the litany of emerging challenges, along with growing cross-border flows of asylum seekers and illegal migrants, continuing high rates of population growth and young age structures in certain poor, unstable countries.

For the foreseeable future, virtually all of the world's population growth will occur in urban areas. Between 2000 and 2030, urban population is expected to increase by 2.1 billion inhabitants, nearly as much as the 2.2 billion that will be added to the entire population of the world. There are significant regional differences. Latin America is the most urbanized region in the developing world, with three-quarters of its inhabitants living in urban areas—roughly the same percentage as in the United States. Africa has the lowest level of urbanization but the fastest urban growth. Asia has a level of urbanization very similar to that of Africa but will have to absorb huge population increments in the next several decades. (See Table 1.) Whereas urban growth rates are not unprecedented, what is unprecedented is the scale of urban growth. As of 1950, there were 86 cities in the

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world with more than 1 million inhabitants. Today, there are 400 such cities and, by 2015, there will be some 150 more.¹

Selected Indicators for the Urban Population, by Development Group and Region, 1950–2030

Region	Urban Population (millions)			Growth Rate (percent)		Percentage Urban		
	1950	2000	2030	1950–2000	2000–2030	1950	2000	2030
World	750	2860	4980	2.68	1.85	29.8	47.2	60.2
More developed regions	450	900	1000	1.4	0.38	54.9	75.4	82.6
Less developed regions	200	1960	3980	3.73	2.35	17.8	40.4	56.4
Northern America	110	243	335	1.59	1.07	63.9	77.4	84.5
Latin America	70	391	608	3.44	1.47	41.9	75.4	84
Oceania	8	23	32	2.14	1.19	61.6	74.1	77.3
Europe	287	534	540	1.24	0.04	52.4	73.4	80.5
Asia	244	1376	2679	3.46	2.22	17.4	37.5	54.1
Africa	32	295	787	4.42	3.27	14.7	37.2	52.9

Source: United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*.

Over the past several decades, massive public protests and riots in cities throughout the developing world have resulted in significant loss of life and widespread destruction of property. Indeed, between 1976 and 1992, more than 146 separate incidents of strikes, riots and demonstrations took place in various developing-country cities.² Such disturbances were at times triggered by immediate economic circumstances (e.g., rising food prices, food scarcity, currency devaluation, austerity measures) or by political upheavals. In some cases, particularly on the Indian sub-continent, simmering ethnic and communal tensions surfaced during such episodes, resulting in an even higher toll of death and destruction. Such occurrences of citywide violence not only have destroyed physical capital but also discouraged foreign

direct investment, thereby threatening already fragile national economies and even potentially destabilizing governments.

In recent years, other less visible changes have occurred in many cities in the developing world, perhaps reflecting the dark side of globalization. Organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorist networks, for example, have become a growing global presence, undermining public security in many cities. Indeed, over the past decade, cities have been the locus of terrorist attacks: More than 150 cities across the globe experienced at least one terrorist act between 1993 and 1997³ and many more have since then. Capitalizing on increased cross-border flows of goods, money and people, criminal organizations also have expanded their territorial reach, positioning themselves in new markets and expanding their range of illicit activities to include trafficking in humans and small arms and wide-scale money laundering. In the process, they have increased their wealth and power relative to many national and city governments. In a number of Latin American and Asian cities, for example, powerful narcotics constituencies increasingly threaten the exercise of sovereignty and the rule of law.

Since September 11, 2001, of course, the connection between cities and terrorism has drawn increasing scrutiny. It has become evident that al-Quaeda and other terrorist groups have operated with impunity in a number of cities in Europe, South Asia and the Middle East, utilizing sophisticated communications technology. It is also clear that cities, and particularly large cities, are likely to be the targets of future terrorist attacks. Whether unleashing biological or chemical weapons or bombing embassies or public buildings, terrorists will seek to have the greatest possible impact in terms of destruction of property and loss of life in densely populated areas, while also destroying the symbols of Western capitalism so clearly embodied in the modern city.

