

Soldiers patrol the streets of the Rocinha favela in March 2006 during a military operation to find ten FAL 7.62 rifles and one 9 mm pistol stolen from an army barracks in Rio de Janeiro. © Antonio Scorza /AFP/Getty Images



# Guns in the City

## URBAN LANDSCAPES OF ARMED VIOLENCE

### INTRODUCTION

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Urban armed violence forces us to rethink our mental geography of state, society, and governance—including the factors that lead to armed violence and the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Previous editions of the *Small Arms Survey* have focused on the role of small arms in conflict and crime as well as on the consequences of proliferation and misuse on development and humanitarian activity. This theme chapter concentrates on the specific features of urban armed violence and insecurity, introducing evidence from a wide range of cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Africa, and South and East Asia.

For the first time in human history, cities are home to the majority of the world's population. More than one billion of these people, however, live in slums, and the number looks set to rise (UN-HABITAT, 2003). In 1950 there were 86 cities with a population greater than one million; today there are 400; and by 2015 there will be at least 550, according to UN estimates (Davis, 2006, p. 1). Most population growth will be concentrated in urban areas of the developing world, and the experience and consequences of urbanization will be especially dramatic in Africa, South and East Asia, and Latin America.

Cities will thus also be focal points for the development of effective violence prevention and reduction programmes and policies. In concentrating on urban armed violence, the *Small Arms Survey* is contributing to an expanding chorus of study by governments, analysts, and international agencies, including UN-HABITAT (and its Safer Cities programme), the Inter-American Development Bank (and its work on urban violence), the Brookings Institution, and the Canadian government. These and other stakeholders recognize that the issue of guns in cities is one that will continue to require direct intervention.

It should be noted that urban violence is strikingly heterogeneous and results from multiple causes (Brennan-Galvin, 2002). It is linked to factors such as the drug trade, the availability of weapons, and forms of social organization (gangs, militias). However, collected data reflects neither a simple nor a necessary causal link between urbanization and armed violence.

The evidence presented in this chapter points to the highly segmented and spatially concentrated dynamics of urban armed violence, highlighting key issues through a series of examples from around the world. The main findings reveal that:

- large-scale urbanization tends to be associated with increased rates of armed violence;
- rapid urbanization is often coupled with decreasing levels of public safety, posing serious challenges to the provision of security and justice;
- in the global South, urban violence is often political as much as criminal in nature, and criminal violence is usually structured and organized, both socially and geographically;



- real and perceived insecurities inform individual and collective responses to armed violence, which often involve strategies to contain violence or export it to the urban periphery;
- municipal interventions to reduce or prevent armed violence can be coercive, compliance-oriented, or voluntary, while successful programmes often combine these approaches;
- ultimately, any appraisal of or policy response to urban armed violence must be shaped by a multi-disciplinary understanding of the phenomenon.

The chapter is divided into three parts. First, it briefly examines urban–rural differences in patterns of armed violence, illustrating these through the cases of the United States, Canada, and Brazil. It then examines the emergence of new forms of urban order, including peri-urban, semi-urban, and inner-city forms of habitation. While slums, shantytowns, and gated communities are becoming increasingly prominent in cities, the experience of violence and insecurity differs widely among them. This transformation of urban landscapes is often driven by individual or collective reactions to perceived (subjectively experienced) versus real (empirically observed) insecurities. The localization of armed violence to the periphery or the interior of urban spaces and the simultaneous creation of safe and secure places are contributing to the fragmentation of public space through processes of *isolation*, *exportation*, and *containment*.

The second part of the chapter presents an overview of the state of knowledge on urban armed violence, demonstrating the tremendous variation in the incidence and type of violence across cities and regions, and distinguishing between criminal and political armed violence. This survey is complemented by short sections that explore firearm ownership and use in African cities, the problem of armed violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and the phenomenon of gated communities amid the ‘violence of urbanization’.

**There is neither a simple nor a necessary causal link between urbanization and armed violence.**

The final section of the chapter introduces a three-fold approach to understanding, preventing, and reducing urban armed violence. It observes that effective municipal-level interventions must consider the different dimensions of the urban landscape, the importance of real and perceived violence, and the role of isolation, containment, and exportation in relation to violence reduction. The chapter also offers a typology for understanding local efforts to reduce armed violence and control small arms, highlighting potential entry-points for rethinking local interventions to improve human security and public safety. These interventions can be coercive, compliance-oriented, or voluntary. The most successful interventions, which appear to be planned and executed on the basis of robust evidence, carefully sequence elements of all three approaches.

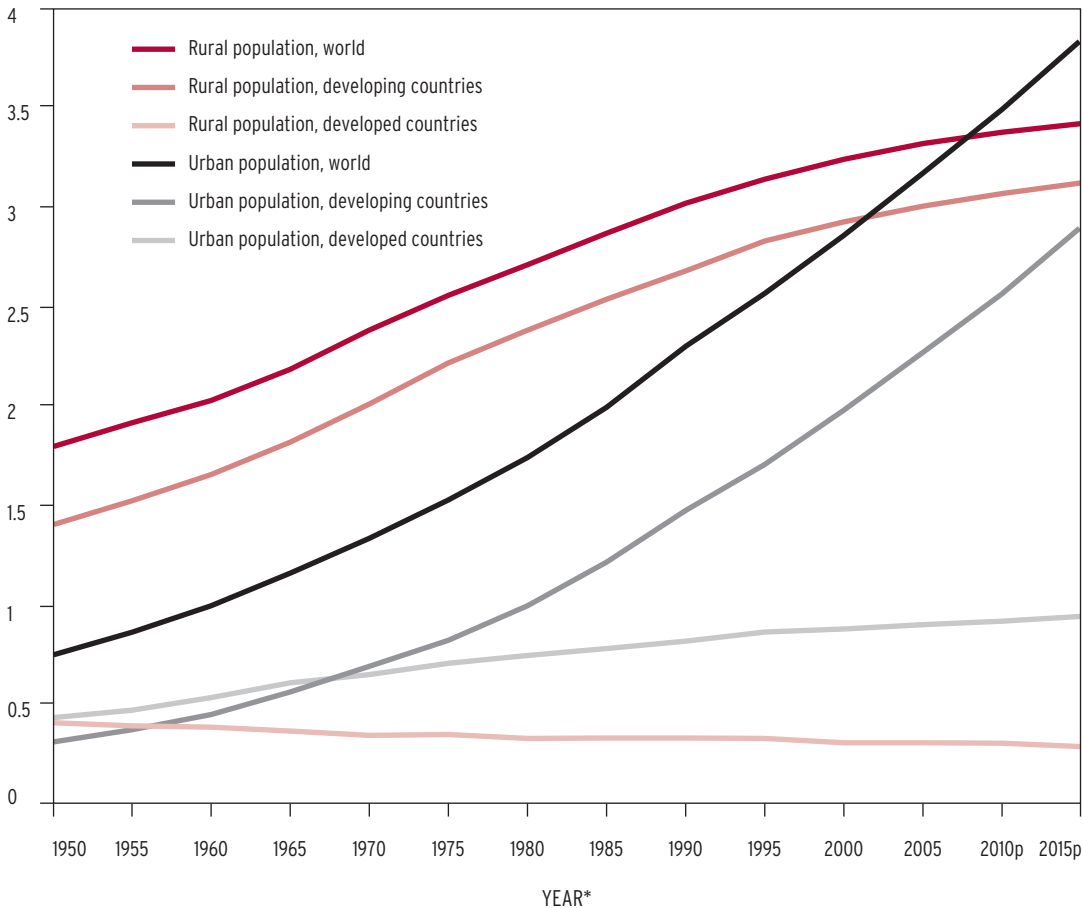
## UNDERSTANDING URBAN ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The emergence of massive urban sprawls has blurred basic distinctions between urban and rural and has yielded a new vocabulary. Today, demographers and urban planners talk of ‘megacities’ of more than eight or ten million inhabitants, and even ‘hypercities’ or ‘metacities’ of more than 20 million, virtually all of which are located in the developing world. For example, by 2025, Dhaka will probably surpass 25 million inhabitants—up from 400,000 in 1950; Karachi will grow to 26.5 million—up from 1 million; Jakarta is set to attain 24.9 million—up from 1.5 million; and Mumbai is to reach 33 million people—up from 2.9 million (Davis, 2006, pp. 4–5). By 2005, these megacities (20 in total) already accounted for nine per cent of the world’s urban population (UNDESA, 2005).

Twenty-first-century urbanization is about more than demographic changes, however, and the notion of the ‘megacity’ captures only part of the transformation. Indeed, the burgeoning literature on ‘global cities’ or ‘world cities’

Figure 5.1 **The urban explosion**

POPULATION (BILLIONS)



\* A p after a year indicates projected population figures.

Source: United Nations (2005)

points to the ways in which globalization has dramatically altered the status of large urban centres in terms of economic, political, social, and ecological interaction and interdependence (Brenner and Keil, 2006). One of the features of the 'global city' is that it is more interconnected with similar cities than with its own hinterland (Sassen, 1994).

Yet not all of the world's cities are on the same playing field. Tokyo, London, and New York are financial and cultural nodes linking three continents, but their ties with Dhaka or Lagos are much less obvious. Between these two poles lie fragmented cities such as Manila and Shanghai, whose business districts are linked to global cities, but whose fringes are home to bleak and vast slums and squatter communities—with militant groups and gangs at times creating their own transnational ties and networks. As will be elaborated below, urban growth and development do not necessarily go hand in hand.

Headlines of urban violence in Johannesburg, Nairobi, and Rio de Janeiro paint a picture (if occasionally exaggerated) of these cities as rife with violence or riddled with no-go zones. In fact, there is some agreement among

### Box 5.1 Definitions

The World Health Organization's *World Report on Violence and Health* defines *violence* as 'the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation' (WHO, 2002, p. 30).

For the purposes of this chapter, and unless otherwise stated, *armed violence* thus refers to violence committed through the threatened or actual use of small arms and light weapons as defined by the *UN Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms* (UNGA, 1997).<sup>1</sup>

criminologists that the strongest risk factor for serious crimes (including armed robbery, car theft, and violence against women) across countries is urbanization. As an overview analysis of the entire range of International Crime Victims Surveys (ICVS) concludes, 'Victimization by more serious crime is strongly correlated with increases in the proportion of the population living in larger cities' (van Dijk, 1998, p. 69). Moreover, urban density 'is thought to be associated with crime as greater concentrations of people lead to competition for limited resources, greater stress, and increased conflict' (Naudé et al., 2006, p. 73).

This chapter, however, will show that understanding urban armed violence requires a more nuanced vision of this emerging urban landscape. Focusing on urban growth and population density is not enough. In addition, urban armed violence must be understood as being intricately linked to the structural dynamics of urban agglomeration, as well as to the competing interests of—and power relationships between—social groups. Armed violence is both a result of and a catalyst for transformations in urban governance and spatial organization (Moser and Rodgers, 2005).

### Urban-rural divides and urban transformations

A key question guiding this study is whether armed violence in urban areas exceeds that encountered in rural areas. Historically, cities were among the first zones of security created in modern states. They were relatively easy to police and supervise (and possessed the first modern police and security forces); they also developed a dense infrastructure, were subject to urban planning policies, and benefited from the 'civilizing process' (Elias, 2000) of industrial development, rising literacy, and social interaction. As Europe became increasingly urban, rates of violent crime (measured by homicide rates) declined steadily from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: in England they dropped from 4.3 homicides per 100,000 at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 0.8 per 100,000 by the 20<sup>th</sup> century; in Continental Europe they fell from 5.5–9.2 per 100,000 to 1.7–2.0 per 100,000 over the same time period (Eisner, 2001; Gurr, 1981). Although the exact timing and scope of the decline varies from country to country, it is systematically linked to urbanization and the Industrial Revolution, and to the expansion of state control and the provision of security and public order (Chenais, 1981).

