

# International Journal of Conflict and Violence

## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 - 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 - 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 - 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 - 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 - 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources and**

**Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 - 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 - 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 - 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 - 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 - 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 - 233)

**International Journal of Conflict and Violence – IJCv**

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# Editorial

## Letter from the Editors

Dear reader,

A mere glance at the size of this issue will give you a clue as to why we are a little behind our publishing schedule this time. We apologize for the delay, and hope you agree with us that the results are well worth waiting for.

This issue focuses specifically on reviewing violence research in the Global South; this is the part of the world worst affected by violence, least able to manage its manifestations and consequences, but also most neglected by research. Promoting the scientific study of the Global South, especially by researchers from or based there, has always been one of this journal's priorities. So we are especially pleased to present a set of literature surveys that provide a picture of the findings to date and will hopefully serve as a valuable resource for further research: four geographical reviews covering the entire geographical sweep of LDCs and NICs from Manchuria to Cape Horn are complemented by thematic contributions on resources and conflict and on the regional diffusion of violence.

Of the other four contributions in this issue, two fittingly originate from Brazil: an examination of the problems involved in interpreting crime statistics and a study of the effects of affirmative action on ethnic identity. But to show that our remit is truly global, we also have two pieces concerning Europe, on prejudice in Germany and ethnic stereotypes in Estonia.

And now of course, we turn our full attention to preparing the next issue, with a focus section on youth and violence, to appear in the fall.

July 2011

Wilhelm Heitmeyer    Douglas S. Massey    Steven F. Messner    James Sidanius    Michel Wieviorka

# The Nexus of Violence, Violence Research, and Development

## Introduction to the Focus Section

Peter Imbusch, University of Wuppertal, Germany

Alex Veit, University of Bremen, Germany

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# The Nexus of Violence, Violence Research, and Development

## Introduction to the Focus Section

Peter Imbusch, University of Wuppertal, Germany

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This focus section of the *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* is dedicated to violence and violence research in the Global South. It examines the causes, forms, perpetrators, processes, and outcomes of violence. While the contributions go into detail on what is commonly understood as politically motivated violence, they also examine societal, criminal, urban, and gendered violence, as well as the involvement of youth. Four articles explore the significance of violence in specific regions: Africa south of the Sahara, West Asia and North Africa, East Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The authors describe and assess the state of research within and about the different countries. Two further articles review the body of research on the causes of civil war, which has been the dominant issue in much violence-related research on the global South since the end of the Cold War.

The driving idea behind this focus section on violence in the global South was our concern with the nexus between development and violence. In many developing countries violence constitutes a central political, social, and economic problem. On the individual level, the experience of victimization through physical violence is a severe burden. Beyond survivors' trauma and harm, it is society as a whole that bears the cost of violence. Economically weak societies have the greatest difficulties responding to these challenges. Indeed, many societies in the global South face severe endemic forms of violence. Despite a reduction in the frequency of civil wars over the last twenty years, violence rates have remained constant or even risen considerably. The different forms of social, political and criminal violence are often mutually reinforcing, in effects termed "spirals of violence" or "cultures of violence" (Ayres 1998; Buvinic and Morrison n.d.; Heinemann and Verner 2006; Solimano 2004). Despite the severity of the problem, academic and political responses have been slow, inadequate, or non-existent. By providing a relatively broad perspective

on the different forms of violence across the global South, we seek to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of violence in its different forms, causes, and outcomes. We hope that the contributions we have brought together in this focus section will assist future comparative research that brings together different strands and areas of research, and thereby helps to develop cross-cutting political initiatives for reducing violence in the global South.

The societal damage done by violence may be divided into three categories: Where violence prevails, development structures are undermined, poverty is aggravated, and states and civil societies come under pressure (WHO 2002; UNDP 2006; Institute for Economics and Peace 2010). Direct and indirect costs for the affected societies are immense. Lost economic growth due to societal violence amounts to 10–30 percent of GDP. In its 2010 report, the Global Peace Index estimates the total cost of violence for 2006–2009 at \$28 trillion worldwide. A reduction of 25 percent would yield a gain of more than \$7 trillion that

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comments, especially Steven Messner, Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Julia Marth, Kurt Salentin, and Stefan Malthaner.

could be spent for other purposes. Violence therefore is a heavy structural economic burden for societies. Violence diverts investment resources away from development.

Many authors demonstrate a convincing, mutually reinforcing relationship between poverty and violence. Poverty leads to violence, and violence intensifies poverty. It is no accident that countries with a low level of economic development and strong social inequality have the greatest problems with violence. Violence also leads to serious deformation of social structures, to a significant increase in social inequality, and to even more unequal distribution of income and wealth (DIW 2009; Groot, Brück, and Bozzoli 2009). Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) add to this relationship the fact that severe inequality likely leads to violence. This is not only true for the OECD countries. The insights are even more pronounced for the countries of the global South. Violence within societies worst affects those parts of the population that cannot safeguard themselves due to poverty or lack of resources. Therefore, at the same time, violence foils all efforts to reduce poverty.

On the level of societal and state institutions, democracy and the rule of law are regularly delegitimized, paralyzed, or made dysfunctional by high levels of intra-societal violence. Where people live in conditions of fear and insecurity, democratic political systems become destabilized. Civil society organizations, including the media, may no longer be able to fulfill their task of controlling the state and enhancing political debate if they are themselves threatened. State security organs confronted with high levels of (criminal) violence often themselves turn into risk factors. In many countries, police and other armed forces do not provide security, but are a main source of insecurity.

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, violence and its effects are no longer restricted to single countries. Phenomena such as transnational criminality, drug trafficking, the spillover of armed conflicts into neighboring states, and international terrorism are among the international costs. Countries in both the global South and the North must respond to such threats. The control of violence and its effects has become a major issue for the OECD states, often under the label of “security.” If informed by research, they may be able to develop differentiated sets

of interventions instead of simple repression. Beyond control of violence, however, the global North has a particular responsibility to tackle the causes of violence. In the face of global economic crisis resulting largely from economic policies in the global North, international organizations like WHO, UNDP, and the World Bank (2011) have repeatedly warned against worsening violent disintegration processes within already heterogeneous and fragmented societies in the global South.

#### **Violence Research in the Global South**

It may be regarded as established fact that certain problems of development are most fruitfully and sustainably resolved by the concerned societies themselves. Also regarding the nexus of violence and development, the ideal path would be for research to be conducted primarily from within societies struggling with forms of intra-societal violence. The geographical contributions in this focus section therefore also provide an overview about the specific situation of violence research within the countries they survey. It is no surprise that the situation for violence research at universities and academic research institutions differs widely, depending for example on the general level of development, the liberal or illiberal constitution of society, the democratic or authoritarian character of the state, the overall level of violence, the kind of violence involved, and public awareness of violence as a central problem.

Overall, despite the scale of the problem, violence research is nearly non-existent in many developing countries. Where such research exists, researchers themselves have to deal with serious challenges. It is often undertaken on an ad-hoc basis with rigid financial budgets but without adequate institutionalized structures. In many countries there is a complete lack of empirical research. In others it is dangerous to study violence because powerful groups in society or the state fear discovery of their involvement. For example, it is not unusual for journalists who investigate violence to suffer attack precisely because they shed light on forms of violence in a way that constitutes a threat to strongmen or formal political authorities.

There is no general relationship between the occurrence or visibility of violence in a society and the degree of in-

stitutionalization of violence research. Violence research is by far the most intense and most thoroughly institutionalized in North America and Western Europe, where societies endure comparatively low levels of violence. Our survey shows that the situation for institutionalized violence research in the global South is best in Latin America, which has long faced tremendous levels of violence, but also has a long endogenous social science tradition of its own. Still, it is individual scholars at universities (rather than dedicated research institutes) who do most of the impressive research with a specific focus on violence. On the other end of the spectrum we find certain Arab states, where even the most basic research on violence is difficult due to the authoritarian state. Institutionalization is weakest in sub-Saharan Africa, due to lack of material resources and state repression. With the exception of some countries in Latin America, India and its neighbors, and South Africa, our knowledge about violence in most of the developing world therefore generally stems from international institutions in North America and Europe. Partially redressing the balance, scholars socialized in the global South but based in these northern institutions provide important and detailed insight into the dynamics of violence in their countries of origin.

The sorry state of violence research in the global South has two further implications: On the one hand, there is very limited capacity for scientists in developing countries to tackle violence, analyze root causes, look at opportunity structures, and develop constructive intervention programs. On the other, the dissemination of academic research results to an interested public or to state authorities is almost non-existent. Police forces resort to repressive and unproductive means not only as a rational tool, but also because they lack practical knowledge of preventive or constructive measures to deal with violence in society.