To what extent, then, are the manifold threats to state stability related to urbanization and particularly to the demographic parameters of urbanization, such as population size and growth, population density and in-migration? While much lip service has

been paid to the topic of urbanization and state stability, it is a complex issue that is difficult to unbundle. It is useful first to define the universe and then to discuss the causes and major impacts of urban crime and violence. Three brief case studies illustrate how transnational criminal networks and home-grown crime and violence are intertwined at the local level: Rio de Janeiro, Karachi and Lagos. A brief discussion of policy interventions concludes.

DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS AND DATA GAPS

The topics of crime and violence are very broad and difficult to define. Society often defines crime from a strictly legal point of view as the commission of any act prohibited by criminal law or the omission of any action required by it. Violence is the unlawful exercise of physical force, usually causing or intending to cause injury. Definitions of criminal behavior, the seriousness attributed to it and the punishment considered appropriate differ widely among nations. Such definitions are determined less at times by objective indicators of the degree of injury or damage than by cultural values and power relationships. The same act of violence against a woman, for example, including such crimes as dowry burnings or honor killings, may be viewed very differently by a Western researcher than by some local communities in the developing world. Such differences make comparative generalizations risky.

Violence can generally be divided into three broad categories: political violence (e.g., guerrilla conflict, paramilitary conflict, political assassinations, armed conflict between political parties); economic violence (e.g., street crime, carjacking, robbery/theft, drug trafficking, kidnapping, trafficking in humans); and social violence (e.g., interpersonal violence such as spouse and child abuse, sexual assault of women and children)—each identified in terms of the type of motivation that consciously or unconsciously uses violence to gain or maintain power. Of course, the categories are not mutually exclusive, as the kidnapping of an executive, for example, may be a political statement or a means of raising money.⁴

Data on urban crime and violence are highly problematic, for developed as well as for developing countries. Comprehensive victimization data are available over time for only a handful of countries, including Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, Finland and the United Kingdom.⁵ Moreover, unlike other international social statistics with accepted definitions, crime statistics lack standardization and are notoriously unreliable, particularly for developing countries.

Despite differences in how countries define crime, the preferred basis for national crime-rate surveys is, by far, “crimes known or reported to the police.” However, the willingness of the public to report crimes (and particularly certain types of crimes) and to become involved in the justice system varies widely among countries. The International Crime Victim Survey, conducted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), found, for example, that sexual incidents occurring during the preceding five years had been reported 46 percent of the time in Buenos Aires and 27 percent in Johannesburg, but only 5 percent of the time in Bombay and less than 3 percent in Jakarta.⁶

From the patchy data available, it appears that urban crime is dominated worldwide by crimes against property (e.g., car theft, burglary, robbery), which account for at least half of all offenses in the world’s cities. In the early 1990s, at world level more than 60 percent of the population in urban areas of over 100,000 inhabitants had been victims of crime during the preceding five-year period; in developing regions, 44 percent of the urban population in Asia, 68 percent in Latin America and 76 percent in Africa had been crime victims.⁷ African cities currently tend to have more crime and to be more violent than cities in other regions of the world, although the situation varies by category of offense. Of the 13 developing country cities surveyed in the International Crime Victim Survey, car theft was found to be highest in Johannesburg and Dar Es Salaam; burglary in Dar Es Salaam and Kampala; robbery in Rio de Janeiro and Dar Es Salaam; and sexual incidents in Dar Es Salaam and Cairo.⁸

Violent crime, including murder, assault, rape and sexual abuse, now accounts for 25 percent to 30 percent of offenses in cities in developing countries. One notable aspect of violent crime is the increase in murders. In several of the world's largest cities, including Rio de Janeiro, Bogotá, and São Paulo, more than 2,000 people are murdered each year. In Rio de Janeiro, more than 6,000 people were murdered in 1990 alone, resulting in a murder rate of 60 per 100,000 inhabitants. Other cities have even higher rates, including Cali (91 per 100,000) and Johannesburg (115 per 100,000).⁹

TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS

In recent years, the end of the cold war and the globalization of business and travel have given international criminals unprecedented freedom of movement, making it easier for them to cross borders and to expand the range and scope of their operations. As a result, virtually every major city in the developing world has seen an increase in international criminal activity—as a source or transit zone for illegal contraband or produce, a venue for money laundering or illicit financial transactions, or a base of operations for criminal organizations with global networks.¹⁰ Many major cities serve all three purposes for international criminal operations.