Yet some general analyses of 20<sup>th</sup>-century figures—at least from the United States, Canada, and Brazil—seem to mark a reversal of this trend towards cities as safe places. One factor that appears to play a role is city size: as Buvinic and Morrison (2000, p. 62) point out, 'crime rates in Latin America are strongly correlated with city size. Crowding intensifies antisocial behaviour and facilitates anonymity and imitation of violent acts.'<sup>2</sup> Similarly, some of the World Bank's econometric modelling of crime rates suggests that, under certain conditions, rapid urbanization rates are associated with higher homicide rates (Fajnzylber et al., 1998, p. 32).<sup>3</sup> In particular, city size and rapid rates of growth are likely to influence levels of armed violence in that they represent serious challenges in terms of governance and the provision of security, especially in today's megacities.

Although a simple link between city size and violence may not hold everywhere, it is at least confirmed in the US case. Between 1985 and 2004 the average homicide rate in the United States was 7.57 per 100,000.<sup>4</sup> Available data also demonstrates a linear relationship between city population size and 20-year average homicide rates (see Table 5.1). Cities of more than one million residents had the highest 20-year average homicide rates at 19.04 per 100,000; the average for cities of 500,000–1 million population was 13.86 per 100,000; for populations of 250,000–500,000 the rate was 11.31 per 100,000; and for cities of 100,000–250,000 the rate of 7.21 per 100,000 was below the national 20-year average. This is also true for crime in general in the United States, where victimization rates in large cities (more than one million residents) have been more than double those of small cities and towns (Glaeser and Sacerdote, 1996, p. 20).

There are, however, huge variations in homicide rates within each category of city. As Table 5.1 shows, homicide rates reach their peak in smaller, not larger, cities. Gary, Indiana (which had the highest homicide rate of any US city during this period), and Richmond, Virginia, had overall homicide rates of 60.22 and 48.78, respectively, much higher than the 7.21 average for other small cities in their category. Among medium to large cities, New Orleans' 20-year average homicide rate of 53.87 is almost five times higher than the 11.31 average rate of other medium-size cities. Meanwhile, Washington, D.C., with an average of 55.18, and Detroit, with an average of 50.43, have rates that are about four times higher than the average homicide rate of 13.86 for cities in their category. And while murder rates have fallen in larger cities, they appear to be rising in middle-sized ones (FBI, 2005; *Economist*, 2006). This variation highlights the central role of contextual factors in levels of urban armed violence.

Although it almost certainly does not hold in all countries, a similar pattern, albeit at much lower levels, holds in Canadian cities and in Brazil. The average homicide rate in 1995–2004 for Canadian cities with a population greater than 500,000 was 1.96 per 100,000, compared to a rate of 1.52 for cities with a population of 100,000–500,000. The national rate was 1.88 per 100,000, again suggesting that smaller cities are less violent. Overall, firearm homicides represent about one-third of all homicides, a percentage that has increased in the past three years (Dauvergne and Li, 2006, p. 17). Perhaps somewhat exceptionally, however, the homicide rate in the largest Canadian city, Toronto, has been consistently below the national average (1.71 during the period under review).

Urbanization correlates with higher levels of armed violence in Brazil as well (BRAZIL). The average firearm homicide rate in urban municipalities (with more than 94 per cent 'urban' residents and a density of 840 persons per square kilometre) is 27.5 per 100,000, more than double that of peri-urban municipalities (where the density is 66 persons per square kilometre), and more than four times the rate of rural municipalities (6.8 per 100,000). In many

**Table 5.1 US homicide rates by city population, 1985–2004 (per 100,000)**

City population	20-year mean rate	Low	High
1 million +	19.04	8.24	27.82
500,000–999,999	13.86	1.74	55.18
250,000–499,999	11.31	1.09	53.87
100,000–249,999	7.21	0.31	60.22
<b>United States overall</b>	<b>7.57</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>9.80</b>

Source: Wilkinson and Bell (2006)

### Box 5.2 Homicide in US cities: all about the gun

Since the mid-1980s, homicide rates have fluctuated and dramatically declined in many US cities. When the data is disaggregated to separate firearm from non-firearm homicides for a city such as New York, the role of guns in the 'peaks' of criminal violence is clear.

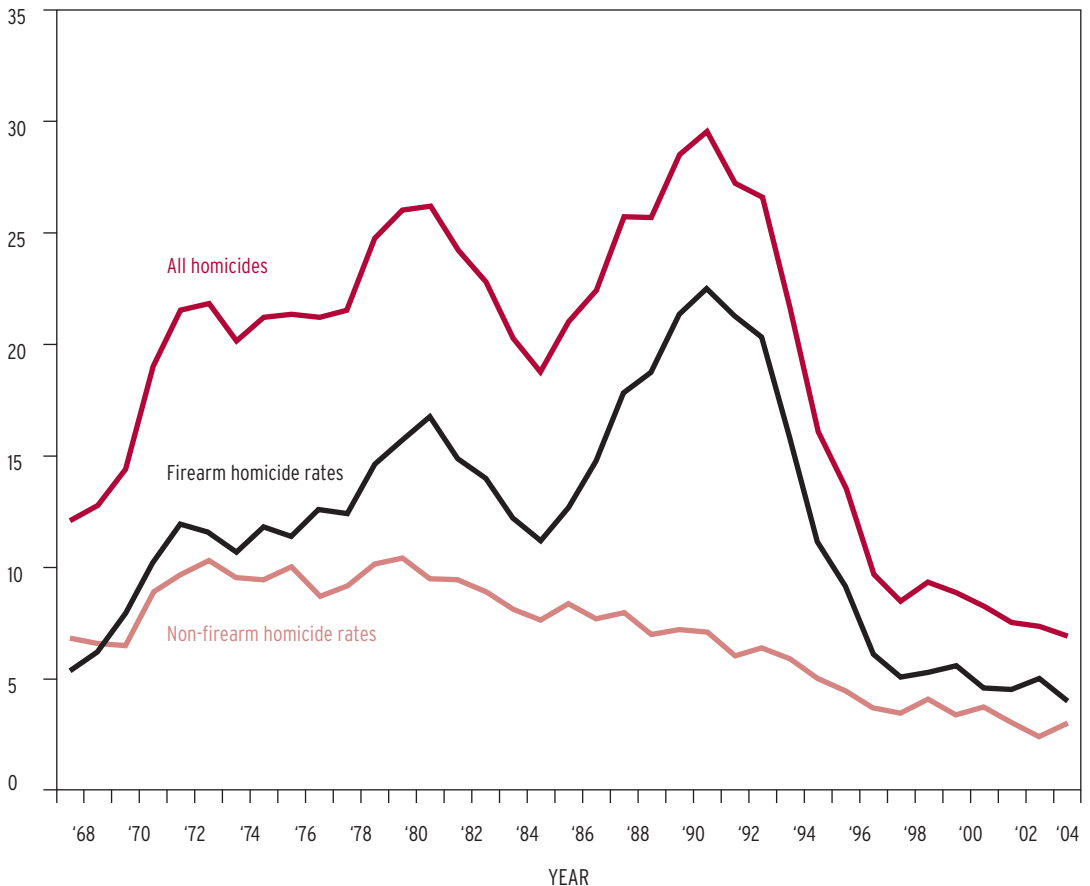
Figure 5.2 below shows the growing importance of guns in homicides in each of the three homicide peaks in New York City in 1968-2004. Increases in both firearm and non-firearm homicides contributed to the tripling of homicide rates through 1972. In 1972, the ratio of firearm to non-firearm homicides was 1.23. By the next peak, in 1981, the 1,187 firearm deaths were nearly 1.76 times greater than the 673 non-firearm homicides. In 1991, the most recent peak, the 1,644 firearm homicides were 3.16 times greater than the 519 non-firearm homicides.

In addition to sharp increases in the number of firearm homicides, the gun v. non-gun ratio also rose because of a long-term decline in the number of non-gun homicides. Since 1980, the number and rate of non-gun homicides has declined by nearly 50 per cent, from 735 to 335 non-firearm killings in 1996. There are thus two dynamic and different patterns in the data on homicide by weapon. Firearm killings follow the rollercoaster pattern of steadily increasing peaks beginning in 1972. Non-firearm killings have declined since 1980—to rates unseen since 1960. This secular decline in non-firearm killings is substantial.

Source: Wilkinson and Bell (2006)

Figure 5.2 **Firearm v. non-firearm homicides in New York City, 1968-2004 (per 100,000)**

RATE PER 100,000



Source: Wilkinson and Bell (2006)

Brazilian cities, the consequences are stark. Wealthy residents of São Paulo, for example, ‘retreated to areas such as Alphaville, a walled city surrounded by high electrified fences and patrolled by a private army of 1,100 guards’ (Brennan-Galvin, 2002, p. 136). Today’s *favela* dwellers live in a climate of fear, and ‘whereas, in the late 1960s, people were afraid of being forcibly relocated . . . today they are afraid of dying in the crossfire between police and dealers or between opposing gangs’ (Brennan-Galvin, 2002, p. 138; Perlman, 2005).

Anecdotal evidence from major cities in Africa also seems to corroborate the relationship between city size and levels of violence. Pérouse de Montclos’s study of three cities in Nigeria (Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt) demonstrates that violence in each city has specific causes and manifestations, but that overall, ‘a city of 100,000 residents constitutes, it seems, the threshold below which “typical” urban violence cannot develop [authors’ translation]’ (Pérouse de Montclos, 2003, p. 6).<sup>5</sup>

As is the case elsewhere, these general trends conceal large variations within different categories, suggesting that other factors associated with particular cities are at work. Furthermore, these findings may fail to hold more generally in (or beyond) North and South America, although data has seldom been disaggregated in a way that would generate a clear picture of urban–rural differences. In Australia, for example, the average firearms homicide rate is higher in major urban areas than in outer and remote regions: with 66 per cent of Australia’s population, major urban areas experienced 58 per cent of homicides between 1990 and 2004 (Mouzos, 2006). Victimization rates also varied widely among urban areas, from 0.04 per 100,000 in Canberra, to 0.15 per 100,000 in Western Australia (Perth), and 0.45 per 100,000 in areas around Sydney and Adelaide.

To provide a more nuanced picture of which factors render large cities more vulnerable to armed violence, it is useful to consider the four categories identified by criminologists and sociologists, some of which have been alluded to above:

- the social dislocation and anonymity of large cities;
- the opportunities for criminal gain;
- the relatively low risk of being caught; and
- the effects of social interaction, especially on vulnerable groups.<sup>6</sup>

These factors are not uniformly related to city size; they depend on such characteristics as the geography and design of the urban space, the demographics of the urban population (age, patterns of recent migration, origins), forms of social organization (segregation by wealth and ethnicity), legislative frameworks regulating firearms, and levels of inequality. To date, few studies have sought to compare systematically different cities according to these factors in order to identify any links to levels of armed violence.<sup>7</sup>

### **The new urban landscape: modern slums and megacities**

Cities that experience rapid growth are almost always characterized by the uncontrolled establishment and expansion of slums, squatter communities, and shantytowns. These defy traditional models of municipal governance and conventional definitions of urbanity. As opposed to rural areas, cities have generally been understood to be tied to social functions such as industrial or commercial activity or transportation and communications infrastructures. In many parts of the world, however, this link between economics, infrastructure, and urbanization has been weakened or broken. Population growth is thus not necessarily accompanied by economic opportunity or welfare gains.