Comparing the different situations of violence research in different regions of the developing world, we can draw the following conclusions:

- There are great differences between the various regions of the world and even between countries within a region. In general, Latin American countries are better off; academic output increased enormously during recent decades and research has been greatly professionalized. Although sub-Saharan Africa is hard hit by different forms of violence, we find many countries without any violence research. This situation reflects the low level of institutionalization of social sciences in general. In the Arab countries politically adverse conditions are the main reason for the long absence of violence research across the whole region. Current developments with anti-regime protests and social uprisings may in the mid-term enhance the possibilities to establish conflict and violence research.
- In most of the developing countries of Africa and Asia there are huge discrepancies between local and international violence research. In general, most of the knowledge about these countries produced by international organizations and research institutions in the global North adheres to academic standards, is more thoroughly researched and reviewed, and allows for comparison across countries and regions. This has important negative consequences, because scientific findings from abroad are much less suited for stimulating public or political debates within a country. Violence research is likely to gain more attention and legitimacy when it comes from within the society rather than from abroad.
- The local acceptance of violence research depends on a variety of factors that are almost unchangeable in the short run. In many societies there are cultural or religious taboos against talking about certain forms of violence, or even acknowledging specific behaviors as violent. In these and other cases, paternalistic or authoritarian regimes forestall debates about violence and its consequences for the victims and for society at large. In repressive political systems, or where criminal organizations have a measure of authority over society, hegemonic discourses produce a culture of fear that eventually leads to strong self-censorship.
- The legitimacy of institutionalized research on violence within the countries of the Global South depends not only on general knowledge about the detrimental aspects of violence for economic development and social progress but also on the general level of support that the social sciences enjoy in the academic field. The existence of



more or less strong social science departments seems to be a prerequisite for the successful establishment of violence research units. The better the social sciences are established, the more probable is the presence of violence research in a country.

- To this day, we have in most of the developing countries a strong contrast between the occurrence of violence and the absence of institutionalized scientific violence research at universities or other academic institutions. Although there has been some progress during recent years, there is still a lot of work to do. Many social scientists from the global South are effectively integrated neither in international scientific networks nor in regional initiatives and forums. The lack of staff, equipment, and financial backing has to be overcome if violence research from the global South is to intervene in public discourse or public affairs. It should also be stressed that research on social conflicts and violence is an essential element for the constructive resolution of violent conflicts and economic and social development at large. Therefore, the international community should strengthen efforts to establish institutions of violence research within the countries of the global South and to improve conditions for violence research.

The latter aspects belong to the strong motivation for the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) at the University of Bielefeld to establish an International Centre for Violence Research to facilitate international cooperation and exchange for violence researchers from all around the world, but primarily from the global South. The centre is designed as a platform and forum to establish and foster violence research within the developing countries themselves. The articles that follow are partly a direct result of this initiative. They serve to provide a clearer picture of the state of the art with regard to violence research in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

#### **Some Introductory Remarks about the Articles**

The articles in this focus section approach phenomena of violence from a multi-angled perspective. Four of them tackle the issue from a regional point of view, surveying Africa south of the Sahara, West and South Asia, Northeast

and Southeast Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Area studies have a long tradition in the social sciences, which, although entailing many difficulties such as lack of communication between experts in different areas, also offers the advantage that within their geographic range scholars often engage in debates beyond the narrow confines of their specific subject and communicate with scholars working on related topics within the same region. Area studies are thus well situated to capture the contextual structures of phenomena of violence, but tend to hinder cross-regional comparative approaches. Similar phenomena of violence, as the contributions in this focus section confirm, occur in different regions, if often during different historical periods. Two thematic contributions serve as examples of comparative violence research: one on the diffusion of violent conflicts within particular regions, the other on the connection between natural resources and political conflict. Alongside their important topical insights, these articles illustrate the opportunities and difficulties of multi-case comparisons.

The articles in this volume concentrate on the articulation of violence as physical violation of bodily integrity. Following Heinrich Popitz (1992, 48), we define violence as “power in action” (*Aktionsmacht*). According to Popitz, violence may be understood as a power resource that greatly increases the chance of enforcing one’s will with immediate effect. Violence is physical assault that results in deliberate bodily injury to others. We adhere to this narrow definition of violence, because compared to more wide-ranging concepts of violence it has the advantage of clearly delineating a manageable field of analysis and not blurring the difference between action-power and structural power.

By contrast, the concept of structural violence, which Johan Galtung (1969, 114) defines as violence that is “built into the structure, and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances,” widens the scope of the term to a point where it becomes too vast to handle. While we agree that violence is institutionalized in relationships of domination, to understand every aspect of power relationships as violence invites analytical confusion between causes, consequences, structures, and actual incidences. Only a narrowly circumscribed concept of violence



allows us to analyze connections between physical assaults and structural pressures and constraints. Furthermore, because the definition of violence is not only disputed in academic debate, but also subject to cultural evolution, comparability across continents depends on a cross-culturally applicable definition of key terms.

As another “disclaimer,” we note that although violence research encompasses sociological, political, historical, social psychological, criminological, and health aspects, the articles in this section are mainly written from a political science, sociological, and historical perspective. The literature selection surely has a bias towards these disciplines. Our authors have, however, included at least some basic insights from other disciplines.

The area specialists who wrote for this focus section were asked to provide relatively broad literature reviews. First, they look at specific articulations of violence, so as to outline common ground for potential future comparative approaches. The main review articles thus take into consideration four major dimensions: social violence, political violence, gender aspects of violence, and youth as perpetrators or victims of violence. Secondly, the authors were asked to select from among the various violence-related topics and bodies of literature those which they thought particularly relevant in the respective regions, those that stir controversial debates, and those that appear most fruitful for further research. Despite their broad approach, however, none of the articles can claim to comprehensively cover the entire spectrum of violence research in its region.

The geographical contributions each begin with a historical overview. The historical development of violence is particularly pertinent because violence and its different forms change in occurrence, intensity, and repercussions. There are also trends of increasing or decreasing violence over time, and some societies that were once more or less peaceful became more violent due to particular events (and vice versa). Understanding such developments requires at least a brief historical contextualization. We thus asked authors to take a closer look at what has changed in society and how forms of violence, as well as research on violence, have changed over time.

A second important aspect is to explain phenomena of violence as dynamic processes involving various actors. This implies looking for causes of specific forms of violence, and the conditions under which they occur. Furthermore, it is important to understand the violent processes themselves as well as their structural contexts and actor constellations. Finally, the consequences of violence need to be analyzed.

A third point of reference for the articles is academic debates and societal discourse. Across societies and historical periods, neither is the meaning of violence undisputed, nor are there clear cut definitions of violence. There are contradictory explanations for the origins and causes of violence as well as contrasting views with regard to its legitimacy. The articles thus also describe the controversies and discussions around violence within the countries of the global South.

In their review on violence and violence research in Africa south of the Sahara, Alex Veit, Vanessa Barolsky, and Suren Pillay set out to identify the most prominent fields of research, tracing the connections between violence and politics during different historical phases. They show how a comparatively high rate of political violence and large-scale civil strife contrasts with a very low level of local research. Most research on violence is undertaken in institutions outside of Africa, with South Africa representing a notable exception. Differentiating between political violence, criminal violence, and youth violence, they describe developments and analyze the debates of recent decades. They argue that violence research has recently gained important insights by moving beyond a focus on political violence and civil war. However, what appeared to be a privatization of violence may more fruitfully be understood in the context of a reformulation of state-society relations. Because violence is at the very heart of this relationship, research that takes the institutional context into consideration has the potential to improve knowledge about causes, processes, and consequences of violence, and also provide important insights on the political and institutional landscape of the continent.

Boris Wilke, Jochen Hippler, and Muhammad Zakar provide a historical and structural overview of violence research in West and South Asia, including North Africa.

They show that social sciences as a whole are weakly institutionalized in West Asia (with the exception of Turkey), and that this is even more true for violence research. Many universities and research institutions are badly underfunded and cut off from international research networks, and face other reasons that impede violence research. Concrete conditions vary from country to country, but the result is similar to Africa: Most of the research on different forms of violence is done by foreign scholars or by local academics working abroad, and many analyses originate from journalists or civil society activists. Dealing with what is in general a highly conflictive region, the authors concentrate on political violence (inter-state and intra-state conflicts), without neglecting forms of religious violence, youth violence, and domestic or gendered violence. Their treatment of two different regions within Asia opens up interesting comparative perspectives. But most of the reviewed studies remain descriptive in character. While there are some important studies on political violence, youth violence and domestic violence have long been neglected despite their prevalence. In some South Asian countries, such as India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, violence research is more thoroughly institutionalized. However these institutions tend to focus on state-centered, policy-oriented security studies. It is almost only in India that scholars (attached to the Subaltern Studies school) employ a sociologically and historically informed perspective on violence within society.

Violence research in Northeast and Southeast Asia has traditionally focused on political violence too, as Oliver Hensengerth shows in his overview. The importance of political violence comes from the violent history of most countries in the region since World War II. Hensengerth covers ethnic and religious violence, secessionism, violence by the state, the Indochina Wars, and internal political conflicts. In contrast to these forms, youth, urban, and domestic violence have only recently become part of the scientific discourse. Youth violence seems to occupy only a marginal role, with problems of youth often discussed only in relation to political events. That has to do with the paternalistic authoritarian context of many societies in the region. Historically, we can identify the important impact and legacy of colonialism on current conflict patterns,

leading in many countries to questions of violent nation building. Hensengerth differentiates regime survival, state integrity and identity questions, ethno-religious violence, and political Islam. All forms apart from political violence are understudied. Urban violence is a relatively recent phenomenon, but with the growth of the cities important problems are arising. Domestic violence is an issue in all countries, but it could not be discussed everywhere. Youth violence is the most neglected form of violence. Although there are important differences with regard to violence and violence research within the region, there are some important institutions at least in the more developed countries.