Globalization, the liberalization of international markets and the suppression of borders have allowed the drug trade to flourish, particularly in recent years. Crime associated with drug production and drug possession tends to have a significant positive correlation with the homicide rate in a given city, consistent with the fact that the illegal drug trade is usually accompanied by violent disputes for market share among different networks of producers and distributors.¹¹ At the local level, organized criminal groups linked to global networks, including mafia groups and drug cartels, tend to tap into other profitable illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution and extortion rackets, which also tend to involve corruption of local government officials.

In the popular imagination, the drug trade tends to be associated with Colombian and Mexican drug cartels. In recent

years, however, due to its porous borders, ample routes for smuggling drugs, weapons and other contraband, and corruptible police and security forces, sub-Saharan Africa has become an increasingly important staging area for international criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists. Indeed, a number of sub-Saharan African cities, including Nairobi and Mombasa in Kenya, Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, Johannesburg in South Africa and Lagos in Nigeria, are becoming hubs for international criminal activity, particularly involving Nigerian criminal syndicates.¹²

As crime has become increasingly international in scope, its financial aspects have grown more complex due to rapid advances in technology and the globalization of the financial services industry, with the loci being the world's large cities. Drug syndicates, for example, generate enormous amounts of cash that, to be useful, must pass through legitimate international banking or commercial channels. As the business of laundering money has been made more difficult, particularly in the United States since September 11, 2001, criminal organizations have been forced to search for other havens. Increasingly well-financed and technologically adept criminal organizations can still move large amounts of money easily and quickly from one jurisdiction to another, passing through financial institutions of large cities in the developed and developing world. Michael Camdessus, former managing director of the IMF, has estimated that money laundering accounts for between 2 percent and 5 percent of world GDP—\$800 billion at the low end and perhaps as high as \$2 trillion.¹³

Money laundering is not only a law enforcement problem but also poses serious national and international security threats. On the one hand, it provides the fuel for drug cartels, terrorists, illegal arms dealers, corrupt public officials and others to operate and expand their criminal enterprises. In addition, it can undermine the legitimate private sector in emerging markets, as front companies have a competitive advantage over legitimate firms that draw capital funds from financial markets. Ultimately,

laundered money flows into global financial systems, where it can weaken national economies and currencies.¹⁴

ARE CRIME AND VIOLENCE REALLY URBAN PROBLEMS?

Beyond acknowledging that some parts of the world are highly urbanized, hence most crime and violence is urban, it is difficult to generalize about the causative links between urbanization, public security and state stability. Clearly, a number of violent phenomena are fundamentally urban, such as gangs and street violence.¹⁵ Crime and violence are not obviously a function of city size, however, as some of the world's largest cities, such as Tokyo and Shanghai, are among the safest. Research conducted in Latin America by Fajnzylber and others¹⁶ found that homicide rates were not significantly related to city size, but crime in general (as measured by victimization) did appear to be related to city size, possibly because larger cities have lower probabilities of arrest. Conducting a large public opinion survey in a number of Latin American cities, Gaviria and Pagés¹⁷ found that a household in a city of more than 1 million inhabitants was almost twice as likely to be victimized as a household in a city of less than 20,000 inhabitants. Surprisingly, the probability of victimization did not change much once the 1 million threshold was passed.

Rapid rates of urban population growth do not appear to be a key explanatory factor, as the growth rate of most of the world's largest cities has fallen off significantly over the past several decades (with growth in many large developing-country cities now coming from natural increase and re-classification, rather than large-scale in-migration). There is scattered evidence to the contrary, however, in Latin America. Gaviria and Pagés¹⁸ found that, on average, an increase of one percentage point in the rate of population growth in a number of Latin American cities increased the probability of crime victimization by almost 1.5 percent, suggesting that rapid urban growth might diminish the effectiveness of law enforcement institutions. Unfortunately, there are insufficient data with which to assess the relationship

between urban population growth and violence in other regions of the world.