**Slums defy  
traditional models  
of municipal  
governance.**



Such uncontrolled growth stands in contrast to urbanization in many European and North American countries, where the process was traditionally coupled with industrialization. In many 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century cities, urban planners made attempts—the most well-known of which was Baron Haussmann’s reshaping of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Paris—to ensure that physical and social infrastructures could deal with the social pathologies of rapid urbanization, including crime, disease, poverty, and filth. Economic growth allowed the governance capacities of states and cities to expand and keep in check the side effects of urbanization and industrial capitalism.

But one feature of contemporary urbanization in many developing countries is that city size is delinked from economic or infrastructure growth. Cities such as Johannesburg, Mumbai, Buenos Aires, and São Paulo have in fact been *deindustrialized* by the closure of their manufacturing sectors, or as businesses and economic actors flee the decaying urban core. Even so, population growth in these cities continues to soar. As the poor migrate from the countryside in search of employment, the city expands outwards, swallowing up the rural areas. Davis (2006, p. 9) notes that throughout the developing world ‘rural people no longer have to migrate to the city: it migrates to them’.

**A dearth of employment opportunities has contributed to the onset of some urban conflicts.**

The result of such uncontrolled and rapid urban expansion is almost inevitably the prevalence of slums, or even *megaslums*, consisting of massive squatter communities, often exceeding one million inhabitants, who live without secure land titles and with few or irregular public services such as electricity, water, sanitation, and sewers. Such areas are often sites of violence and coercion as masses of people are repeatedly evicted in city clean-up operations or to make way for urban renewal schemes. Though anthropologists, sociologists, and community workers have long recognized this phenomenon, the international and national policy-making community has generally lagged behind in developing robust policy responses (Muggah, 2003; Neuwirth, 2005). In one noteworthy step, the United Nations recently set as one of its Millennium Development Goals improving the livelihoods of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 (of an estimated total of more than one billion). Yet given that slum populations worldwide seem to be growing by around 25 million each year, this is a monumental task (UN-HABITAT, 2005).

Alarmist authors claim that these megalums constitute the new frontier of armed violence and sources of insecurity (Rapley, 2006). One argues that what he calls ‘feral cities’ are ‘natural havens for a variety of hostile non-state actors’ and that they may pose ‘security threats on a scale hitherto not encountered’ (Norton, 2003, p. 105).

The evidence, however, is thin, and many large slums, while suffering from a variety of deprivations, do not seem to be rife with armed violence or insecurity. Indeed, whether small arms violence is of greater concern in semi-urban or peripheral slums and shantytowns than in areas that are more developed and vigorously policed remains to be determined. As systematic evidence becomes available, it will serve to inform contemporary urban planning and security-building.

A more nuanced analysis of what has aptly been termed *cityspace* reveals the interdependence of highly heterogeneous urban populations and focuses on the linkages arising from ‘the purposeful clustering and collective cohabitation of people in space, in a “home” habitat’ (Soja, 2000, p. 12). In simple terms, a city such as Caracas, Venezuela, is utterly dependent on the informal labour force residing in the *barrios* or squatter settlements, which include more than half the entire population. Of course, the linkages within these spaces are not necessarily positive or symbiotic. Because the vast majority of residents in cities such as Lagos or Dhaka live in slums that, by definition, are poorly planned and thus acutely vulnerable, they are also in danger of suffering from ecological disaster. In addition, this vulnerability may exacerbate social unrest among alienated or excluded populations.

Moreover, a dearth of employment opportunities and resources in some cities has contributed to the onset of urban conflicts, from Brazil and Guatemala to South Africa and India. These conflicts can erupt over the unequal

### Box 5.3 Distinguishing 'urban' from 'rural' spaces

The term *urban* used to be applied to free-standing built-up areas of at least 1,000–2,000 inhabitants, with an observable core fulfilling a range of social and civic functions of an administrative, commercial, cultural, or educational nature. Continuous growth and coalescence of towns and cities over time, however, meant the development of subsidiary spaces in the form of suburbs and satellite towns. In Britain, for instance, the General Register Office for England and Wales thus introduced the concept of 'conurbations' in 1951 to meet the demands of an increasingly complex scenario, but the problems of classification persisted. Recognizing that the lack of a consistent and comprehensive government definition of 'rurality' hindered effective rural policy-making, the Countryside Agency (2004) has now established a new definition of urban and rural areas of England and Wales, based on both morphological and contextual aspects of settlements.

Beyond the United Kingdom the patchwork of slums and gated communities that is fast becoming the norm in many of the world's megacities renders traditional concepts of *urban* and *rural* obsolete. An example would be what geographers now call the Rio-São Paulo Extended Metropolitan Region, a 500-kilometre-long urban-industrial megalopolis with a population nearing 40 million. The urban-rural divide is also increasingly blurred in the more confined spaces of Bangladesh, where 84.7 per cent of the country's urban population—more than 30 million people—live in slums (Davis, 2006, p. 24). Dhaka alone has around 10 million slum dwellers in a city of about 15 million inhabitants. This sea of squatter communities and shantytowns—alternately called *megaslums* or *shadow cities* (Neuwirth, 2005)—defies urban-rural classifications.

Such classifications, however, are a vital element of policing and violence reduction programmes, since authority is exercised through the organization of jurisdictional boundaries. A new vocabulary is thus emerging. Sieverts, for instance, has coined the term *Zwischenstadt*, 'cities without cities' that are no longer characterized by centrality and a threshold of density. Instead, today's urban environment features a series of development clusters linked by a network of transportation routes. The result is a 'city web' in which notions of public space and social cohesion are replaced by the prioritization of (elite) personal space and the competition for power among arbitrarily divided urban enclaves (Sieverts, 2003). Such is the daunting setting for 21<sup>st</sup>-century urban violence reduction programmes.

distribution of basic goods and services and land (DFAIT, 2006). In extreme cases, 'issues of rural–urban change can be both underlying causes and trigger factors for increasing violence and insecurity, or indeed consequences of the phenomenon itself' (Moser and Rodgers, 2005, p. v).

## URBAN POLITICAL AND CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

Given the diverse geography and socio-economic situation of cities, urban violence is highly heterogeneous, and few cross-city or cross-regional generalizations can be made. This section examines different facets of urban armed violence, reviewing the limited research and evidence that has been collected concerning political and criminal armed violence in urban settings.

### Urban criminal armed violence

Around the world, urban armed violence is linked to organized criminal activity, the availability of weapons, opportunities for criminal gain, weak or ineffective police and security, and stark patterns of inequality or a lack of alternative economic opportunities. Diverse studies have illustrated the overall impact of armed violence on urban populations and the broader climate of insecurity that is created.

The most systematic study of urban violence—the International Crime Victims Surveys—has been conducted under the auspices of the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). Its study of criminal victimization in urban Europe (based on surveys carried out in the year 2000) examines victimization in 16 Eastern and Central European cities, and nine Western European urban areas. It found no major differences between Western and Eastern

European levels of victimization, with 27 per cent of all respondents being a victim of one of 11 crimes in the preceding year (Alvazzi del Frate and van Kesteren, 2004). Arms were used in about one-quarter of ‘contact crimes’ (robbery, assault, sexual offences). There were no significant differences in the prevalence of guns in these crimes, with the exception of assaults, where weapons were much less frequently present in Western European cities (only six per cent of the threat and assault incidents). Further work is needed to disaggregate these findings across different urban contexts, but the widespread availability and use of firearms in violent crimes is relatively clear. What is less well understood is how and by whom these weapons are used, and the specific role of weapons as enablers of/or catalysts for violence.

This issue is somewhat better understood in other contexts. Latin America, emerging from long periods of civil war, still has one of the highest rates of armed violence in the world, and criminal violence is intertwined with the phenomena of *pandillas* and *maras*—small- and large-scale organized gangs that engage in predatory behaviour, drug trafficking, protection rackets, and other forms of gang violence. Their impact on overall levels of armed violence cannot be overestimated. In Managua, Nicaragua, for example, one in four individuals surveyed in 1997 claimed to have been the victim of a crime in the *previous four months*, and 40 per cent of all crimes were reported in the capital city (with only around 20 per cent of the population) (Rodgers, 2004, p. 116). Even with significant under-reporting, armed violence appears to have risen steadily throughout the 1990s, and to have evolved ‘from a form of collective social violence to a more individually and economically motivated type of brutality’ (Rodgers, 2006, p. 267).

A similar pattern is evident throughout Central America. In 2006, more than 40 per cent of reported homicides in Guatemala occurred in Guatemala City, which has less than 20 per cent of the country’s population. Even accounting for under-reporting in rural areas, Guatemala City’s reported homicide rate of 110 per 100,000—higher than the Latin



Armed with a whipping cane and a sawn-off shotgun, a member of the Bakassi Boys vigilante group returns from patrolling the market in Onitsha, Nigeria, in June 2002. © Boris Heger/AP Photo

American average—suggests a high concentration of urban violence. Small arms were responsible for 85 per cent of homicide deaths (Matute and García, 2007).<sup>8</sup> Recent surveys systematically rank insecurity as the most important concern (above unemployment) in Guatemala, highlighting that ‘armed violence is recognized as a major social problem . . . that seriously hinders the possibilities for progress’ (Matute and García, 2007). In El Salvador, almost two-thirds of armed violence is gang-on-gang, which, given the urban concentration of the *maras*, means high levels of violence in the capital city (and a national level of armed violence that is among the world’s highest as well) (Cruz, 2006, p. 129). Both cases illustrate that the long-term effects of violent conflict are dramatic.

Municipal governments have increasingly assumed security responsibilities in Guatemala, and although these initiatives are relatively new, they appear to have some impact on overall violence levels. But tackling armed criminal gang violence will be a longer-term effort, since the phenomena of *maras* and *pandillas* are continental in scale, and perhaps global in nature (Hagedorn, 2007). Gang violence in major US cities (Miami, Los Angeles) has been clearly linked to Central American cities, and one result is that, in the case of Los Angeles, African Americans and Latinos account for 85 per cent of homicide victims (Maxwell, 2006).

Armed violence and crime in major African cities are less clearly linked to large-scale gang activity, representing a mixture of criminal and ‘political’ (broadly defined) motives. They have been linked ‘to the increased intensity and complexity of urbanization’ (Gimode, 2001, p. 297), including land use and expropriation policies that systematically exclude marginal groups from land and public services. Armed vigilante groups such as the Bakassi Boys (active in Aba, Nigeria) have summarily executed alleged criminals, have enjoyed support from important political figures (local and state-level), and have often become tools of predation against competing groups (communal or economic rivals) (Harnischfeger, 2003; Smith, 2004).

#### Box 5.4 Firearm ownership and use in African cities

Over the past decade, crime victim surveys have produced a wealth of information on experiences of crime in Africa.<sup>9</sup> The standard International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) questionnaire includes questions on ownership of firearms, the type of arm, and reasons for ownership.<sup>10</sup> The ICVS is also a general victimization survey addressing issues of safety.