According to Peter Imbusch, Michel Misse, and Fernando Carrión, and contrasting with the other continents, Latin America and the Caribbean have a very lively research community on nearly all kinds of violence. The fact that the subcontinent has a long history of violence has inspired many researchers to ask questions about the meaning, causes, and social and economic implications of violence. Although the structural situation for violence research is very different in the various countries due to specific histories of violence, authoritarian traditions, cultural aspects, etc., there are many local researchers that address political violence, domestic violence, and youth violence. It is the recent experience with large-scale political violence, for example the brutal dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s, and the tremendous rise in social and criminal violence thereafter, that has alarmed people and the states and provoked social scientists to do more research on this important field. As a result of these efforts, the volume of research is huge and literature surveys are liable to fill whole books. The authors have written a concise overview of the general state of violence research in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as covering the extent and differentiation of the phenomenon in single countries. Complementing the other articles in this section, they also address causes and determinants of violence, the social costs of violent crime, and strategies against violence in more detail. Due to the enormous amount of violence, in-depth studies come not only from Latin American scholars but also from international organizations and academic institutions in North America and Europe. Despite this attention, there

are few genuine centers for violence research on the sub-continent.

Comparative findings on specific issues in conflict and violence research may well apply also to violent phenomena outside the global South. Given however that the large majority of contemporary wars, armed conflicts, and violence takes place in the global South, the following authors of the focus section provide further important insights. Nadine Ansorg concentrates on what may be called “bad neighborhoods,” regions where one or more countries are affected by civil strife. These are more likely to be found in economically marginalized areas of the world. Similarly, natural resources play a far more determining role in countries of the global South, both regarding their importance for national economies, and their impact on the likelihood of armed conflict. Thus the contribution by Gitta Lauster, Stormy-Annika Mildner, and Wiebke Wodni on the nexus between armed conflict and natural resources is of great relevance for a focus section on the global South.

Nadine Ansorg’s contribution argues that, despite the avalanche of research on the topic, it is still not evident how militant violence diffuses into the immediate neighboring countries of violence-affected states. Furthermore, the emergence of regional conflict systems remains puzzling from a comparative perspective. Empirically, it seems clear that since World War II, the major actor groups in wars are not only state armies, but also a variety of non-state armed organizations. The latter often develop relationships beyond their national borders, out of which regional conflict systems emerge. Focusing mainly on African cases, but also looking at West Asia, she shows that conventional theories fail to transgress the boundaries of methodological nationalism, a prism that takes state borders as determining structures for violent conflict as a given. Furthermore, existing studies tend to focus on particular factors, or do not take into account the process character of regional

conflict developments. They are therefore unable to adequately explain international or local dynamics of violent conflict.

In their article on natural resources and conflict, Gitta Lauster, Stormy-Annika Mildner, and Wiebke Wodni focus on the role of natural resources, and argue that existing comparative studies do not really define what they mean by scarcity or abundance of natural resources. The findings from these studies are thus not only conflicting, but also non-comparable. The neo-Malthusian argument that armed conflicts are caused by a scarcity of resources seems to have been largely refuted. However, the argument that an abundance of natural resources, for example diamonds, is a causal factor for the emergence of civil wars, has been more successful. But even the most prominent proponents of the thesis agree by now that it is problematic to infer the motivation of warring groups from deposits of natural resources or to conclude that rebel “greed” causes armed conflict. At present, research indicates that resources are merely a structural condition that facilitates, but does not cause, civil war. The authors argue therefore that comparative approaches on the resource-war nexus need to be improved.

The focus section on “Violence and Violence Research in the Global South” thus provides manifold insights into the dynamics of violent conflicts, but also challenges for cross-regional comparative analyses. Together, the contributions demonstrate that such research needs to be clear about definitions and variables, sensitive to cultural, social, and political contexts, and understand that phenomena of violence have a history. While this may sound like the proverbial squaring of the circle, the focus section also shows that similar phenomena of violence can be found in many different societies and during different historical periods. We hope that it might instigate further comparative research across regions of the global South (and the North) that might help to reduce the negative impact of violence on social and economic development.

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# Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

► **Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara

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This review presents the major lines of investigation regarding violence in Africa since the Cold War. After a historical introduction to the development of violent phenomena and their political contexts, diverse issues such as civil war, democratization, vigilantism, and the role of youth are assessed. It is argued that recent research has produced important insights by re-focusing on violent phenomena beyond the state. Yet despite the increasing number of non-state violent actors active on the African continent, to speak of a “privatization” of violence may be premature.

Since Hegel, Achille Mbembe writes, Africa has been described as a space of “catastrophe, convulsions, disaster already happened or about to happen – of breakdown, instant terror. It matters little that the words do not relate any precise event, provided that they preserve, for the phenomena allegedly being described, stark immediacy, and testify to the primacy of sensation and the utterness of the region’s disorder” (Mbembe 2001, 177). It is to overcome this specific imaginary that we must begin this review article of research on violence in Africa south of the Sahara by exploring the historicity of the issue. A historical introduction to the development of violent phenomena and the parallel evolution of political institutions is required, because forms of violence are always closely related to the respective political context. Moreover, such an approach linking the study of violence with a historical sociology of the political may be most fruitful for further research.

Our second concern in this contribution is to outline major research directions during the two decades since the end of the Cold War, during which dramatic change in the African socio-political landscape has been accompanied by a re-focusing of Africanist scholarship. In particular, we focus on the fields of civil war, vigilantism and security in the urban space, and youth. Our decision has to do with an important claim regarding the supposed privatization of violence in

the last two decades. While parts of Africa have undergone a process of democratization, civil wars devastated other areas. The debates around these developments can be best brought into a single framework of analysis by analyzing the fields of study we have chosen. We argue that since the Cold War, research on violence in Africa has made important advances by focusing more closely on „non-political“ forms of violence, such as social and criminal violence. In this context, the big number of non-state-armed groups, the newly found agency of youth, but also the increasing number of security companies and communal vigilante groups has been interpreted as a privatization of violence regulation. However, it is evident from the books and articles reviewed here that it is misleading to discard the role of the state. Whatever the form of „private“ violence, public authorities play an important role, whether as targets, instigators, profiteers, or regulators. Moreover, even supposedly private violence has important repercussions on the form of political order in the respective society. The argument of a privatization (Abrahamsen and Williams 2007) may thus be misleading, given that the distinction between public and private in neopatrimonial societies is by definition always blurred (Médard 1991; Bayart 1993).

Readers will miss other important fields of inquiry. For example, we do not deal specifically with the fields of peace



mediation and peacekeeping, with sexual violence in war, or with terrorism. The question of gender, meanwhile, recurs throughout. As Cynthia Cockburn argues, gender is an ordering principle that pervades all power systems (2001, 15). Instead of adding a specific section on gender and violence, we therefore opted to treat gender as a cross-cutting analytical perspective.

Even despite these chosen topical limitations, there are immense difficulties in writing a review article on violence research in Africa. The first problem is that for disciplines ranging from anthropology and history to political science (from which most works reviewed here stem), violence is an underlying theme across a wide range of material, but rather rarely the explicit issue of analytical concern. Whether we are concerned with armed conflict, the formation of the state, or even supposedly unrelated issues such as the development of health provision (Hunt 1991, 1999), violence obviously plays an important role. However, in most research physical assault is mentioned only in passing or even remains unacknowledged. Many authors do not directly deal with the actual physical action and reaction, but describe instead what leads to the act and what happens thereafter.

What is lost in such distanced or indirect treatment of assault on individual physical integrity is the effects on the person concerned, but also the psychological impact on society and political order. The strong symbolic significance of violence is mirrored by the extensive media coverage of certain phenomena. Media reports tend to sensationalize violence, exploiting the horror experienced by victims and observers. While such sensationalization hardly contributes to a better understanding of causes or outcomes, it nonetheless provides an important clue to the emblematic repercussions of violence: The horror and trauma on the one side, and the immediate experience of power on the other. Such aspects, and their consequences, deserve more analytical scrutiny. Thus a direct examination of violent acts and their immediate and indirect consequences is a research desideratum. Nonetheless, academic works that deal with violence from an analytical distance have also contributed many insights.

The second reason for the complexity of writing about violence research in Africa is rooted in the moral im-

plications of the topic. Violence is an emotive issue, and cannot possibly be described without at least an implicit normative evaluation. Such normative evaluation, in turn, leads to the issue of legitimate representation. The study of violence in Africa, as in other postcolonial spaces, is closely related to questions of perspective. Mahmood Mamdani, for example, relates contemporary political discourse on violence to the colonial imaginary of the non-Western savage and the Western savior (Mamdani 2009). At the same time there is a need for differentiation between the portrayal of Africa as a region of meaningless brutality, and an adequate criticism of illegitimate uses of violence by authorities (Mbembe 2001, 24–101).