Other demographic factors may play a role, although there is little hard cross-country evidence. Density has been suggested as an explanatory factor for high crime and violence rates, in that crowding intensifies antisocial behavior and facilitates anonymity and imitation of violent acts.¹⁹ Riots are a form of violence particularly suited to the densely populated urban environment. The urban context increases the possibility of ensuring that the protest reaches the ears of those in power—who themselves tend to be located in urban areas.²⁰ Density also has security implications. The U.S. military, for example, has identified the closely packed and densely populated slums and squatter settlements within and surrounding many large Third World cities as posing far greater military and security challenges than modern urban areas.²¹

Age structure appears to be a significant causative factor in crime and violence. Demographic trends in many developing countries boost the segment of the population—males between 15 and 24 years of age—that are the main perpetrators and victims of political and economic violence. Single men between 15 and 24 can be dangerous to the social order if not employed, disciplined by schools or the military, or under parental or community control. Indeed, it has been found that mass demonstrations, terrorism, secessionist movements, clashes among ethnic groups, riots and pogroms always involve disproportionate numbers of young men.²² In terms of employment and livelihood opportunities, the scenario is frightening. Between now and 2010, 700 million young people will enter the labor force in developing countries—more than the entire labor force of the developed countries in 1990. The ILO estimates that there are approximately 70 million unemployed youth, and the youth unemployment rate is generally double that of the adult population.²³ In some regions, such as the Middle East, where youth unemployment is 8 to 10 times higher than adult unemployment, it can be partly attributed to the limited relevance of education and skills development to the needs of the labor market.²⁴

In many cases, unemployment rates are much higher for university and secondary school graduates than for those with elementary education, as the latter accept low-quality, insecure jobs at wages much lower than those of secondary- and tertiary-level students.

Rural-to-urban migration is another explanatory factor, in that movement to cities and towns leads to fundamental changes in traditional structures and customs. The family and religion may be particularly challenged as agents of social control by emerging new value systems and can no longer reinforce norm-conforming behavior, especially among urban youth.²⁵ The literature, however, is diverse and contradictory. In the 1960s, crime and development were viewed from a modernization perspective, focusing on young male migrants as individuals unable to cope with urban anomie and sometimes turning to crime and violence. Dependency approaches in the 1970s shifted from individual to institutional and structural causes, with levels of crime and violence perceived as an outcome of unequal power relations both between countries and within them, as well as the product of colonial criminal law systems. Crime and violence were thus viewed as a form of resistance among economically and socially disadvantaged individuals.²⁶

Scholars debated whether violence would quickly follow on the heels of migration or erupt some years after migrants had been absorbed into the urban environment.²⁷ Early arguments warned of “disruptive migrants,” torn from rural roots, isolated in the city and prone to violence and extremism as a result of increasing disillusionment with urban life. Later arguments suggested that violence was more likely after migrants had become more firmly established.²⁸ In short, a socialization period was important for transforming migrants into “radicalized marginals.” Gizewski and Homer-Dixon²⁹ suggest that the idea can be extended into the future, when a large majority of people will have been born in cities and when urban life will represent the only arena of comparison for the masses. In the context of economic stagnation or recession, relative differences between rich and poor in the city, and between different ethnic groups and

classes, will become ever more salient, leading to increasing feelings of relative deprivation.

OTHER UNDERLYING CAUSES OF URBAN CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Theories of causality tend to reflect the professional discipline informing the debate (e.g., criminology, epidemiology, community development). They are often highly compartmentalized, perpetuating numerous, fragmented understandings of crime and violence. A major obstacle to the acceptance of any theory is the lack of a critical body of sound cross-country research on crime and violence, due to lack of comparability of data, cultural relativism, differences in juridical systems, and so on.