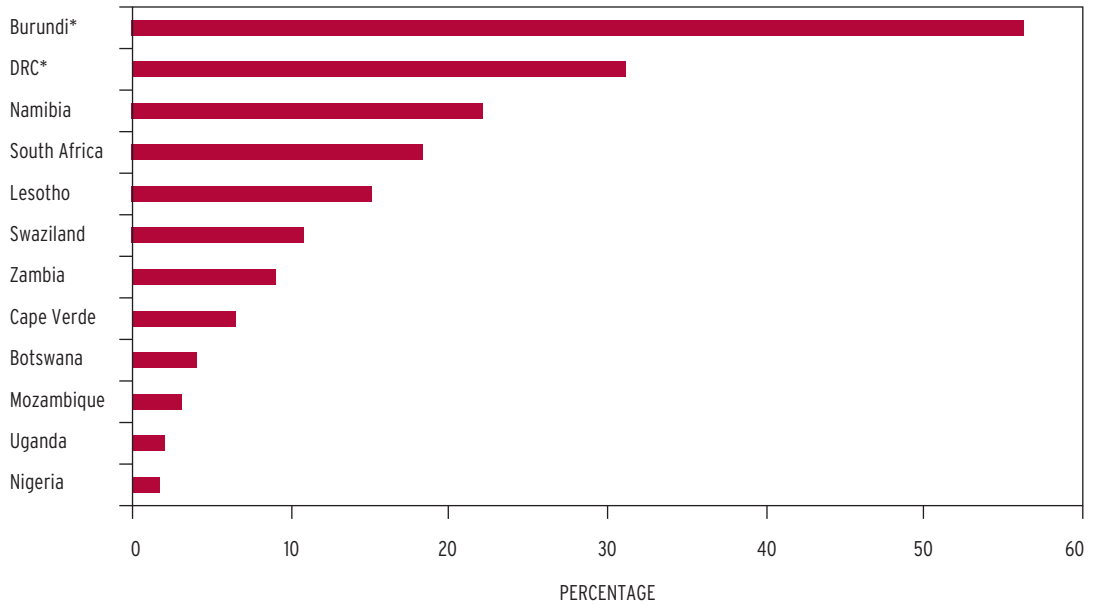
On average, 9 per cent of the interviewed households in urban areas worldwide declared that they owned a firearm and 6 per cent (about two-thirds of gun owners) had a handgun. Among those owning handguns, the majority (60 per cent) said that the purpose of their keeping the weapon at home was to protect themselves from crime (see Figure 5.3).

The Small Arms Survey has conducted surveys in households in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in which respondents were asked a variety of questions about firearms. For a number of reasons, the results of these surveys are likely to show higher rates than those of the ICVS. Unlike the ICVS survey, this household questionnaire deals only with firearms as opposed to larger security issues (though it also asks for a respondent’s lifetime experience and other background). The question on firearms ownership (‘Have you ever had one of these arms in your possession?’) is also more general than its ICVS equivalent. Furthermore, since both countries are experiencing post-conflict situations, access to weapons may be easier than elsewhere.

Indeed, more than half of the respondents in Burundi and approximately one-third in DRC admitted to owning a firearm. Among the reasons mentioned for detaining a weapon, belonging to a rebel group was mentioned by 42 per cent of the owners in Burundi and 8 per cent in the DRC. Self-protection was the main reason in Burundi (53 per cent), while it captured only 11 per cent of the responses in the DRC, where the main reason stated by respondents was being a member of the army (48 per cent).

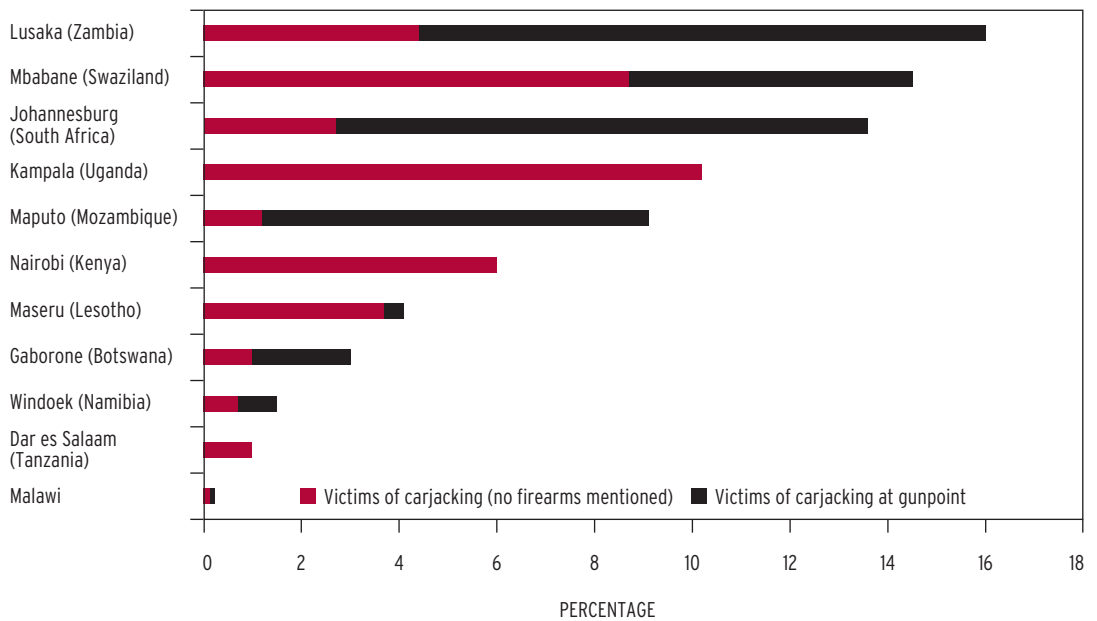
According to available statistics for Africa, guns are used to commit on average one in four homicides and, apart from killings, violence is more often committed with firearms when gaining property is the object of the crime. An average of nine per cent of respondents who owned a car had been victims of a carjacking, and victimization rates were highest in Lusaka, Mbabane, and Johannesburg (see Figure 5.4). This crime has become a major issue of concern for car drivers in African cities, especially because of the frequent involvement of firearms in crime.

Figure 5.3 **Percentage of households owning firearms in African capital cities or large urban areas, per country**



\* UNODC analysis of data from results of surveys conducted by the Small Arms Survey in Burundi (Bubanza, Bujumbura, Bururi, and Cibitoke) and DRC (North Kivu and South Kivu) in 2004. Sources: ICVS survey data; Alvazzi del Frate (2007)

Figure 5.4 **Percentage of respondents who were victims of carjackings at gunpoint or not involving firearms in African capital cities or urban areas (survey data)**



\* Data for Nairobi from Stavrou (2002). Source: Alvazzi del Frate (2007)



Levels of victimization in African cities do not generally reach the heights of some Latin American cities, although the pattern of victimization is similar (concentrated among particular groups and among young men). In Nairobi, 18 per cent of residents reported being a victim of physical assault in a 12-month period (2000–01). Guns were used in only around ten per cent of the assault cases (most of which involved robbery), but in two-thirds of the homicides (which were usually theft-related) (Stavrou, 2002, pp. 54, 118–19). In Cape Town, almost half the residents were victims of a crime in a five-year period (relatively long for such surveys), while Johannesburg reached 62 per cent. Only 20 per cent of violent crimes in Cape Town involved guns (although nearly half the murders were committed with a gun) (Camerer et al., 1998; Louw et al., 1998). Homicide rates were also highest in Johannesburg and Cape Town, reaching levels of 30 and 29 per 100,000, respectively (Isserow, 2001).

### Urban political armed violence

In Western cities armed violence is associated predominantly with organized or small-scale criminality. In the global South, however, urban violence is often political as much as criminal in nature, and can be part of larger armed conflicts. Political armed violence includes clashes between rival political (or communal) groups and between state officials (police and other security forces); it can also represent the instrumental use of violence by the state against its population (Winton, 2004). In situations where local or national governments are unrepresentative or anti-democratic, politics can spill over into violence, or armed groups can be mobilized to enforce or maintain power.

The situation in Baghdad in 2006 and early 2007, which witnessed high levels of armed violence in the context of a civil war between heavily armed militias, is an extreme case. By early 2007, one in 160 of Baghdad's 6.5 million inhabitants had been violently killed since the beginning of the war in 2003, many (if not most) by small arms and light weapons (Iraq Body Count, 2007). Conflict and post-conflict urban armed violence also heavily affects cities ranging from Bujumbura (BURUNDI) to Mogadishu and Kabul. As one analyst has noted, 'war-related violence tends to quickly lead to the demise of city administrations, and the resultant power vacuum may be filled by military authorities or armed groups' (van Brabant, 2007, p. 20).

**In the global South, urban violence is often political as much as criminal in nature.**

Urban armed violence can also be high in non-war settings such as Colombia, where the line between political and criminal violence is often blurred. Here, criminal activity (assault, robbery) is often politicized in the sense that it is undertaken for political ends. Moreover, criminal organizations are intertwined in complex relations of competition and cooperation with state authorities (Gutiérrez Sanín and Jaramilo, 2004).

Although the absolute number of victims may not be high (relative to the population), urban political violence has consequences beyond the number of people killed, since it is usually associated with intimidation, threat, and a chilling effect on popular participation in politics. Several examples from around the world can illustrate how major cities are affected by this form of armed violence.

Caracas, for instance, was ranked by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) as the second most violent city in Latin America for death due to homicide (see Box 5.12). In recent years, many of these deaths have been political, as clashes between demonstrators and the police increased by nearly 800 per cent between 1999 and 2004. Violent deaths across Venezuela are increasingly being registered as 'resistance to authority' and 'other violent deaths' rather than as homicides.

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, presents another grim example (see Box 5.5). A study conducted in 2004–05 and published in the *Lancet* estimated the homicide rate for the city at 219 per 100,000, with an estimated 8,000 people having been murdered between February 2004 and December 2005, 65 per cent of them by firearms (Hutson and Kolbe, 2006). In

### Box 5.5 Port-au-Prince, Haiti

In 2004, a violent insurrection by members of the disbanded Haitian army overthrew the elected government. Groups on all sides accused their political opponents of systematic human rights abuses. Neither the United Nations, which established a mission in Haiti in mid-2004, nor the Interim Haitian Government had a firm estimate of the numbers of human rights violations committed or the identity of the perpetrators (Dupuy, 2005). Qualitative studies from the US State Department (US DOS, 2005), Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2005), and others (AI, 2004; Griffin, 2005; Freedom House, 2005) indicated that gross human rights abuses including prolonged illegal detentions, politically motivated executions, and physical and sexual assaults had occurred.

#### Estimating human rights violations

Using household surveys, an estimate of the patterns of human rights violations in greater Port-au-Prince was established. The surveys covered murders, detentions, physical/sexual assaults, theft/vandalism, death threats, threats of physical violence, and threats of sexual violence. The study covered incidents that occurred between 29 February 2004 and December 2005.

Standard random sampling techniques for survey research, such as cluster and stratified samples, often cannot be used in developing countries because they require census data, address lists, or population density maps that are unavailable or unreliable. Instead, Random GPS (Global Positioning System) Coordinate Sampling (RGCS) was used for this study. RGCS differs from traditional techniques in that selection is based on randomly determined spatial locations. The geographic boundaries of the area examined are determined before selection and GPS locations within the boundaries are randomly generated.

Using RGCS, 1,500 locations within the Port-au-Prince area (estimated population 2,121,000) were identified and visited to determine if a household resided at the site. Of the 1,389 valid households, 1,260 participated in the study—a response rate of 90.7 per cent. The 1,260 households interviewed accounted for 5,720 residents with an average household size of 4.5 individuals. Nearly 40 per cent (38.4 per cent) of the household members were under 20. More than half (52.7 per cent) were female.