Even though we have sought to emphasize studies by African scholars, these voices are still underrepresented due to the weak institutionalization of violence research on the continent itself. African universities, starting from a weak base at independence, expanded their activities during the brief period until the late 1970s. Thereafter, economic crisis, increasingly authoritarian regimes, and societal turmoil drained material and political support. Consultancies for international development agencies supplement many university teachers' income, but leave little space for freely developed research agendas. Private universities, which are blossoming, concentrate on teaching rather than research. Many academics leave their home institutions for Europe and North America, and accordingly most research on violence in Africa is undertaken in institutions outside the continent. Universities and research centers in Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, and the United States contribute most. The biggest exception is South Africa, which provides extensive cutting-edge academic scrutiny of violent phenomena.

Regardless of where they are born, socialized, or employed, there are very few social scientists researching Africa. Clearly, given the comparatively high rate of political violence on the continent and the scope of its problems, violent phenomena are understudied. Large parts of the continent, in particular rural regions, remain practically untouched by academic scrutiny. The surprise about insurgencies, such as in West Africa in the early 1990s, and more recently also in Darfur, testifies to this neglect. These con-



licts were of course not at all sudden outbreaks of extreme and organized mass violence. Rather, political and socio-economic developments leading to civil strife remained unnoticed, sometimes for decades. On-going attempts to install “conflict early-warning systems” are doomed to failure if the quantity of scientific research is not increased. On the other hand, certain countries are comparatively well covered, in particular those that are relatively prosperous: South Africa again, as well as Nigeria and Kenya. What French colonialists termed “l’Afrique inutile,” those parts of the continent without exploitable resources, remains virtually out of the frame.

The structural limits of Africanist scholarship are also reflected in the scarcity and unreliability of quantitative data. The Africanist tradition, rooted in anthropology, is reflected in most of the literature cited in this review, which is almost without exception based on qualitative methods. This tradition also leans heavily toward single case studies. Systematic comparisons between African societies remain scarce, still less with other continents. Only the field of development studies produces its own set of dependable data. Afrobarometer (<http://www.afrobarometer.org/>) is virtually the only institution providing cross-nationally comparable opinion surveys, but covers little more than a dozen countries. Future research should build on the existing qualitative strengths of Africanist tradition, but also add quantitative and comparative methods more systematically.

### **1. Violence and Political Institutions in African History**

Given the scarcity of written sources, very little is known about violence in pre-colonial Africa. It is commonly argued that before the arrival of imperialist forces, warfare and violence were limited. Without firearms, violence was restricted to face-to-face interaction. The few large centralized political domains that existed alongside many stateless societies made use of violence to uphold and expand their rule. The abundance of land in the sparsely populated continent, however, allowed for flight and migration as a widespread reaction to violent suppression (Vansina 1966; Smith 1989; Reid 2002; Chrétien 2003).

These circumstances changed dramatically with the advent of capitalist incursions. The transatlantic slave trade after

1492 disrupted societies, particularly along the West African coast. While mercantilist elites at the coast thrived as intermediaries, the violent hunt for human merchandise had devastating consequences for inland societies. Societies in the Sahel also suffered from the decline of trans-Saharan trade, as sea trade favored coastal societies (Rodney 1972; Wirz 1972; Lovejoy 2000; Fisher 2001; Iliffe 1995, 127–58). On the eastern side of the continent, the slave trade had for centuries been the domain of merchants operating in the Indian Ocean. Their activities peaked in the nineteenth century, when the Waarabu traders established commercial/political domains stretching from Zanzibar to the Congo River (Whiteley 1971; Page 1974; Iliffe 1979; Cooper 1997; Fair 1998; Fabian 2000).

The West African jihads and the Southern African „Mfecane“ represented potential indigenous trajectories toward modern state systems, including „modern“ violence. The West African Islamic jihads, beginning with the revolutionary founding of the Caliphate of Sokoto in 1806, succeeded in establishing prosperous statehood based on religious legitimacy. The second major process of violent state formation in this period, the Mfecane, was a large-scale migration movement in Southern Africa from after 1800. It has long been traced to the expansion of the Zulu kingdom. Newer historiography acknowledges the major impact of Great Britain’s acquisition of the Cape Colony in 1806, and subsequent Afrikaner treks into the continent (Hamilton 1995; Etherington 2001; Cobbing 1988; Iliffe 1995, 168–80; Robinson 2000).

The societal and ecological crisis in East and Central Africa took full effect with the final expansion of colonialism from after 1880. Colonialism meant violent conquests, rebellions, massacres and genocide, and previously unknown forms of labor exploitation and social stratification, as well as devastating epidemics and famines. By the beginning of the twentieth century the whole continent had been colonized by European powers, apart from Liberia and Ethiopia. The Europeans held the unmatched advantage of machine guns, which they used to kill in unprecedented numbers. Notably, African mercenaries formed the rank-and-file of almost all colonial armies, creating the basis for the central political role of African armies after decolonization (Lyons

1985; Headrick 1994; Trotha 1994; Iliffe 1995, 187-211; Glassman 1995; Hochschild 1999; Chrétien 2003; Hoppe 2003; Leopold 2005a; Pesek 2005; Deutsch 2006).

Despite the relative briefness of colonial rule, capitalism, urbanization and labor migration, political reorganization and the reconfiguration of gender, ethnicity, religion, and family bonds led to profound changes in Africa's social structures. While economic exploitation and racial segregation were often violently enforced, especially in the form of forced and indentured labor, the period between 1918 and 1945 was marked by a relative quiet, a "pax coloniale." Large-scale anti-colonial revolts were avoided, as the old and new elites of African chiefs, teachers, clerks, clergymen, traders, farmers, non-commissioned officers, and trade union leaders instead used largely peaceful means to conduct political and social conflict (Cooper 2002, 20–65; Iliffe 1995, 213–44).

After the Second World War, social stratification and political conflict between independence movements and colonial authorities led to an increase in organized violence. In Kenya, land scarcity and British repression sparked the Mau-Mau guerilla war from 1952 to 1960 (Buijtenhuijs 1982; Kanogo 1987; Presley 1988; Berman and Lonsdale 1992, 225-467). In French Cameroon, armed insurrection began in 1955 (Mbembe 1996). Overall, however, decolonization was characterized by the absence of large-scale organized violence. Weakened by war, pressurized by the new superpowers, facing protest movements in many colonies and military defeat in Algeria and Indochina, the European colonial powers agreed to independence rather rapidly. By 1965 most countries in East and West Africa were independent (Cooper 2002, 66-84; Hargreaves 1996; Rotberg and Mazrui 1970). Only Portugal and the southern African settler colonies clung to the status quo; the latter region became a major battleground of the Cold War. Wars of independence, externally stoked civil wars, and uprisings against white domination lasted until 1980 in Zimbabwe, until 1990 in Namibia, until 1992 in Mozambique, until 1994 in South Africa, and until 2002 in Angola (Lodge 1983, 1991; Ranger 1985; Katjavivi 1988; Geffray 1990; Price 1991; Birmingham 1992; Kriger 1992; Chabal 2002; Cooper 2002, 133–54).

The initial optimism of the 1960s nationalist mobilization quickly waned, especially in Central, East and North-East Africa. Given the frequency of civil wars, an account of violence in post-colonial Africa has primarily to describe internal civil strife. The first country to slide into outright chaos was the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a litany of military mutiny, coups, external intervention, provincial secession, and insurgency began immediately after independence in 1960. It was 1965 before stable but authoritarian rule re-emerged (Young 1966, 1994; Young and Turner 1985; Callaghy 1984; Schatzberg 1980, 1988; Coquery-Vidrovitch, Forest, and Weiss 1987; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002; Birmingham and Martin 1998). In neighboring Burundi and Rwanda, colonially hardened ethnic conflict set genocidal dynamics in motion (Lemarchand 1977, 1994). In Sudan and Chad, civil wars across ancient boundaries between northern and southern political figurations began shortly after independence and lasted, with short periods of peace, for decades (Woodward 1990; Daly and Sikaninga 1993; Buijtenhuijs 1978, 1987). Ethiopia slipped into wars of secession in 1962, followed by revolution, civil war, famine, and finally inter-state warfare with Eritrea (1998–2000), which had won independence in 1991 (Clapham 1988; de Waal 1991). Uganda endured military dictatorship in the 1970s, followed by civil war until 1985 (Mazrui 1975; Mamdani 1996). The sources of these manifold wars and armed conflicts were, of course, very heterogeneous. Some common important factors can nonetheless be discerned in most of the armed conflicts, such as rivalries between Cold War superpowers entangled with internal elite competition; older and colonially induced group conflicts based on regionalism, ethnicity or religion; economic decline; and repression of social movements by authoritarian or militarized states. Much easier access to modern weaponry, which had been almost unavailable during the colonial era, allowed insurgents to confront regimes. Only a few states in eastern and southern Africa – most outstandingly Tanzania, but also Kenya, Malawi and Zambia – managed to uphold relative peace.

West Africa, on the other hand, was largely spared warfare between 1960 and 1989, with only the Biafra secession and war-induced famine in Nigeria (1967–70) as the first African humanitarian crisis resulting from violent conflict to be widely reported by Western media (de St. Jorre 1972;

Harrison and Palmer 1986). The conflicts that existed in most West African countries, often between coastal and inland regions, were initially managed by constitutional means (Ilfiffe 1995, 248). However, many states experienced military coups, dictatorship, or one-party rule (Rotberg and Mazrui 1970; Ilfiffe 1979; Cruise O'Brien, Dunn, and Rathbone 1989; Nugent 2004, 204–59). In 1989 only seven out of forty-five states south of the Sahara were politically pluralistic (Ilfiffe 1995, 261).