The relative importance of different factors is a subject of considerable debate. Many specialists stress the overriding significance of poverty—i.e., inadequate incomes, typically combined with poor and overcrowded housing and living conditions and insecure tenure. This situation presents fertile ground for violence. Indeed, epidemiological studies and police figures show that murder and violence are often clustered in specific delinquency areas with high concentrations of prostitution, street crime, and drug dealing, low-income housing, unemployment, single-parent families and school desertion. These factors help create a cultural climate in which violence and delinquency are normative and become self-perpetuating.³⁰

In the 1990s, religious and ethnic violence emerged as a growing phenomenon in a number of Asian and African cities. Urban areas in general are more likely to provide a heterogeneous, mixed society where different faiths live alongside each other, often in harmony until some political, economic or ethnic issue provokes what becomes labeled a religious conflict.³¹

Shortages of facilities and intense competition for limited resources may also precipitate crime and violence in developing-country cities. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, small towns have been transformed in some instances almost overnight into modern cities—without the infrastructure to sustain substantially larger populations. In such instances, scarcity of natural capital such as land and water may cause high levels of conflict

among neighbors and communities. Indeed, in urban slums throughout the world, shared water is one of the greatest sources of violence; privatization may even exacerbate the situation. Likewise, in a worldwide climate of deregulation, interpersonal violence in many cities is linked to fierce competition in informal sector activities such as market stalls or transport.³²

Other explanations of urban crime and violence focus on the contemporary urban environment, particularly on the existence of vast inequalities in wealth and their juxtaposition in most of the world's large cities. Such disparities are thought to engender an attitude that legitimizes the "distribution of wealth" through criminal activity.³³ Indeed, in a simple Robin Hood model of income redistribution developed by a World Bank economist, inequality variables seem to play a significant role, particularly in the case of property crimes.³⁴ Likewise, the *1999 Global Report on Crime and Justice*³⁵ concluded that socioeconomic strain—measured by unemployment, inequality and dissatisfaction with income—was a major factor in explaining cross-country variation in contact crimes. There appears to be a strong link between inequality and homicide as well: Indeed, a one-point increase in a country's Gini coefficient—a common measure of income inequality—is associated with a nearly one-point increase in its homicide rate.³⁶

Although poverty, inequality and social exclusion partly explain the scale of urban crime and violence, other factors, such as local traditions and values and the degree of social cohesion and solidarity among urban communities, also play a role. Many cities have shown a greater susceptibility to the negative effects of mass culture due to the weakening of social bonds and controls in recent years. With rapid progress in communications technology (indeed, the number of TV sets per 1,000 persons nearly doubled worldwide—from 121 to 235—between 1980 and 1995), widening income gaps among and within countries are becoming more starkly visible.³⁷ Moreover, satellite dishes, linking individual homes to a remote outside world, are a new feature of the urban landscape in much of the developing world. The level of violence on television and other media is thought to

play a significant role in engendering aggressive behavior, particularly among children, in the United States (although the vast and growing literature still has not shown a conclusive link between the effects of the media and violence).³⁸ Clearly, very little is known about the future impact of exporting this material to the farthest reaches of the developing world.

The easy availability of weapons is a factor in some societies. Indeed, a RAND study on urban insurgency concluded that the proliferation of weapons in cities in the developing world—including small arms, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and plastic explosives—is facilitating the growth of insurgency and heightening the potential for other forms of political violence, such as terrorism.³⁹ In many acts of violence, such as rape, alcohol—which has higher levels of consumption in urban areas—is a stimulating factor. Another factor in the increase in murder and violent crime in many cities has been the growth in drug addiction and trafficking. At the neighborhood level, petty drug dealing has become a profitable and frequently violent activity in a growing number of cities in both developing and developed countries. In many cities, serious crime has increased as the unemployed population has been exploited by traffickers, both as labor and as a consumer market. The motivation to earn easy money is strong, exacerbated by low salaries and a scarcity of jobs.

IMPACTS OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE

The economic and social costs of urban crime and violence are vast worldwide—from the inner cities of the developed world to the peri-urban slums ringing most developing-country cities. The direct costs of crime and violence and the associated losses due to deaths, disabilities and property crimes can be measured as percentages of GNP or GDP (yet despite decades of research, there is continuing debate among economists regarding cost estimates).⁴⁰ Beyond the economic costs, however, violence erodes social capital, with serious implications for urban governance. In particular, the violence-linked drug industry erodes the state by

corrupting institutions (including the judiciary, the media and even security forces) and co-opting segments of the population.