Twenty-three households reported that a homicide had taken place during the period under review. The resulting calculated crude murder rate was 219 per 100,000 per year. This means that an estimated 8,000 (95 per cent confidence interval 5,000–12,000) individuals were murdered. The most common cause of death was by gunfire ( $n=15$ ; 65 per cent). Other causes were blunt force trauma, 'torture', sharp object wound, and asphyxiation. Findings suggest 5,200 individuals were murdered by firearms during the 22-month period examined. Criminals were the largest group of perpetrators in these murders (47.8 per cent), while police officers were named as responsible in 21.7 per cent, and members of the demobilized army and armed anti-Lavalas groups (e.g. *Lame TiMachete*) in 26 per cent. Of the firearm deaths, 40 per cent involved an unknown type of gun, 33 per cent involved a handgun, and 27 per cent were committed with a rifle.

#### The politics of information

This study generated significant controversy. Critics claimed to perceive bias because the study did not detect any Lavalas murders or sexual assaults; some argued that Lavalas partisans had thus been 'exonerated'. Others accused the authors of having a 'pro-Lavalas' bias, in part because one of the authors had volunteered ten years earlier at an orphanage founded by Jean-Bertrand Aristide, of the Lavalas party, and had covered Haiti as a journalist.

Given the statistical power of the sample size and the survey methodology employed, it is not possible to detect all cases in which a particular political actor may have been involved. The study did not detect UN killings either, though the UN has accepted responsibility for such deaths. Misunderstandings of the standard epidemiological methodologies and procedures used in this study—by both the press and parties with vested interests—appear to have contributed to the controversy. Individuals critical of the findings may also have had political motivations.

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addition, up to 11,000 people were victims of kidnapping or extra-judicial detention by various paramilitary organizations. Violence increased during this period against the backdrop of a deteriorating political situation in the country. With external support, former soldiers had ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. Armed violence then increased in part as a result of the criminal banditry perpetrated by politicized armed militias or *chimères*. About 170,000–210,000 small arms were in circulation during this period—the vast majority of them illegal (Muggah, 2005a).

Karachi, a city of more than 10 million inhabitants, had the highest reported crime rate in Pakistan, with a reported homicide rate of 13 per 100,000 in the mid-1990s (Chotani et al., 2002, p. 58). While the order of magnitude may be lower than that of Caracas or Port-au-Prince, the city nonetheless reported more than 2,100 political murders in 1995. Detailed epidemiological studies of the pattern of victimization established that 83 per cent of the victims were killed by firearms, and that 46 per cent of the dead and injured were from only four neighbourhoods, populated mostly by Mohajirs, Muslim immigrants from India. One neighbourhood, Korangi, which had only six per cent of the population, witnessed 22 per cent of the homicides (Chotani et al., 2002, pp. 58–59). Studies of more than 4,000 victims of intentional injury in 1993–96 demonstrate that opposition to political activity was a clear predictor of victimization, and that firearms were the overwhelming weapon (83 per cent) (Mian et al., 2002; Chotani et al., 2002; Esser, 2004).

Karachi is not the only South Asian city suffering from political violence. Mumbai was rocked by communal–political violence in 1993, with the Hindu Shiv Sena movement targeting Muslim minorities in riots and large-scale acts of violence that left more than 800 dead. Small arms were frequently used, particularly by the police to contain riots. A subsequent government inquiry established ‘Shiv Sena’s and other political parties’ blatant involvement in the violence, and the abuse of authority by the police’ (Hansen, 2001, p. 132).

A similar structure exists in Nigerian cities, which exhibit a tendency towards inter-communal conflict; in 2002, armed violence killed more than 100 people in Lagos, where links between armed gangs, local political elites, and the criminal underworld are strong (CNN, 2002; Harnischfeger, 2003). The same pattern of inter-linked criminal and political violence is manifest in Nairobi (Anderson, 2002). While not confined to urban areas, the political mobilization of communal groups and the creation of armed militias in urban areas have contributed to insecurity and violence in many Southern cities.

### **Violent urbanization: containment in fragile and fragmented cities**

There is no necessary causal relationship between urbanization and armed violence, and not all urban spaces are sites of violence and victimization. Tokyo is a case in point: with 35 million residents, it is by far the most populous urban agglomeration in the world, yet it is also one of the safest cities on the planet. Levels of violence and victimization are also dynamic across time: large cities such as New York and Atlanta experienced dramatic declines in armed violence during the 1990s, while others witnessed increases or no change. But decreasing levels of armed violence do not necessarily correlate with people’s perceptions of their security.

As the IADB has noted, ‘even where statistics on violence are accurate, tremendous gaps can exist between subjective perceptions of violence and objective fact’. A single violent incident in an upscale district can generate lasting impacts on attitudes and real-estate estimates, and ‘it is not unusual for governments to take action . . . as a result of pressure from the public’s perception of a lack of public safety, even when statistics suggest relatively low levels of crime and violence’ (Guerrero Velazco, 2003). Briceño-León argues that ‘fear is distributed on a more egalitarian basis than that of the population’s real security . . . the role of the mass media, vicarious victimization and rumour lead to similar feelings in victimized and non-victimized groups’ (Briceño-León, 2005, p. 1632).

In many parts of the developing world, real and perceived levels of violence are intricately linked to the fragmentation of public space, which in turn can be related to the speed at which urbanization is taking place. In this context, it is suitable to talk about the violence of urbanization rather than urban violence (Boisteau, 2006). In some cities, parts of slums and shantytowns have taken on the character of forbidden gang and crime zones beyond the control

**Real and perceived levels of violence are often linked to the fragmentation of public space.**

of public security forces. As a result, middle- and upper-class residents may feel the need to build walls to shield themselves, giving rise to a landscape of gated communities. Real and perceived violence mutually reinforce each other to create what Agbola (1997), describing conditions in contemporary Lagos, has aptly termed an ‘architecture of fear’. In frantic efforts to protect themselves, the wealthy hide behind increasingly elaborate systems of security, supplied and maintained by private firms. The result is a fragmentation of public space, a breakdown of social cohesion through the generation of new forms of spatial segregation and social discrimination, and potentially more violence (see Box 5.6).

According to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT, 2006), almost half of all Latin American and Caribbean cities have areas that are considered dangerous and inaccessible to state security services. In such spaces, gangs, vigilantes, militia groups, and organized crime syndicates prosper, reordering social networks and offering alternative forms of social cohesion. In the light of the extent of these new forms of socio-spatial organization and informal governance, some analysts have begun to talk about failed or fragile cities (Moreau and Hussain, 2002). Not unlike certain states, some cities are powerless as their authorities lose their monopoly over the legitimate use of force—powerful gangs are in control on one side of the wall, and private security forces on the other.

Police attempt to keep watch over Nairobi's Mathare slum following overnight clashes in November 2006. © Tony Karumba/AFP/Getty Images





**Box 5.6 Undermining public space: the phenomenon of gated communities**

'Residents from all social groups argue that they build walls and change their habits to protect themselves from crime. However, the effects of these security strategies go far beyond self-protection. By transforming the urban landscape, citizens' strategies of security also affect patterns of circulation, habits, gestures related to the use of streets, public transportation, parks, and all public spaces. How could the experience of walking on the streets not be transformed if one's environment consists of high fences, armed guards, closed streets, and video cameras instead of gardens and yards, neighbors talking, and the possibility of glancing at some family scene through the windows? The idea of going for a walk, of naturally passing among strangers, the act of strolling through the crowd that symbolizes the modern experience of the city, are all compromised in a city of walls. People feel restricted in their movements, afraid, and controlled; they go out less at night, walk less on the street, and avoid the "forbidden zones" that loom larger and larger in every resident's mental map of the city, especially among the elite. Encounters in public space become increasingly tense, even violent, because they are framed by people's fears and stereotypes. Tension, separation, discrimination, and suspicion are the new hallmarks of public life.'

—Teresa Caldeira, *City of Walls* (2000, p. 297)



A gated suburban community borders on the La Cava slum on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, underscoring the glaring divide between rich and poor in Argentina. © Natacha Pisarenko/AP Photo



These new circumstances have had profound effects on urban governance. The logic of spatial fragmentation clearly puts the focus on containment rather than prevention, exclusion rather than participation. As Moser and Rodgers write, the ‘policing of urban order is increasingly concerned with the management of space rather than the disciplining of offenders’ (2005, p. vii). Policies and programming designed to reduce urban violence must take into account this social and physical reorganization of urban space, and must understand that it is shaped as much by people’s perceptions of armed violence and victimization, as by actual criminality. In much the same way as the ‘war on terror’, the architecture of fear requires continuous affirmation of threat in order to justify its continuation.

## URBAN RESPONSES TO ARMED VIOLENCE

Multilateral donors and national policy-makers are becoming increasingly aware that the prevalence of urban armed violence constitutes a major constraint to achieving meaningful development and good governance.<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding certain disagreements over the underlying causes, costs, and consequences of urban armed violence, rates of homicide and other forms of armed violence—and the attendant fear and insecurity—are a major preoccupation within the public and private sectors (Moser, 2006, p. 2). In some cases, the virulence of urban violence rivals that commonly found in armed conflicts. Mounting concern over ‘urban warfare’ has generated a corresponding policy discourse with responses seeking to ‘combat’ violent crime and win the ‘war’ against drug and arms trafficking.

As the impacts of armed violence are felt locally, pressure to reduce them is often brought to bear at the municipal level. Governors, mayors, elected councillors, and civil servants are on the front line of reducing gun violence. A vast assortment of non-governmental organizations, trade unions, private sector entities, and activists are responsible for advocating for and implementing initiatives to prevent and reduce armed violence. The growing international aware-

### Box 5.7 The Armed Violence Prevention Programme: towards evidence-guided prevention of armed violence

The Armed Violence Prevention Programme (AVPP) is an inter-agency collaboration initiated by the UN Development Programme and the World Health Organization. Its overall objective is to promote effective inter-institutional synergies and partnerships to enhance strategies and policy frameworks designed to prevent armed violence. Global and national activities, including focused assessments in Brazil and El Salvador, have been undertaken since 2004.

Systematic inventories of violence prevention programmes documented information on more than 175 Brazilian and 145 Salvadoran municipal violence prevention programmes. In both countries, interventions tended to be urban-based, initiated with local political support, and combining a variety of violence prevention strategies. At the same time, the majority of documented interventions were constrained by funding and human resource limitations and weaknesses in coordination and systematic exchange and learning.

From the broader sample, a smaller selection of violence prevention and reduction activities was thoroughly evaluated. Three of these included activities targeting high-risk youth, another entailed a community-based programme to prohibit weapons-carrying. Despite a number of constraints, these efforts were deemed to have generated a broadly positive impact on reducing risk factors associated with armed violence or actual perpetration rates of armed violence.

Several international processes are raising the profile and relevance of the AVPP. The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development of 2006 and the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee to develop guidance on armed violence reduction are two examples. Findings from the AVPP are feeding directly into both of these efforts and future activities at the global and national level will aim to increase programming effectiveness through more integrated and cooperative work at a national level, inclusive activities with civil society and international agency partners, and a commitment to enhancing measurement, monitoring, and evaluation.

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ness of the scope and impact of urban armed violence has coincided with a trend towards the decentralization of government administration and services, and the delegation and reallocation of related functions and resources to local government structures. These forces have combined to generate mounting pressure on mayors and local authorities to craft responses, often without a commensurate reallocation of resources.