## 2. Research on Violence in Africa after the Cold War

The collapse of the Soviet Union opened up new spaces for political reform and inspired many movements for democratic change. Economic decay had already hollowed out political systems based on neo-patrimonial legitimacy. Long-term decline stemmed from the failure of state-led development in the 1960s, steep increases in the price of oil imports, and falling prices for Africa's export products in the 1970s, as well as a credit crunch and externally imposed structural adjustment programs in the 1980s (Ilfiffe 1995, 252–56; Cooper 2002, 91–132; on post-independence economies see also Hyden 1980; Bates 1981; Collier 1990; MacGaffey 1991; Scott 1998, 223–61; Guyer 2004; on neo-patrimonialism in Africa see Médard 1991; Bayart 1993; Chabal and Daloz 1999).

The excluded and marginalized (often urban youth) took to the streets. Frequently trade unions, churches, and re-emerging opposition parties took the lead. Very few regimes resisted their demands outright, and democratization became a relative, if hard won and often inchoate success story in many countries (Nugent 2004, 368–433). Yet the end of the Cold War did not lead everywhere to liberal democratic dispensations. A new wave of civil wars rolled across parts of West, Central and North-East Africa. Mirroring the South African experience of the Cold War, these civil wars were closely connected and reinforced one another. But unlike the Cold War era these wars were less obviously driven by the geostrategic motivations of African states and external allies. Social, political, and economic pressures within societies seemed to play a more important role.

Democratization processes in many countries and the related wave of violent conflict after the Cold War brought

societal developments beyond the narrow confines of international and state politics into focus. Both processes were set in motion by societal groups, namely social movements and rebel organizations. This shift in perspective provided for a major advance in the study of violence on the African continent, as it also led to new insights into the relationships between social structures, political action, criminality, and security.

### 2.1. Civil Wars

Reflecting its prevalence on the continent, the study of civil war has become the dominant field of violence research in Africa, differentiated into a number of sub-fields. In studies of the root causes of civil wars, probably the dominant research issue, a recent shift towards questions of citizenship and political exclusion has emerged (Mamdani 1996; Akindès 2003; Sall 2004; Ouedraogo and Sall 2008; Colin, Kouamé, and Soro 2007). Loosely related with this are studies of how democratic elections may instigate, but also resolve violent political crisis (Amouzouvi 2000; Kaya 2004; Makumbe 2006; Akokpari 2007; Belinga 2007; John 2007; Lafargue and Katumanga 2008).

In West Africa, a string of civil wars shattered societies, beginning in Liberia in late 1989 and almost seamlessly encroaching neighboring Sierra Leone a little more than a year later (Richards 1996; Ellis 1999; Abdullah 2004; Keen 2005). At times, Guinea threatened to become involved in this cluster of warfare (Chambers 2004). While these conflicts ended in 2002–2003, the burden of armed conflict and partition shifted to Côte d'Ivoire between 2003 and 2007, with post-electoral fighting there from 2010 to 2011 (Akindès 2004; Banégas 2006). The West African nations of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, Niger, and Congo-Brazzaville also faced army revolts, secessionist movements, and insurrections (Bazenguissa-Ganga 1999; Vigh 2006; Foucher 2005; Klute and Trotha 2000; Deycard 2007). At the Horn of Africa, large parts of Somalia have been gripped by clan-based warfare and devoid of a national state or government since 1991 (Menkhaus 2003; Marchal 2007). After the civil war between the government and southern rebels in Sudan ended with a power-sharing deal in 2003, insurgents in Darfur began their fight for political inclusion (Prunier 2007; Mamdani 2009).

The biggest and in terms of human cost most destructive cluster of wars and rebellions in contemporary Africa occurred in the Great Lakes region. An insurrection in Rwanda beginning in 1990 revived elite and ethnic conflicts dating from the pre-colonial and colonial period. The insurgents' enemies, in particular radical elements in the Rwandan government, reacted in 1994 with a genocide against the Tutsi minority, which resulted in death on an unprecedented scale (Prunier 1997; Des Forges 1999; Gourevitch 1999; Hintjens 1999; Melvern 2000, 2004; Mamdani 2001; Straus 2006). The political fallout led to "Africa's World War" beginning in 1996, largely fought on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and involving the armies of about ten countries and many more non-state armed groups. While these wars are now limited, with a peace deal in Burundi, more stability in the Central African Republic, and the withdrawal of foreign armies from the DR Congo, some regions are still suffering civil strife (Turner 2007; Veit 2010).

The study of civil wars in Africa has to a large extent been actor-centred, with a focus on insurgency groups, militias, and other forms of non-state armed organization (Clapham 1998; Bwenge 2003; Boas and Dunn 2007; Weinstein 2007; Debos 2008; Schlichte 2009). Internationally, materialist explanations pertaining to opportunistic and self-interested behavior of rebel groups have attained prominence (Berdal and Malone 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Africanist scholars have produced few works supporting these arguments and tended instead to voice critical perspectives. These critics emphasize the political character of contemporary conflicts and the complexity of motivations, as opposed to binary assumptions about "greed" or "grievance" (Marchal 2000; Marchal and Messiant 2002; for critical views referring also to non-African contexts see Kalyvas 2001; Schlichte 2006). These arguments anticipate the greed thesis, but without the latter's negative connotations. Nonetheless, the structural relationship between natural resources and violent conflict is an issue, most importantly regarding civil strife in the oil-rich Niger Delta (Ifeka 2001, 2004, 2006; Obi 2004, 2006, 2008; Omeje 2004, 2006; Anugwom 2005; Dibua 2005; Onuoha 2007, 2008; Owolabi and Okwechime 2007; Owusu-Koranteng 2008).

The greed vs. grievance-debate tended to hinder rather than advance social research, as the focus on perpetrators' motivations merely revisited older discussions. Already in 1970, Ted Gurr answered the question of "Why Men Rebel" with the grievance argument, which he termed "relative deprivation." Other scholars challenged this argument, and posited that "grievances alone cannot explain mobilization" (Tarrow 1998, 15) because grievances are practically ubiquitous, whereas protest and violent rebellion are not. The "contentious politics" school developed a perspective of "opportunity and constraint" as central conditions for the emergence of militant oppositions (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007).

While rebel groups gained enormous attention, state militaries and states apparatuses have attracted comparatively little attention. Rather than looking at what African states are doing, attention has – through the lens of „weak“ or “failed” states – shifted to what they do not do, and how this supposed void leads to conflict (Young 1998, Reno 1998, Fawole and Ukeje 2005, Fomin and Forje 2005; critically Chabal and Daloz 1999). In response, other authors describe how alternative powerful institutions emerge even when state institutions collapse during civil war (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004; Menkhaus 2004; Tull 2005; Raeymaekers 2007). Yet we still know too little about the dynamics in violent state organizations in Africa.

## **2.2. Democratization, Criminal Violence, Vigilantism, and Urban Security**

Democratization was the order of the day during the early 1990s in many African countries. In particular southern Africa entered a period of greater political stability after the end of the Cold War and the introduction of representative democracy in South Africa in 1994. As the political landscape became pacified, research agendas changed. At the same time, social and criminal violence seemed to be on the increase not only in South Africa, but also in commercially vibrant cities such as Nigeria's Lagos and Kenya's Nairobi.

Democratic societies rule through consent rather than outright coercion, and therefore rely on the legitimate authority of the state. One of the core responsibilities of a state is to protect the "right to life." The way in which the state pro-

ffects this right can impact on its long-term legitimacy and authority. High levels of violent crime, assault, and murder indicate that the state might be failing to create the environment for a safe and secure community, and therefore impacting negatively on its capacity to govern effectively.

The shift from political to social and criminal violence is increasingly explained with reference to the breakdown of social cohesion, which is perceived to have created an anomic context in which violent crime is likely to occur. Shaw notes in this vein: “[A]part from generating particular forms of criminality (most notably the organized variety), transitions also have important impacts on the social controls present in any society. In many instances a weakening of these provides an environment that may be more conducive to criminality” (Shaw 2002, 2). In this context the concept of “social cohesion” has become increasingly common in policy environments such as that of South Africa over the past few years. It is argued that in order to reduce levels of violence, the ways in which citizens relate to one another as citizens need to be transformed.

However, in South Africa and in postcolonial societies in general, the notion of „good citizens“ who police themselves in terms of a commonly held set of norms and values, falls apart in a context characterized historically by multiple overlapping systems of social authority and normative regimes. As Peter Ekeh (1975) notes, the African colonial experience, and in particular the experience of indirect rule, such as in colonial tribal jurisdictions and Black “homelands” during apartheid) creates multiple spaces of rights, obligations, and ethical conduct that are not necessarily concordant with the juridical rights and obligations normatively articulated in democratic constitutions (see also Mamdani 1996; Joseph 1997). It is in this context that violent crime can lead to the creation of forms of community that are at odds with the unifying, nation-building efforts of governments. The result, in Africa and other regions of the global South, is Balkanized zones of governance and citizenship: informal settlements, gated communities, vigilante groups, and gangs.