Rising crime and violence and increasing insecurity have transformed the physical look and feel of many cities. People from all social classes fortify their homes and change their habits. The result is a new urban landscape made up of fortified fragments from which the poor and the marginalized are excluded.⁴¹ In some cities, insecurity and fear are even changing patterns of daily life, including people's movements, and the use of public transport, sometimes discouraging people from using the streets and public spaces altogether.

One perverse effect of the rise in crime and violence is that security-related industries, including alarm services and devices for homes and automobiles, private security forces, armored car dealerships and the like, have become commodities bought and sold on the market, fueling a thriving worldwide industry. Caldeira⁴² notes that the privatization of security challenges the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of force, which has been considered a defining characteristic of modern nation-states. Where police and judicial institutions are weak, the increasing privatization of security is a growing phenomenon, with two to three times as many private guards as police in many developing country cities. For instance, it is estimated that 10 percent of Brazilian GNP is spent on private security, including insurance, security gadgets, armored cars and private guards.

São Paulo provides a case in point; it is, by some accounts, a vision of future urban life in the developing world. As homicide and kidnapping rates soared to record levels, the elite retreated to areas such as Alphaville, a walled city surrounded by high electrified fences and patrolled by a private army of 1,100 guards. Meanwhile, civilian helicopter traffic in São Paulo has become the busiest on earth. The city currently boasts some 240 helipads, compared with 10 in New York, allowing the privileged to fly to and from their well-guarded homes to work or shopping or their country houses.⁴³

Rio de Janeiro

With a population of 2.9 million in 1950 and some 10.6 million at present, the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan region has grown much more slowly in recent years as a result of declining fertility and out-migration. Growth is now less than 1 percent per annum. The growth of Rio's *favelas*, however, has far outpaced overall population growth. According to the 2000 census, the population of the city of Rio increased by 6.9 percent between 1990 and 2000 (to a total of 5.8 million), while the *favela* population increased by 23.9 percent (to more than 1 million).⁴⁴

Brazil is a major transit country for cocaine and other drugs. Much of its drug trade is centered in Rio de Janeiro. Organized crime gangs ensconced in the *favelas* wage frequent and violent battles for turf and control, recruiting children as drug distributors and sentries and enlisting young adults into vigilante death squads. As a result of a thriving illegal arms trade, these turf wars are often very violent. Indeed, the homicide rate in Rio tripled in 14 years—from 2,826 in 1980 to 8,404 in 1994—with the highest homicide rates to be found in sectors of the city with the greatest concentration of slum residents and the highest degree of income inequality.⁴⁵ Currently, as many as 1 million weapons, both legal and illegal, are estimated to be in the hands of civilians in Rio de Janeiro state. Moreover, the types of petty crime that adversely affect tourism have increased steadily.

The police have been largely unable to cope and are blamed for excessive use of force in which dozens of *favela* residents were killed in separate massacres during the 1990s. In response, the government launched Operation Rio in late 1994, bringing in federal military troops to assist the local police in conducting arbitrary house-to-house searches of *favela* neighborhoods. The government also has enacted vagrancy laws, providing a pretext for detaining and imprisoning *favela* residents who lack proof of employment. It also halted gun sales in Rio de Janeiro for several months. Most of these efforts, however, have had little impact. Indeed, in a recent public opinion poll, 59 percent of Rio residents—the highest proportion of any city in Brazil—reported that they felt afraid to walk down the streets.

Much of the damage—and it is substantial—related to the loss of social capital among Rio residents is difficult to assess. In her seminal work in the early 1970s, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*,⁴⁶ Janice Perlman surveyed the lives of hundreds of Rio *favela* residents and concluded that, far from being marginalized, they had considerable ingenuity and high hopes of achieving social mobility.

In 2000–2001, she re-interviewed a large sample of the original respondents and their offspring and came away with a very different picture. In a preliminary piece entitled “The Metamorphosis of Marginality: From Myth to Reality,”⁴⁷ Perlman found that, with the ascendancy of the drug dealers in Rio de Janeiro, life has become more restricted and *favelados* now feel far more excluded and marginalized than they did some 30 years ago. Perlman notes that the single biggest difference in the lives of the *favelados* today as compared with a generation ago is the pervasive atmosphere of fear. The sense of insecurity is palpable. Whereas, in the late 1960s, people were afraid of being removed from their homes and communities and being forcibly relocated by the housing policies of the dictatorship, today they are afraid of dying in the crossfire between police and dealers or between opposing gangs. They report being equally afraid of the police and the dealers. Half of the respondents said that they or a family member had been pick-pocketed or robbed in recent years; even more striking, one in five had a close relative who had been a victim of a homicide.