Tensions persist between national and municipal approaches to violence reduction and arms control. For example, multilateral and bilateral donors often privilege *national* programming when it comes to development and security-related priorities. Investment in legislative reform and good governance, enabling mechanisms for arms control and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) or security sector reform (SSR) are channelled through ministries and departments for foreign affairs, the interior, finance, justice, and defence of developing countries. In many cases, donors design and finance programmes in collaboration with national institutions of recipient governments—including parliaments and national commissions. Financing mechanisms are approved and accounted for within national executives and legislatures, thus assuring donors that programmes are ‘nationally owned’. While the positive outcomes are expected to be felt locally, overall control remains a national prerogative. At best, as in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana, armed violence prevention and reduction priorities are mainstreamed into national development planning frameworks, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes and UN Development Assistance Frameworks.

Though national institutions may be essential for sustaining and expanding the reach and scale of discrete prevention and reduction projects, it is often the mayors, local officials, non-governmental agencies, and faith-based groups that are responsible for advancing the process. Precedents are emerging for bridging the international–national–municipal divides. For example, Colombia’s efforts to promote municipal-based armed violence reduction and arms control offer a model for the Andean region. Specifically, Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali applied for and obtained loans from the IADB in the late 1990s to finance violence prevention and public safety programmes. Though loans were guaranteed by the national government, they were secured, managed, and repaid by the three cities. The IADB approved similar loan arrangements for Uruguay and other Latin American countries: as much as USD 150 million has been committed to six ‘citizen security’ loans and technical cooperation projects (Alda et al., 2006; Buvinic, Morrison, and Shifter, 2002; Buvinic and Morrison, 2000).

There is, of course, a range of established risk factors that contribute to the onset and virulence of urban armed violence. In addition to rapid urbanization, these factors may include inefficient and non-credible judicial and law enforcement sectors, the absence of employment opportunities for youth, the prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse, and unregulated small arms possession. The chapter on Brazil (BRAZIL) reveals that risks can vary widely from one city to another. Municipal authorities are aware that interventions must be tailored to the particular context in which they are planned and executed. There is no standard template or blueprint for local armed violence reduction. Rather, there are thousands of heterogeneous and variegated municipally based interventions to mitigate urban crime, armed violence, and arms availability.

### **Typology of municipal small arms control**

Multilateral agencies and developed country governments are becoming increasingly committed to investing in human security and public safety in urban areas. Coupled with developmental objectives such as a significant reduction in the number of slum-dwellers by 2020, the relationships between urban spaces, organized crime, and post-conflict reconstruction and recovery are also intensifying security-oriented concerns (UNDP, 2006; UN-HABITAT, 2005; Brennan,

**Mayors, local officials, and civil society often advance violence reduction and prevention projects.**

### Box 5.8 Freedom from fear in urban areas

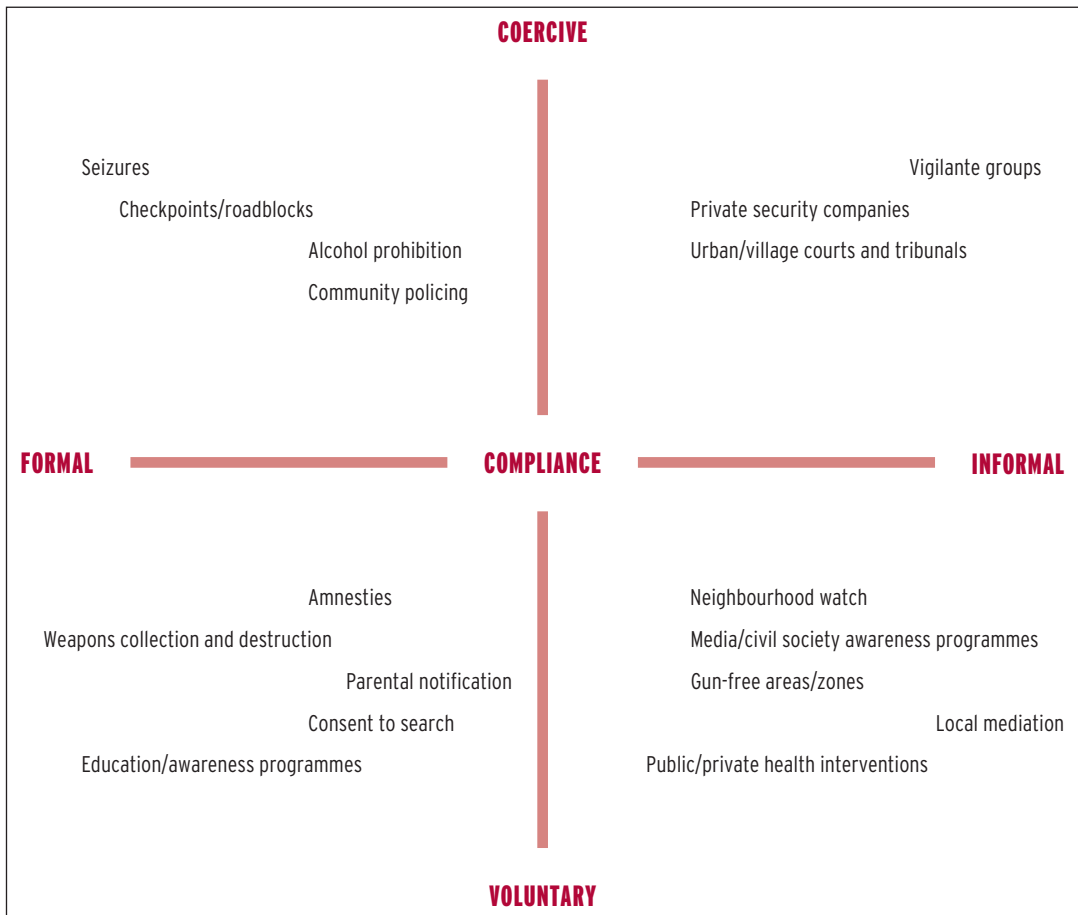
The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) recently launched an initiative entitled 'Human Security—Cities: Freedom from Fear in Urban Spaces'. The adoption of an 'urban lens', they argue, 'allows for a better understanding of peace-building or conflict-generating trends that are unique to cities, so as to strengthen and improve upon human security policy and programming'.

The mushrooming of slums in many cities around the world, coupled with a lack of corresponding investment in public security, has led to a stark increase in the number of areas without an effective police presence. With the authorities often accused of social cleansing, the excessive use of force, and collusion with gangs, private security services are on the rise. The result is a 'bifurcated security structure' of gated communities on the one hand, and gangs selling security services to residents on the other.

A further consequence of the failure to provide public security is the potentially explosive combination of youth, arms, and gangs in urban areas, with well-armed, organized gangs controlling streets and neighbourhoods. The affordability and availability of small arms in cities means that these gangs are often better armed than the police. DFAIT's initiative thus emphasizes the need for effective security sector reform, explores the notion of 'conflict-resilient cities', and highlights the need to think about urban governance as one of the key tools in the promotion of human security.

Source: DFAIT (2007)

Figure 5.5 **Conceptual typology of municipal arms control strategies**



1999). Uncontrolled urban growth brings the social and economic segregation of the wealthy from the poor into sharp relief. As a result, certain donor governments have defined improvements in public and private security and demilitarization as foreign and national policy objectives (DFAIT, 2007; see Box 5.8). Many cities in developed and developing countries alike have themselves launched an array of interventions to rein in armed violence.

Though highly varied in form and content, municipal-level armed violence prevention and reduction activities can be mapped out as a conceptual typology (see Figure 5.5). These can be organized according to their form (coercive, compliance-based, or voluntary) and institutional structure (formal or informal). *Coercive* approaches encompass aggressive top-down strategies to deterring and reducing violence such as forcible disarmament, cordon, and search activities and intelligence-led interventions. They often target high-risk groups including would-be perpetrators, repeat offenders, ex-combatants, and young men. *Compliance-based* activities seek to encourage changes in behaviour through the threat and enforcement of selective penalties. They often include decentralized and community-centred approaches to policing and promoting the rule of law.

Meanwhile, *voluntary* interventions are designed to encourage participation in armed violence prevention and reduction. As such they often include temporary amnesties, educational and awareness-building initiatives, and community-led arms collection activities. All three forms of interventions can be formal—that is, mandated and organized by the state—or informal, organized and implemented outside the remit of the state.

Effective urban violence prevention and reduction interventions apply a combination of coercive, compliance-oriented, and voluntary approaches. ‘Effectiveness’ here implies sustained improvements in objective and subjective indicators of security (McCord, 2003). For example, the widely lauded Boston Gun Project and the St. Louis ‘consent-to-search’ programme piloted a carefully sequenced package of activities to enhance real and perceived safety (US NIJ, 2004). Coercive approaches—including swift and selective arrests, pedestrian and traffic stops, and search warrants—together with compliance-promotion (e.g. consent searches, parent notification) and voluntary initiatives (e.g. gun buybacks, turn-in campaigns, and town hall meetings) were pursued via a partnership between federal, state, and local security providers. In selected catchment areas in Boston, fatal and non-fatal firearm injuries decreased while perceived security increased: between 1990 and 1998, homicides dropped threefold and non-fatal gunshot injuries decreased by 65 per cent (Cook and Ludwig, 2004; Mogul, 1999). Analogous problem-oriented policing approaches have been consciously exported to and adopted in Manchester (Bullock and Tilley, 2002).

#### Box 5.9 Bottom-up and top-down approaches to violence prevention and reduction

Participatory urban appraisals of armed violence intervention programmes in Colombia and Guatemala identified several approaches to designing, implementing, and measuring the impact of armed violence prevention and reduction interventions. They emphasize criminal justice; public health; human rights; citizen security; environmental design; and community empowerment (Moser, 2006, p. 6).

The *criminal justice* perspective privileges deterrence through arrest, conviction, and punishment by the police, courts, and prison system. The *public health* approach emphasizes ‘risk triggers’ and promotes case-by-case interventions by isolating causal pathways—alcoholism, single-headed households, and firearms availability. The *rights-based* approach draws from existing human rights principles and norms and promotes basic entitlements of freedom from armed violence. The *citizen security* approach combines both criminal and health-related interventions to promote peace and co-existence by strengthening juvenile violence prevention, community-police relations, and rehabilitation at the local level. The *environmental* approach is spatially focused on dangerous or high-risk areas and aims to restore and enhance physical structures through urban renewal. Finally, *community organizations* emphasize the restoration of social capital—namely trust and unity—through informal and formal institution-building (Lederman et al., 2002).

Effective urban violence prevention and reduction programmes often build on a solid evidence base and robust public–private partnerships. Collaborative arrangements can be formally institutionalized, while in other cases they remain informal and ad hoc. For example, certain cities in the European Union and Latin America established multi-stakeholder ‘crime prevention councils’ to act as a forum to enhance the sustainability of armed violence reduction (Shropshire and McFarquhar, 2002; Bullock and Tilley, 2002). During the early 1990s, the Dutch government negotiated a USD 19 million security contract with ‘problem municipalities’ in order to undertake community policing, anti-hooligan programmes, the recruitment of mediators, and the development of a network of communal substance abuse centres to reduce armed violence (Vourc’h and Marcus, 1993). In other cases, municipal programmes are combined with larger-scale SSR initiatives.<sup>12</sup>

### Coercive approaches

Urban armed violence prevention and reduction interventions traditionally advanced coercive deterrence-based approaches to affect changes in real and perceived victimization. High-profile national programmes emphasizing repression and police deployment were more likely to secure greater public sympathy and assuage popular anxieties—particularly among elite segments of the population—than low-key voluntary initiatives. As noted by Buvinic and Morrison, ‘prevention . . . is a long-term proposition and one that does not buy many votes’ (2000, p. 69). An expectation was that muscular police-led operations to ‘crack down’ on high-risk groups—from paramilitaries, militia, gangs, and ‘terrorist cells’ to unemployed youth, ‘delinquents’, and others—could generate visible improvements in safety.