The areas most affected by violent crime also tend to be the areas most affected by “everyday” social violence, such as

gendered and domestic violence, and economic marginalization. In South Africa, the areas most affected are black communities in townships, mostly working class with high levels of unemployment and poverty. In contexts of ongoing socio-economic deprivation, “community” can thus become an identity that coheres around a notion of social exclusion. People identify themselves as victims of a lack of delivery and poor local government representation and service, and see themselves as a community in opposition to the state. In the South African context this has been most explicitly articulated in “service delivery protests” (Delaney 2007).

In this context a growing body of literature on vigilante groups has emerged in the African context and beyond (for a global review, see Pratten and Sen 2008). Vigilante groups play an ambiguous role, in some instances offering genuine protection but sometimes degenerating into protection rackets. In the latter case, vigilantism is but one form of organized crime. This tension is mirrored by vigilantes’ relationships with the state. Vigilante groups may pose a challenge to the state by threatening its monopoly over the legitimate use of violence but they are also often intimately linked to political leaders or formal political parties. Laurent Fourchard, for example, identifies an ambiguous relationship between the state and vigilante groups in southwestern Nigeria. Vigilantism can be interpreted as a sign of state erosion. But as Fourchard (2008) explains in the particular case study he relates, the term was originally introduced with a positive connotation by police forces themselves. It is thus far from clear whether vigilantism constitutes a challenge to state institutions. Vigilantism may represent an actively chosen alternative form of social organization, rather than simply being the consequence of state weakness (Buur 2008).

Nigeria is one of the countries most strongly affected by criminal violence and vigilantism. A survey of violent crime in the sprawling metropolis of Lagos, Nigeria, found that, faced with high incidence and fear of crime: “many communities and individuals took several measures to reduce their feeling of vulnerability and minimize risk of victimization. Eighty one percent of the respondents said that vigilantes existed in their communities, while seventy seven percent reported that the vigilantes were paid for their ser-



vices” (Alemika and Chukwuma 2005). Many militant groupings were founded as a response to the plundering of the country’s resources by political elites, argue Charles Gore and David Pratten (2003; Ukeje 2001). Pratten goes on to argue that vigilante groups in Nigeria are primarily popular responses to criminality. Their spread however has been so ubiquitous that their impact is much more pervasive. Vigilantism in Nigeria is intimately linked to the political economy, connects urban and rural spaces, reproduces or restructures lineages and ethnicity, and includes activities ranging from crime fighting to political lobbying. Discursively, Nigerian vigilantism is embedded in narratives of contested rights (Pratten 2006, 2008a, 2008b).

In South Africa there has also been an increase in the prevalence of vigilante groups across the country. Ranging from more formally organized groupings such as People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) in the Western Cape, groups in KwaZulu-Natal province started out as community neighborhood watches, some of which have taken on violent and radicalized forms. Identification with a specific „community“ in the case of PAGAD and neighborhood watches indicates the recovery of a religious and racially hegemonic social morality fraying at the seams as a result of substance abuse, gangsterism and poverty (Pillay 2002).

Vigilantism in Africa is difficult to define and delineate in terms of spaces, culture, and discourse. While it is often considered an urban phenomenon, some groups, particularly in Kenya, bridge the urban-rural divide. Most widely discussed in this regard is the Mungiki vigilante sect and other similar groups in Kenya. The Mungiki are legitimized by ethno-centrism, religion, and the contested history of the anti-colonial and intra-ethnic Mau-Mau uprising. They boast strong links to particular political camps that are well established in state institutions. However, depending on which political camp gained a hegemonic position in the apparatus, there were periods when the state engaged the group in intense fighting (Wamue 2001; Anderson 2002; Kagwanja 2003, 2006b). Some groupings show the influence of urban globalized youth culture. One example is analyzed by Remy Bazenguissa-Ganga in Congo-Brazzaville, where politicized frustrated youth formed urban defense groups, which turned into

armed militias that linked up with rival political camps and fought much of the civil war of the 1990s (1999a, 1999b). Their identity, Bazenguissa-Ganga argues, was strongly linked to Western media images. The same can be said about Somalia’s Mooryaan (Marchal 1993), and militant youth formations in West Africa (Richards 1996; Ellis 1999; Bayart 2000, 227–29; see also below). Other vigilantes assert religious and local identities at the same time, thus positing an alternative way of relating to global discourses. Fatima Adamu (2008) shows how groups across the shari’a states of northern Nigeria draw legitimacy from different and sometimes competing sources, including traditional, communal, religious, and political elites (cf. Last 2008).

Aside from their anti-criminal merits and complicated relation to state and law, vigilantes in Nigeria have also become vehicles for inter-communal violence. Johannes Harnischfeger detects among vigilantes in Lagos and southeastern Nigeria agendas directed not only against criminals, but also targeting members of other ethnic groups (2003, 2004). The Bakassi Boys, to name one example, were supported by a state governor who capitalized on their anti-crime legitimacy. Such links, however, undermined the group’s popular legitimacy as it became seen as the tool of a corrupt political class. Similarly, the Ooduas Peoples Congress, Rufus T. Akinyele argues, established a model for many other ethnicist groups to follow (2001; see also Adebani 2005). Inter-communal violence also drew in vigilantes in central Nigeria’s Plateau state during conflict from 2002 to 2004, Adam Higazi reports (2008). He describes a shift from action against thieves to protection from armed political militias, which in turn led vigilantes to ever more closely resemble their adversaries.

In a less organized context there have been sporadic outbursts of communal violence against (suspected) criminals. Black South African townships suffering from poverty and unemployment have also cohered against that which comes from outside and threatens, or is perceived to threaten or impede, the life chances of local citizens. This category of external threats includes those who are felt to be taking jobs and income opportunities or undercutting local businesspeople by selling goods at cheaper prices. The target around which the “community” coheres in this particular

instance is foreign Africans, deprecatingly designated *Amakwerekwere*, who have become victims of xenophobic violence (Neocosmos 2010).

While violent exclusion in poor urban zones is thus closely related to a communalization of protection against violent crime, in middleclass areas the same tendency can be traced to a commercialization and privatization of protection (Schlichte 2005). Middle- and upper-class residents are able to mobilize resources, information, technologies, and organization in defense of their residential security, leading to the proliferation of “gated communities.” In South Africa these have typically involved residents setting up access control around older neighborhoods and blocking off a street or blocks of streets. Private security guards are employed to regulate the inward and outward movement of people and vehicles. Fortified commercial enclaves for work, consumption, and leisure accompany the residential spaces of safety of the middle classes. These zones are connected by road and transport systems that favor the wealthy, creating an interlinked “fortified network,” which could eventually “disembed” the city. The trend towards exclusive malls, highways, and transport systems like the Gautrain high-speed rail link between Johannesburg and Tshwane (former Pretoria) are symptomatic of this trend in South Africa.

In this environment, the forms of “community” that emerge are often mobilized against an “other” in a way that increasingly fosters separation. In her study of spatial separation in Cape Town, Charlotte Lemansky observes that “walls and gates have reinforced a vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion by concentrating the poorest social groups in spaces with minimal economic and political leverage. ... Furthermore, enclaves do not just respond to difference and fear, but actually deepen segregation and reinforce fear by excluding difference and limiting social mixing, thus increasing paranoia and mistrust between groups” (Lemanski 2004, 107). Another study shows that the view of the white middle class was that “crime originated from outside the community” (Landman 2002, 173). Communities could therefore establish „trust“ and social relations that bound them together in relation to an external threat. They could collectively keep a lookout for this “threat,” and draw on and develop practices and technologies in order to do so.

Thus the forms of social cohesion that violent crime is creating show signs of being at odds with the forms of social cohesion envisioned and assumed by policies of national governments and international development agencies. While there are positive community formations to manage risk, poor communities are also showing signs of cohering around social exclusion, xenophobia, and susceptibility to gender and sexual violence. While social cohesion exists inside these fragmented and mutually exclusive spatial zones, social polarization between “communities” tends to create separate publics, with different benefits, rights, and obligations, and fragmented experiences of citizenship. Debates about autochthony in Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, the DR Congo, and elsewhere demonstrate the continent-wide dimension of these phenomena of social exclusion, which often lead to violent exchanges and even warfare (Bayart, Geschiere, and Nyamnjoh 2001; Geschiere 2009).

Studies of criminal violence and societal responses such as vigilantism and gated communities demonstrate the need to move beyond analytical categories of public vs. private or legitimate vs. illegitimate violence. Vigilante groups, for example, blur the boundaries between protection and criminality. They fulfil, in many cases, functions of public authority. Their protection service is, however, often limited to select groups in society. As such, they are not much different from official state security organs or from gated communities protected by „private“ security companies. These fluid phenomena ask for a broad, process-oriented view on interactions, moving beyond a focus on single actors or particular societal groupings.