The pervasive presence of the dealers also has had devastating impacts on community life. Compared with 30 years ago, there is considerably less “hanging out” in public space, less participation in community associations and, when there is a war between commandos, less visiting among friends and relatives. Membership in every kind of organization, with the exception of churches, has declined drastically. Moreover, the internal space of the community is no longer used for leisure time or recreation.

Karachi

From a little over 1 million inhabitants in 1950, Karachi has grown to a current population of around 12 million and is still expanding very rapidly. Karachi has the dubious distinction of being one of Asia's most violent cities, where lawlessness and sectarian warfare have become part of daily urban life. A study in contrasts, fashionable upper-class neighborhoods sit next to slums (*katchi abadis*), which are home to some 40 percent of the city's population. The Pakistani state at the national, provincial and local levels lacks the capacity to accommodate the needs of Karachi's diverse and quarreling population. The city's aging infrastructure is overtaxed and does not properly serve new communities. Powerful communities in the city are able to ensure better service through political pressures and bribes and by building private wells and electrical generators, but those in poor areas do not receive basic services. Frustration stemming from the lack of urban services has even led to attacks on the offices of the Karachi Electricity Supply Corporation and the Karachi Water and Sewage Board.⁴⁸

As Pakistan's largest city and biggest port, Karachi not only was an important conduit for smuggling weapons during the Afghan war in the 1980s but also became a training ground for the most militant Muslim recruits heading for the conflict. As a result, weapons left over from the Afghan war have saturated Karachi. Along with rising ethnic tensions, Karachi also has experienced ongoing gangland-style power struggles between Sunni and Shiite Muslims for control of the city's religious institutions.

At the same time, more than 1 million Afghan refugees migrated to the city during the 1980s and 1990s, many of them linked to the drug trade in their homeland. Until the recent disruption of supplies resulting from the war in Afghanistan, Pakistan continued to serve as a major transit and consumer country for opiates from neighboring Afghanistan and now has one of the highest addiction rates of any country in the world. The city's criminal gangs also operate large gambling and prostitution rings.

In recent years, Karachi has experienced protracted political violence, marked by rallies and violent demonstrations, as well as random bombings and shootings, in addition to outbreaks of ethnic and sectarian violence. The past few years have seen a significant increase in the influence of Islamic militant groups, who readily find recruits among the growing number of unemployed young men. Petty crime is pervasive, whereas violent crime, including carjackings, armed robbery, arson, house invasions and other violence against civilians, has increased significantly in recent years. Since 2001, this violence has been increasingly targeted against foreigners. An underpaid, undermanned police force has been largely ineffective and troops have periodically had to be brought in. Sectarian and political violence has taken up much of the time of the police, encouraging criminal gangs to step up their activities. Moreover, the police force itself has become a target for heavily armed gangs.

Lagos

With a population of less than 300,000 in 1950, Lagos currently has around 10 million inhabitants and is growing very rapidly. It is expected to reach nearly 16 million inhabitants by 2015. The city has a young age structure and very high levels of under- and unemployment. In recent years, Nigeria's civilian government has been struggling to keep a lid on ethnic tensions, as thousands have died since the end of military rule. Fighting between the Yoruba and ethnic Hausa—which is thought to have far more to do with poverty and lack of opportunity than with animosity between ethnic and religious groups—continues, as houses are burned down and market stalls destroyed. In February 2002 serious ethnic rioting erupted a month after a suspicious and as-yet-unexplained blast at an army barracks led to the loss of more than 1,000 lives. Crimes against property are a daily occurrence, and travelers worldwide are warned against the lawless atmosphere of the country's major airport.