**The results of coercive violence reduction and prevention interventions are mixed.** Coercive strategies to reduce armed violence typically emphasized heightened police presence as well as increases in arrests and long-term incarceration. Such approaches persist over time in different states: the United States and the Russian Federation reported incarceration rates of 5 per 1,000 during the mid-1990s as compared to 1.7 per 1,000 in the rest of the world during this period (Vanderschueren, 1996, p. 103). Potential acts of armed violence were expected to be pre-empted through the credible threat and use of force, the rapid dispensing of justice, and the broadcasting of severe penalties and incarceration rates. The ‘demonstration effects’ of successfully executed coercive approaches were expected to discourage would-be violators and repeat offenders.

The results of coercive approaches, however, are mixed. Across time and space coercive interventions alone do not appear to deter successfully or measurably reduce armed violence. There were also rising concerns that high-profile coercive initiatives diverted resources away from more effective, low-visibility preventive programmes and served to stigmatize the ‘targets’, thereby further contributing to criminality. Although in most cases such approaches are supported by the electorate owing to the enhanced sense of security they engender, the statistical evidence is limited. In the UK, the 2001 Halliday Report estimated that a 15 per cent increase in prison populations would be required to generate a mere one per cent drop in crime (Home Office, 2001, p. 9).

Coercive approaches to preventing and reducing armed violence also tend to focus on seizing weapons from illegal traffickers, brokers, and owners. Weapons seizures and confiscations, together with enhanced police and private security presence, are expected to send a message to high-risk groups. Targeted interventions designed to gather assault rifles, sub-machine guns, and even grenades, mortars, and light weapons are not uncommon in North and Latin American, Balkan, and African cities. For example, more than 53,500 handguns were forcefully collected by police between 1990 and 2001 from Rio de Janeiro’s 700 *favelas*—though the casualty rates of such operations were tremendously high. This should be compared to the 250,000 firearms collected voluntarily through weapons



### Box 5.10 Guns and gang violence in Los Angeles

Although levels of crime in Los Angeles have dropped over the past five years, the city has experienced a surge in gang violence. Gang membership has actually fallen in the past decade from more than 60,000 in the mid-1990s to fewer than 40,000 in 2006. But urban violence is highly concentrated among gangs: according to municipal police statistics, about half of all reported homicides are gang-related. Beyond firearms-related deaths and injuries, the widespread use of arms also takes a daily toll on residents living in low-income neighbourhoods, in particular in South Central and East Los Angeles.

Gun violence related to gang activity is the result of fights over turf, status, and revenge (VPC, 2001). It can be described as a neighbourhood 'ecology of danger' in which racial discrimination and geographic isolation contribute to an inner-city environment devoid of resources and opportunities and access to adequate housing, schools, grocery markets, and neighbourhoods that are available in mainstream society. African American and Latino youth in South Central and East Los Angeles succumb to alternate methods of attaining status and wealth—whether by joining gangs, selling narcotics, theft, or engaging in gun violence.

Successive interventions have been launched to reduce this urban armed violence. As recently as late 2006, a joint LAPD-FBI task force was established to deal with gang violence and attempt to increase transnational cooperation among police departments across North and Central America. Other interventions have focused on joint patrols, greater focus on intelligence collection, the prioritization of interventions on high-risk gangs, cooperation with neighbouring cities (within the state, across state lines, and across international borders), crackdowns on graffiti, increased surveillance and investigations of narcotics and firearm-related violations by federal agents, and the application of stiffer federal penalties (FBI, 2007).

Source: Maxwell (2006)

collection programmes between 2003 and 2005, during which time no civilians were killed or injured (WHO, PAHO, and Small Arms Survey, 2005).

Declining public confidence in governance and formal police and judicial systems in certain contexts has led to a growth in informal and privatized responses to urban insecurity. In the context of limited employment opportunities, vigilantes, gangs, militia, and for-hire private security groups have emerged to fill the gaps left by under-resourced police forces. These privatized security groups are becoming increasingly transnational in character: mayors and police authorities in the United States have described armed violence by gangs as 'a problem of international scope, [to be faced] on an international scale' (BBC, 2007; Tita et al., 2003b).

The strategies employed vary in the level of coercion applied. For example, in Los Angeles, inter-agency interventions focus on the arrest and deportation of members of the estimated 463 gangs (Tita et al., 2003a; see Box 5.10). Meanwhile, in several northern Nigerian cities, militant Muslim groups supplanted police functions by vigorously enforcing *sharia* law (Florquin and Berman, 2005). In Medellín and Bogotá, both guerrilla and paramilitary groups impose 'taxes' on local business as a form of protection, while in Cape Town vigilante groups such as People Against Gangsterism and Drugs regularly execute gang leaders to 'cleanse' the streets. As noted above, militant groups and gangs in inner cities and shantytowns of the world's major cities are becoming increasingly institutionalized and internationally connected (Hagedorn, 2005, p. 159; Moser and Rodgers, 2005, p. 23).

### Compliance-based approaches

The police and criminal justice systems serve as the fundamental pillars of law and order in a society. For a variety of reasons, their administration, management, and financing are normally centralized at the national and federal levels, thereby circumventing or overriding the control of municipal authorities. In most countries, national, military, and municipal policing and justice entities may experience overlapping jurisdictions within a single municipality or city. In certain instances, institutional relationships can become highly politicized and adversarial, while in others

they may be complementary and reinforcing. Compliance-based interventions thus occur at the interface of these internally competing agendas and tend to reinforce even greater decentralized community-based responses with an emphasis on enhanced judicial functions.

An array of compliance-based approaches to managing armed violence—including community-based policing—have emerged in a wide variety of contexts. Community policing emphasizes community-centred awareness and solutions, proactive rather than reactive interventions, more on-the-ground engagement of police in the everyday affairs of neighbourhoods, enhanced visibility and active patrolling on foot or bicycle, and a participatory approach with increased delegation and discretion. The expectation is that local governments are in a better position to successfully apply and monitor police and the dispensation of justice. In some cases, community policing is formally institutionalized in existing security structures. In Japan, for example, policing services are highly decentralized and focused on enhancing visibility at the local level: 15,000 neighbourhood police stations are spread out across the country with some 9,000 also serving as permanent residences for police in rural areas. Japanese police officers have wide discretion in managing offenders, thus allowing them to cut through bureaucracy and reserve the shame of trial for more serious offences.<sup>13</sup> In other cases, community policing is introduced in a targeted fashion to enhance outreach and support devolved services—as in Brazil, Malawi, and Tanzania (UNODC, 2007).

**Compliance-based approaches rely on the decentralization of justice services.**

As opposed to sanctioning interventions from above, compliance-based approaches aim to enhance local-level resilience in relation to preventing and reducing urban violence. One approach—described as the ‘broken-window theory’—advocates decentralization and delegation of policing functions to the precinct and community level, enhanced local monitoring and surveillance, and a practical problem-solving approach to visible petty offences in order to encourage reductions in violent crime. The theory, itself heavily contested among urban sociologists, is that there is an iterative relationship between improvements in perceived and real security as well as between different types of criminality (Kelling and Coles, 1996). Broken-window strategies were consciously employed in New York, and later in Los Angeles and Mexico City, in a bid to contain and reduce firearm-related homicide. Over a five-year period in the mid-1990s, then New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton was credited with overseeing a drop in firearm-related homicide by almost 70 per cent, with general violations of the law cut in half. Interventions focused on mitigating petty crime, but there were also simultaneous efforts to control firearms and interrogate suspects to uncover the origins of seized weapons.<sup>14</sup> Strategies encouraged the visible dismantling of gangs on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis and targeted efforts to rein in non-violent crime, such as prostitution and drug trafficking (Harnett and Andrews, 1999; Kelling and Coles, 1996).

A governing assumption of compliance-based approaches is that the decentralization of justice services will overcome the inertia of overburdened and inefficient judicial systems. Such reforms are expected to restore public confidence in the rule of law and the tendency to take justice into one’s own hands and settle grievances through recourse to weapons rather than the courts. Conventional reforms focus on national-level improvements to the administration of justice, increases in the quality and quantity of judicial services, enhanced prison and incarceration systems, and even alternative methods for conflict mediation. But there are also innovative decentralized approaches focused on improving local service delivery. Especially effective pilots introduced in certain countries include the *Maisons de Justice* (France) and neighbourhood tribunals such as *people’s reconciliation* in China, the *barangay* in the Philippines, and *barrio courts* in Latin America.

Municipal authorities frequently experiment with innovative approaches to improving the efficiency and public perception of the justice system, especially in relation to armed violence prevention and reduction. For example, in

Colombia, the *casas de justicia* (houses of justice) are an experiment in the decentralization of the courts and increased local processing. From the mid-1990s onwards, several *casas* were established in both Cali and Bogotá, then considered among the most violent cities in the country (Muggah et al., 2006). These entailed the involvement of the office of the District Attorney, Family Violence Intake Centres, Victim Assistance Offices, Forensic Medicine and Prosecution, as well as police oversight and legal aid services to on-site locations in acutely affected areas. Although no comprehensive evaluation has been undertaken, early results relating to processing claims and public perception suggest dramatic reductions in armed violence and gun use (Buvinić et al., 2005).

Other, more informal approaches to enhancing the delivery of justice services have emerged in Africa. Following the Ugandan civil war in the 1980s, for example, a series of ‘resistance councils’ emerged with responsibilities delegated to cities and rural areas. Legalized in 1988 and with democratically elected leaders, the councils sought to guarantee security and respect for the law in their areas of jurisdiction, to interface with government initiatives, and to promote development according to participatory processes. They played a pivotal role by intervening in civil cases—whether for debt, contracts, damage to property, land disputes, or in certain criminal cases. In contrast to the formal courts, they delivered justice quickly, free of charge, and in a locally appropriate fashion (Nsibambi, 1991).

### Voluntary approaches

The bulk of contemporary urban armed violence and arms control activities emphasize primarily voluntary approaches—albeit often in combination with other types of interventions. Indeed, the UN and other multilateral organizations tend to discourage coercive interventions, or at least avoid undertaking such activities outside of mandated peace-enforcement operations. Voluntary interventions range from firearm amnesties and weapons collection programmes to urban sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns (see Box 5.11). In 2002, Kuhn et al. (2002)

#### Box 5.11 Philadelphia students campaign against gun violence

In January 2004, we, the students of Philadelphia’s Jubilee School had a discussion about an epidemic that was destroying our neighbourhood: gun violence. A former Jubilee student had been shot and killed—he was 18. We decided to do something about guns by starting the Children’s Campaign against Gun Violence.

As part of our campaign, we wrote a petition that says: ‘We, the children of Pennsylvania, are asking you to let kids live their future. We want neighborhoods to be gun-free. Please change the laws so we can experience life in a safe environment. You should make the right choice and help us get rid of guns and drugs. We want to grow up with dignity and power instead of being scared.’