### 3. Youth and Violence

One societal grouping that has received a great deal of academic consideration regarding its relationship to violence is African youth. However, youth does not feature as a prominent category in every study of violence and conflict. Even if young people – mostly men – play important roles in the majority of conflicts and everyday incidents of violence, these combatants, perpetrators, or victims are not necessarily defined on a generational basis. Class, origin, ethnicity, religion, or gender are some of the many other categories used to explain violent behavior of young



people. Nonetheless, analyses of links between youth and violence have gained prominence in the past two decades.

### 3.1. Youth in Africa

Any analysis of youth must come to terms with what becomes defined as “youth” in different contexts. “The fact is that in Africa local definitions of childhood and youth tend to differ from those used in international law and by bodies such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF),” writes Mark Leopold. “People who would be considered minors in Europe and North America are frequently expected to assume a range of ‘adult’ roles, including working and being sexually active, as well as fighting wars, while others may not count as full ‘adults’ until their late thirties” (Leopold 2005b, 693–94; cf. Abbink 2005; Last 2005, 37–40). Remy Bazenguissa-Ganga adds another dimension to the changing definitions of youth in Africa, when he points out that during the civil war in Congo-Brazzaville being an elder became detrimental to political advancement and the most powerful – regardless of their age – presented themselves as the youngest (Bazenguissa-Ganga 2001). Jean and John Comaroff point out that youth is often regarded as a transhistorical and transcultural category, but is in fact a modern construction. They argue that the spread of capitalism created the conditions for the emergence of an autonomous category of youth on a global scale. The current crisis of capitalist society in Africa and elsewhere leads in turn to what can be understood as a crisis of youth. Yet it is exactly in and through this crisis that the young have acquired an unprecedented autonomy vis-à-vis other generations (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000).

As in other regions, students of Africa regard youth as a group between extremes. Rather than treating it as an ordinary part of society, youth seems to oscillate between hope and despair, construction and destruction, peaceful contribution to and violent denial of society. Titles such as “Vanguards or Vandals” (Abbink and Van Kessel 2005) or “Makers and Breakers” (Honwana and de Boeck 2005) bespeak the ambiguity. Youth symbolizes the future, and thus both fear and hope about coming changes are assigned to the young generation. As Mamadou Diouf shows, the nationalist projects of the early post-independence years projected much of their optimism concerning a fundamen-

tal transformation of African societies – in political, economic, cultural, and social terms – onto Africa’s youth. Paradoxically, the idea of youth as “chief agents of transformation” also entailed its definition as a societal group that needs to be „channeled and supervised by adults“ (Diouf 2003, 3–4). The long-term economic and educational investments of the post-independence years proved inadequate and ultimately failed.

Youth, not unlike other groupings in society, tend to be oriented towards risk, immediate profits, informal practices, and individualism. Traditional forms of socialization through rites, respects for elders, and obedience to adults and the state became linked to surveillance, harassment and repression (Mbembe 1985). Youth are perceived to have become increasingly independent and critical of older generations. The street became the central stage for youthful (i.e. unruly) behavior. Young African migrants, musicians, loiterers, sapeurs (swanks), and thugs became the subject of moral panic in Africa, but also in Europe and North America. Youth appeared more and more as a threat to rather than a hope for society, fundamentally as a societal element uprooted from social bonds such as family, ethnic group, or nation (Diouf 2003, 4–8). Optimists view these phenomena as legitimate resistance to repression and exclusion (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000; contributions in Trudell 2002), while pessimists understand it as mere delinquency and symptoms of crisis (Cruise O’Brien 1996). Both perspectives allow insights: The recourse to violence, as a common practice of many youth movements across the continent at least since the colonial era, often targets unresponsive authorities or, in the absence of functioning police forces, criminal delinquents; but there also have been outbreaks of xenophobic violence or the transformation of vigilante to mafia groups. As Diouf notes, even violent demonstrations “always have an element of playing hooky,” and hereby express nihilism, childish naughtiness, and idealism at the same time (Diouf 2003, 9).

The ambiguous role of youth as linchpin of positive transformation or catastrophic destruction is mostly been put forward in connection with young men. Young women and children are rarely attributed such positive or negative agency. In particular child soldiers and young females

raped during civil war are often regarded as the quintessentially powerless victims of evil violence. In opposition to such views and in line with a general trend in African studies to emphasize the agency of subordinated groups, youth agency has become a major matter of analysis. The volume edited by Alcinda Honwana and Filip de Boeck, which probes the role of violence as a means of self-assertion, constitutes the current milestone (2005; in particular contributions by Honwana and Utas on war situations and contributions by Diouf and Biaya on questions of legitimacy, identity, and violence; see also Christiansen, Utas, and Vigh 2006).

The study of violence, conflict, and youth in Africa has produced several edited volumes during recent years, most of which employ qualitative ethnographic methods. These studies link youth with a variety of issues such as historical perspectives and political mobilization (Abbink and van Kessel 2005), migration and conflict (Hart 2008, also includes case studies from other regions), memory and states (Bay and Donham 2006), and inter-generational negotiation and social becoming under exclusionary and violent circumstances (Christiansen, Utas, and Vigh 2006). The lack of a gender perspective in many works on youth and violence in Africa is partly balanced – though only in passing remarks rather than thorough analysis – by contributions to Jon Abbink and Ineke van Kessel's (2005) volume on youth politics and conflict, some of which demonstrate how gender roles foster violent behavior by young men as protectors. Women, on the other hand, are not only victims of violence, but may also become perpetrators, as in the case of "liberation fighters" (Cock 1991; Weber 2006). However, the complexities inherent to the topics of youth, gender, and violence remain understudied save for very few case studies (Heald 1989; Glaser 1998a). The volume edited by Abbink and Van Kessel (2005) also sheds light on the changes in generational power balances, which are particularly strong during and after violent conflict. Violent practices can empower younger generations, but older strata in traditionally gerontocratic (and patriarchal) societies often find ways to co-opt youth and their violent means for their own purposes (Abbink and van Kessel 2005, in particular contributions by Last and Burgess).

### 3.2. South African Youth after Apartheid

In South Africa youth have been stereotyped in exemplary terms as either "Heroes or Villains" (Seekings 1993). Under apartheid and especially after the student uprising of 1976 the African National Congress (ANC) regarded youth as the "shock troops of resistance" (Glaser 2000, 1). The ANC's strategy of rendering the country ungovernable through strikes, boycotts, and attacks on state representatives was largely based on the "young lions." The destructiveness directed against the apartheid system found a counterpart in youth organizations' campaigns against drug abuse and criminal violence in the townships. Youth activists were seen as, and perceived themselves as, a moral force, entrusted not only with resistance, but also with disciplining the township population. Institutions like ad-hoc "people's courts" emerged, suspected informers were physically punished, and strikes and boycotts violently enforced (Marks 2001, 52–54, 82–98; Seekings 1993, 97).

Towards the final demise of apartheid perspectives on non-white South African youth changed radically. A "lost generation" was "discovered," whose political engagement impacted negatively on their schooling and career chances in a post-apartheid society. Such alienated young men with a wealth of experience with violence were seen as an imminent danger (Marks 2001, 6; Seekings 1993, 5). The term "comt-sotsi" (an amalgam of "comrade" and "tsotsi" or small time gangster), invented in the townships, became widely propagated. Clive Glaser's study of Soweto's gangs between 1935 and 1976, "Bo-Tsotsi," details how marginalized and violent youth used the sub-urban space. This stratum of society occasionally joined political demonstrations and riots, but not always for purely idealistic purposes (Glaser 1998b; 2000).

In parallel the high incidence of gendered violence in South Africa gained greater academic consideration. Mamphele Ramphele states that "Apartheid defined black men out of the community of patriarchs" (Ramphele 2002, 113–14; cf. Ramphele 2000; Reynolds 2000; Shefer et al. 2008) The traditional male roles of protecting and feeding the family came under attack as the state was extremely violent and unemployment and labor migration were widespread. Young men reacted to this crisis of masculinity with the formation of peer groups, which were particularly sus-

picious of outsiders' interest in "their" women. Violence was however also directed against the latter: "It was a culture, in many respects defined in opposition to femininity, which subjected women to terrifying levels of coercion and sexual violence." (Glaser 1998b, 308-9; cf. Mager 1998 for rural counterparts between 1945 and 1960).

As Jeremy Seekings cautions, ascriptions of violence to youth do not tally with the everyday experience of a large majority of young people. Rather the regular experience of violence as perpetrator or victim is restricted to a minority. Research, in Seekings's opinion, fails to understand the everyday lives of that majority. As he points out, the moral panic about youth quickly abated in the post-apartheid era as society became more concerned with other problems (Seekings 2006, 4-9). The everyday criminal violence that rose to one of the world's highest rates was unexpectedly ascribed not to the young, but to (Black) criminals in general.

### 3.3. Young Combatants in West African Civil Wars

Youth as perpetrators of extreme violence became a major issue in analysis of the civil war in Sierra Leone and to a more limited extent Liberia. The debate's starting point in the West was a piece in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "The Coming Anarchy," where Robert Kaplan describes West African youths as "loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting" and goes on to describe "places where the Western Enlightenment has not penetrated and where there has always been mass poverty," where "people find liberation in violence." The author perceived this violence as apolitical and irrational (Kaplan 1994, 2000).