At the same time, Nigeria is at the center of international criminal activity in Africa, including, but not limited to, drug trafficking, financial crimes (such as the infamous 419 scams—

fraudulent solicitations for assistance in wiring funds abroad from Nigerian banks, named after a section of the Nigerian penal code), counterfeiting and money laundering. Nigeria's position as a historic trading crossroads both in Africa and along maritime routes between East and West has given Nigerian international criminal syndicates a legacy of moving capital and commodities on a global scale. Currently, powerful and sophisticated criminal syndicates based in Nigeria have extensive networks reaching into the Western Hemisphere, Europe, Russia and the newly independent states, Southeast and Southwest Asia, Australia and other countries in Africa. In fact, Nigerian criminal groups are more pervasive around the globe than those of any other nation, with as many as 1,500 Nigerian nationals involved in criminal activities in Brazil alone and large numbers of Nigerians thought to be engaged in illegal activities in some 60 countries.⁴⁹

Nigerian criminal enterprises defy traditional definitions, in that they tend to be loosely structured, highly fluid and ever-changing. However, an important segment of criminal activity is carried on by Lagos-based crime barons, many of whom are members of the elite or are government officials. Operating in an old-fashioned pyramid-based, hierarchical structure, these local crime bosses operate with virtual impunity in an environment of pervasive corruption.⁵⁰ Decades of gross economic mismanagement in Nigeria have left not only private citizens but also government and law enforcement officials and junior and noncommissioned military officers with great incentives to engage in criminal activity in order to make ends meet. Widespread fraud has caused Nigeria to lose billions of dollars in business and foreign investment in recent years. Moreover, pervasive crime and corruption have crippled the economy, contributed to social and political tensions and undermined relations with major traditional trading partners, including the United States and Europe.

POLICY APPROACHES TO URBAN CRIME AND VIOLENCE

There is clearly no universal recipe to deter urban crime and violence, which is deeply embedded in the specific local context:

different cities have sharply differing political systems, levels of poverty, patterns of income distribution, degrees of social welfare development, demographic trends, cultural factors (e.g., religion, ethnicity) that may foster or deter criminal behavior, as well as differing paces of cultural change. Moreover, policy interventions clearly need to be targeted to the appropriate level: international, national, city, neighborhood, household and individual.

Policy interventions will be very different with respect to organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism—several of the major emerging trans-boundary issues of the twenty-first century. The principal instruments used to meet these challenges will include greater cooperation among national police forces, the sharing of criminal intelligence, facilitating extradition and mutual legal assistance and increasing flows of international technical and financial assistance to law enforcement entities of drug-torn or crime-torn countries.

While national plans to combat crime and violence have been formulated by some developing countries, such efforts' coverage, effectiveness, cost and design vary greatly. Approaches include police surveillance, focusing on problem groups and target-hardening programs, involving alarm systems, cameras, lighting and the like to protect the safety of local residents and businesses. Increasing the professionalism and raising the salaries of law enforcement personnel is an important step. A problem lies, however, in the fact that the police have a poor reputation in much of the developing world because of their history of corruption, inefficiency and paramilitary activities. Whereas there is a need on the one hand to stem the sweeping tide of crime, there is concern on the other hand with providing the police with too much power.

Clearly, strategies cannot be limited to policing and criminal justice but must be complemented by active prevention. There are two major strategies for crime reduction: the education and training of justice personnel and social development.⁵¹ Ultimately, some of the most cost-effective outcomes may result from the implementation of programs tailored to local condi-

tions. Such programs may include community-policing initiatives, early childhood development initiatives, violence prevention curricula in schools, restrictions on the sale of alcohol, handgun control and campaigns against domestic violence. The debate on urban crime prevention in the developing world cannot be separated from broader issues of creating employment, reducing poverty and improving governance and urban management. Indeed, the role of local government in violence and crime reduction is increasingly being recognized as a practical and effective solution.

The stakes are high. The brief case studies presented above indicate that once crime reaches very high levels, and particularly when there is a high level of drug trafficking and other types of transnational crime, along with ethnic and sectarian violence and various forms of home-grown crime and violence, it becomes very difficult to eradicate and tends to become self-perpetuating. Increasingly, crime and violence in the world's large cities are emerging not just as problems of social pathology but as critical constraints on the economic and social development of cities as well as nations. ♣

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