We went to schools and discussed gun violence with other children. The teenagers we met said: ‘We need guns to protect us.’ The children in elementary school were more willing to accept the fact that guns are killing, not protecting. We got almost 300 signatures on our petition by students from eight different schools. We presented the petitions to the Philadelphia City Council, the governor of Pennsylvania, and a state representative.

We organized and participated in a Children’s March against Gun Violence. Overall, our campaign went beyond what we thought it would. We were invited to a small arms conference held by the United Nations to share our experience with gun violence and how the laws should be changed. Representatives from other countries listened to us and treated us seriously and with respect.

Although we are children, we want to do our part to make the world a safer place. We want to have another children’s march, speak in more schools, and collect more signatures for our petition. We also plan to work on a documentary film about gun violence and its effects. We would like to interview activist groups, so they can give us the knowledge we need to succeed in ending this epidemic.

By the students of the Jubilee School, Philadelphia

A Guacaipuro gang member holds on to his gun as he takes a swig in the Petare slum of Caracas, October 2006. © Fabio Cuttica/Contrasto/eyevine

### Box 5.12 Addressing armed violence in Caracas<sup>15</sup>

While publicly committed to addressing longstanding social injustices in one of Latin America's most unequal societies, the administration of President Hugo Chávez has ushered in the most violent period in Venezuela's recent history. Demonstrations and clashes between government and opposition groups have left a polarized and intolerant climate that led citizens to rank insecurity over unemployment as the principal problem facing the country today. Though increasingly unreliable and inconsistent, official statistics confirm these perceptions. At 65 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004, the annual homicide rate in Venezuela more than doubled since 1998, surpassing even neighbouring Colombia in 2003.<sup>16</sup>

The Inter-American Development Bank ranked Caracas the second most violent city in Latin America in terms of death due to homicide during the period 1999–2003, with an estimated 133 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. More than half of Caracas's 3.5 million residents lack access to basic services and infrastructure. Unchecked violence in the city's barrios, such as Petare, is accompanied with a weak justice system and ineffective public security institutions. This is due in part to Caracas' fragmented administrative base; the city's five municipalities share territory with different states and have their own distinctly uniformed police forces. Popular militias, or *Círculos Bolivarianos*, have taken up arms in self-defence and wage urban warfare with opposition groups. One result has been that the percentage of homicides associated with firearms rose from 64 per cent in 1998 to 87 per cent in 2004.<sup>17</sup>

In Caracas deaths occurring in clashes between demonstrators and the police increased by nearly 800 per cent between 1999 and 2004, and violent deaths are increasingly registered as 'resistance to authority' and 'other violent deaths' rather than as homicides. Such extra-judicial killings are reflected in a ratio of civil to police victims of 39:1 nationally, much higher than that observed in Brazil (10:1) and far above the international average (5:1). Moreover, these violations are rarely investigated; of 9,719 known homicides in 2004, 62 per cent were referred to prosecutors, 14 per cent led to arrests, and only 7 per cent resulted in sentences.

Public and community-based security initiatives have had little impact so far on the escalating violence. In September 2006, the Chávez administration proposed a USD 4.6 million gun buyback programme that would offer USD 140–230 to people who turn in revolvers and pistols (San Francisco Chronicle, 2006). Such disarmament programmes are likely to have little lasting impact without significant reform of the police, justice, and penitentiary systems. Leopoldo López, mayor of the municipality of Chacao in Caracas, has proposed a comprehensive plan that includes institutional reforms as well as a range of strategies for violence monitoring and prevention.<sup>18</sup> Initiatives such as better street lighting, reclaiming public space, and the construction of 'vertical' gymnasiums have also had positive impacts.<sup>19</sup> In 2006, however, the proposed budget for the Ministry of Defence was some 80 times greater than that of the Ministries of Interior and Justice, implying that municipal safety and security in Venezuela's urban centres is not a high priority (Venezuela National Budget Law, 2006).

By Brodie Ferguson







reported that there had been more than 100 separate firearm buy-back programmes in the United States alone in the past decade.<sup>20</sup> Previous editions of the *Small Arms Survey* reviewed national and community-based arms collection initiatives ranging from conventional DDR to discrete arms control interventions focused on national regulation, export and import controls, enhanced registration, improved border and customs control, and stockpile inventory security.<sup>21</sup>

Various types of amnesties are frequently administered by a national or municipal authority to encourage voluntary reductions in armed violence. Though often voluntary and time-bound, they are usually preceded and followed by a series of penalties and are thus implicitly linked to the compliance and coercive-based approaches reviewed above. Amnesties were successfully introduced in several urban contexts to encourage the voluntary surrendering of illegal or legal arms for public destruction, as in Albania, Mali, Cambodia, Brazil, and Colombia (Muggah, 2006). They are also frequently legislated to encourage the surrender and destruction of replicas and toy weapons, and thus serve a useful educational function.

Awareness and sensitization programmes are credited with successfully influencing access and resort to armed violence and small arms. Because prevailing social norms structure the motivations for acquiring firearms, an appreciation of and response to relevant risk factors as well as associated means (real and relative prices and resources) constitute important entry points for altering behavior. Education—particularly at the primary, secondary, and vocational levels—can play a major role in shaping the motivations and means of weapons acquisition and misuse (Brauer and Muggah, 2006; Atwood et al., 2006).

**Classical approaches  
to violence  
prevention and  
reduction are being  
forced to adapt.**

Many examples of community-based education programmes exist to reinforce tolerance and anti-violence norms among male and female youth in urban environments. For example, in Jamaica, the PALS programme adopted the Foundation for Peace Education model and aims to educate children about conflict resolution and alternatives to gun violence.<sup>22</sup> In Colombia, voluntary disarmament programmes were bolstered by a deliberate strategy of enhancing a *cultura ciudadana* (citizen culture) and distributing textbooks in exchange for toy handguns. As a result of these and other interventions, firearm-related homicide and unintentional injury rates reportedly declined among youth segments of the population (Aguirre et al., 2006, p. 232).

Changing demographics and priorities in rapidly urbanizing contexts are forcing classical approaches to violence prevention and reduction—including disarmament—to adapt. At a minimum, interventions are accommodating a more multidisciplinary approach (Cuesta et al., 2007). There is awareness that no single disciplinary perspective—whether sociology, demography, public health, or economics—adequately captures the inherent complexities of urban violence. A growing number of urban planners and policy-makers are conscious that bringing to bear the whole range of policy-relevant research—including criminology, epidemiology, and human geography—with evidence-based analysis is essential to identifying the dynamics of and effective solutions to urban armed violence.

## CONCLUSION

Cities are remarkably vibrant and resilient and, given their diversity, few global generalizations can be made about the phenomenon of urban armed violence. This chapter has provided an overview of the wide variation in the level and scope of urban armed violence: from its near-total absence in such megacities as Tokyo, to near-epidemic levels in places such as Guatemala City or Cali—and from its links to conflict and post-conflict dynamics (Baghdad) to large-scale criminal activity in Latin American cities.

Despite this diversity, at least three major conclusions can be drawn to supplement the more specific observations made above. First, large-scale and rapid urbanization places enormous stress on the governance capacity of states and municipal authorities while also providing new opportunities for criminal and violent activity. Whether this potential becomes actual violence, however, depends on contextual factors, such as the availability of weapons and the strength of community and public security institutions.

Second, the changing nature of urban architecture (in its broadest sense) is often driven by individuals' real and perceived sense of insecurity, and violence is often contained or exported to peripheral urban zones characterized by poverty, poor infrastructure and services, and at times rampant insecurity.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, municipal interventions to reduce or prevent armed violence represent an important—and potentially the most important—policy instruments available to governments and international agencies and donors seeking to reduce the scope and scale of armed violence. Cities will thus be the object of an increasing focus of policy attention in the 'urban century'. ■

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVPP	Armed Violence Prevention Programme	ICVS	International Crime Victims Survey
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration	RGCS	Random GPS Coordinate Sampling
GPS	Global Positioning System	SSR	security sector reform
IADB	Inter-Agency Development Bank	UNICRI	UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

## ENDNOTES

- 1 See p. 3 of the Introduction to this volume for the *UN Report* definition.
- 2 Further support for this theory is provided by research in the United States and Latin America, although for crime as a whole, and not specifically armed violence. See Fajnzylber et al. (2002) and Gaviria and Pagés (2000). On violent crime in the United States, see Shaw-Taylor (2002), which notes that violent crime rates in smaller cities (average population around 200,000) were much lower than in the largest cities.
- 3 A correlation was found when the model controlled for country-specific effects, but not in the model without country-specific effects. This highlights the need for a contextual analysis of urban armed violence.
- 4 Material in this section is drawn directly from Wilkinson and Bell (2006). Moreover, Wintemute (1999) has shown that half of all US homicides occurred in 63 cities with 16 percent of the population.
- 5 See also Pérouse de Montclos (1997).
- 6 Glaeser and Sacerdote (1996); Campbell and Ormerod (n.d.); Vanderschueren (1996); and Sampson et al. (1997).
- 7 One notable exception is Blau and Blau (1982).
- 8 See also Rodríguez and León Wantland (2001, p. 207) and León and Sagone (2006, pp. 195–96).
- 9 Since 1989 the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) has been conducted in approximately 80 countries and large cities across the world. Data here refers to capital cities and urban areas (more than 100,000 population) that took part in different editions of the survey. Data presented in this box also includes victim surveys carried out in African capital cities and urban areas by UNODC (Cape Verde); UN-HABITAT–Safer Cities Programme (Nairobi, Dar es Salaam); the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (Malawi); and the Small Arms Survey (Burundi, Republic of Congo, DRC).

- 10 The main question asks, 'Do you or someone else in your household own a handgun, shotgun, rifle, or air rifle?' Then the respondent is requested to specify which type and for what purpose. The purpose categories are the following: hunting, target shooting as a sport, as a collector's item, for crime prevention/protection, as duty because the respondent is in armed forces or the police, or because it has always been in the family/home.
- 11 See, for instance, UNODC and World Bank (2007) on crime and violence in the Caribbean.
- 12 Justice and security sector reform, security system reform, and security sector reform are here treated as synonymous. See the OECD-DAC (2007) *IF-SSR Guidelines*.
- 13 In 1989, for example, police were responsible for 73 per cent of all arrests (and 96 per cent of arrests for homicide) and 76 per cent of thefts were solved (Brennan, 1999).
- 14 Specifically, an offensive was mounted against violators of weapons possession laws who, after being arrested, were interrogated to locate the source of small arms. People arrested for other minor offences were also interrogated.
- 15 Unless otherwise indicated, data in this box is drawn from information provided by the Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas Penales y Criminalísticas, Venezuela, and the Center for Peace and Human Rights of the Central University of Venezuela.
- 16 Data provided by the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, Colombia; Security and Democracy Foundation, Balance de Seguridad; and the National Institute of Statistics, Venezuela.
- 17 Data from annual mortality reports (1998–2004) of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, Venezuela.
- 18 See Alcaldía de Chacao (<<http://www.chacao.gov.ve/plan180/presentacion.htm>>)
- 19 See the Caracas Urban Think Tank (<<http://www.ccstt.org/>>)
- 20 These programmes range from individual activities such as interventions in Boston, Wisconsin, or Los Angeles, to a national buyback programme, co-funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and implemented in approximately 90 cities in 1999. The programme was discontinued in 2001. See <<http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa073101b.htm>>
- 21 See also Faltas et al. (2001).
- 22 See, for example, <<http://www.peace-ed.org/curricula/>>

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