Paul Richards set out to prove Kaplan wrong. His book *Fighting for the Rainforest* describes the leadership, rank-and-file, and social environment of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which started the war in 1991 and lost it in 2000. Richards seeks to demonstrate the RUF's "practical rationality of war" (1996, xxi), even including violent acts as horrific as the chopping off of civilians' hands and arms. He analyses war and violence as performance and discourse, expressive acts through which otherwise disfranchised people empower themselves, delving into the subjectivities of the RUF's leadership, presented as excluded

intellectuals, and their young followers. The latter are understood as embedded in West Africa's rain forest culture. Richards also describes the local adaptation of global media images, including interesting insights into the cultural appropriation of the first *Rambo* film.

Where Kaplan's piece was of interest for its supposed influence in policy circles and its exemplary representation of what may be called a postmodern Orientalism, Richards's equally controversial approach stirred great academic interest and disagreement, particularly among West African scholars. A special issue of *Africa Development* provided a critique of Richards' book. Most pointedly, Yusuf Bangura's extensive review criticizes Richards's framework of violent actors' subjective rationality and his supposedly undifferentiated conception of youth (1997). Indeed Richards's aim of disproving Kaplan's claim of actor irrationality leads him to stark claims about the means-ends rationality, discipline, and homogeneity of the RUF. He also tends to understate and legitimize RUF violence without taking its victims' views into account. Bangura argues that, while actor rationality should not be completely discarded, RUF fighters' logic of action was not only political, but also an expression of banditry, hedonism and brutality (1997). He thereby anticipated more general findings on civil wars and armed groups, positing that political violence in civil wars tends to derail and become mixed up with and even driven by „private“ issues (Kalyvas 2003).

Bangura and other authors in the special issue propose a different view of RUF fighters, which they portray as rebellious "lumpen" youth with little ideological grounding and a tendency to anti-social behavior. The reference to Marxist thinking about a usually anti-revolutionary lumpen-proletariat seems, however, not entirely free from disdain for the largely uneducated forces in the RUF. These urban-based and until then urban-oriented scholars seem just as puzzled by the sudden power of the young rural strata as was Sierra Leone's urban (intellectual) public in general (Bangura 1997; Rashid 1997; Abdullah 1997; see also Gberie 2005).

Richards and related researchers continued their inquiry into the "hinterland" of Sierra Leone and its disfranchised

young population, pointing to economic, educational, and socio-political constraints, and the need for protection, as reasons to join Sierra Leone's armed groups (Peters and Richards 1998; Peters 2004, 2006; Zack-Williams 2001; see also Utas 2008 for similar findings in Liberia.). Also related to this are generational conflicts, especially with quasi-feudal customary chiefs (Richards 2005; Fanthorpe 2001, 2006).

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

Since the Cold War, research on violence in Africa has made important advances, focusing more closely on violence that is not employed to directly gain political power. Even regarding some civil wars, as in the case of Sierra Leone, the center of attention moved beyond elite and state interest, to take into account motivations of rank-and-file combatants. Youth has become an important category of analysis, along with vigilantism and criminality. This is a welcome development in the study of violence in Africa, given that intra-societal violence was largely neglected in previous decades.

However, categories like youth are also shown to have only limited analytical value. Youth is a category too broad to comprehend the lifeworlds of specific perpetrators of violence. Currently, if a strict age parameter is employed, a majority of Africans may be categorized as youth. However, only a fraction of Africa's youth is involved as victims or perpetrators of mass violence. The changing and spatially different cultural perceptions of who is considered youth and for what reason also limit the analytical value and comparability of the category. Accordingly, use of the category has been contested in Sierra Leone, where the Marxist term „lumpen proletariat“ has been proposed for fighters in the civil war. In South Africa, changing societal categorization of violent criminals also led to a change in academic perceptions. The analysis of youth in relation to violence thus needs to put other parameters, such as class, gender, and location at the center. Only then can we understand which groups in society employ which forms of violence, where, against whom, at what historical moment, and for which reasons.

The category of vigilante, too, promises only limited insight into questions of societal responses to generalized insecurity and criminal violence, given that the term is

derived from these armed organizations' supposed motivation for the employment of violence. Vigilantes can be protectors of communities in the positive sense, yet empirical research has shown that they may be better analyzed as part of public authority. It thus seems necessary to move beyond perpetrators' motivations for using violence. While motivations are particularly important for the assignment of guilt and responsibility, social scientists need to be interested in more aspects than prosecutors and judges. Motivations are not only very difficult to assess (given that social science lacks the means of interrogation available to the police), motivations are bound to be heterogeneous (particularly among groups of perpetrators) and subject to change depending on what may be called structures of opportunity and constraint. Future research should thus concentrate more on the outcomes and effects of violence on social structures, on state and societal responses to violence, and on the interaction processes between perpetrators, victims, and observers of violence.

More generally, it seems that the study of violence suffers from the general disregard for the larger political and socio-economic structure of contemporary African societies. During the Cold War, analysts employing Marxist theories aspired to understand African societies as structural hierarchies (admittedly with only limited success). In societies with a large majority of peasants and almost no proletariat, dominated by a thin layer of political elites, classical Marxist class analysis yielded only very limited insights (see for example on Zaire Schatzberg 1980, 14–32). Nonetheless this was at least an attempt to examine a society as a whole and understand interdependencies between its component groups. Contemporary Africanist social science instead prefers to focus on particular actor groups. A renewed focus on societal structures as a whole may thus add valuable insights into causes, processes, and outcomes of violent phenomena.

Which phenomena will dominate empirical research in the coming years? The rise in the frequency of civil wars in the 1990s, it seems, may be in a process of reversal. Major clusters of violent crisis – most notably in West Africa – seem to have become more stable. In the Great Lakes region, most wars and conflicts have been resolved or con-

tained in recent years. Yet the problem of ex-combatants without a social and economic stake in post-conflict societies remains a challenge, as is the exclusion of large parts of the population from political and economic participation. Post-conflict violence, often linked to democratization processes, is likely to become a pressing societal problem in the coming years.

Without portraying Africa as a continent of criminality, it can also be expected that research will shift to delinquency and related societal developments in urban spaces. Along-

side the growth of the younger generations, urbanization constitutes the most important socio-geographic and demographic trend on the continent. Rapid economic growth and a more even distribution of wealth, which could by itself do a great deal to resolve societal crisis, seems at the moment a rather faint hope in most countries. The study of violence in poverty-stricken urban areas will quite probably constitute a major area of future research. Given the uneven development of political figurations on the continent, the relation between violence and politics will, however, remain at the top of the agenda.

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# Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and Structural Overview

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:**  
**Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

► **Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and Structural Overview

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This is a historical and sociological overview of violence and violence research in and on North Africa, West Asia, and South Asia, considering only studies for a global audience. The main focus is on political violence, with a brief look at religious and communal violence, youth violence, and domestic and gendered violence. These regions have been consistently affected by political violence for many decades, the main source of which seems to be the ongoing state formation process, as well as social transformation in general. The literature on violence is dominated by international debates, at times with little regard to realities in the ground. It would be highly desirable for scholars from North Africa, West Asia and South Asia to play a more active role in research and debate.

## 1. Violence and Violence Research in the Contemporary World

International violence research is compartmentalized by subject and discipline. At least seven academic disciplines study physical violence in social relations: international relations, political science, sociology, history, social anthropology, social psychology, and criminology. Although they claim particular topics and issues as their own, there is considerable overlap and inherent interdisciplinarity in practice. It is the level of analysis that defines the identity of a discipline: Whereas international relations focuses on violence in the international system, political science looks at how states and governments make use of violence and/or are affected by it; sociology, history, and social anthropology all investigate violent behavior in social relations; and, finally, social psychology and criminology give most attention to violence at the individual level. This article primarily looks at international relations, political science, and sociology, thus focusing essentially on political violence.

International violence research is segmented by country and region as well. Research facilities and conditions vary enormously, and equally do research results. If we look at con-

temporary world society, it is fair to say that research conditions and outcomes are more advanced in and on Western Europe and North America, which are the regions where organized political violence has been largely contained since the Second World War (Beaumont 1995; Gantzel and Schwinghammer 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003). Barring some notable exceptions that will be mentioned later in this article, we can see a pattern: In countries affected most by political violence, academic research tends to be poor, whereas it is strong in countries less affected by political violence. It may be argued that as soon as a group of people has agreed on some basic rules regarding the use of physical force, i.e. on the “control of violence” (Elias 1983), conditions for thinking about the subject matter change for the better. In many societies of the Global South, the rules guiding the use of force are not clear, and even if they are, they cannot be implemented; against this backdrop, it is not surprising that international violence research is less comprehensive there.

This paper looks into violence and violence research in two regions: West Asia (including North Africa) and South Asia.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In our discussion of *West Asia*, often called the Middle East, we include the North African countries of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya, as well as

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran (West Asia proper).

*South Asia* consists of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. For a similar classification, see Abhyankar (2008).

Social sciences are generally weakly institutionalized in both regions, and this is especially true of violence research.<sup>2</sup> Most universities and research institutes are badly underfunded, cut off from the international research community, or dysfunctional for other reasons. On closer examination, conditions vary enormously. At one end of the spectrum we have Afghan universities, which rarely meet international standards because of the poor level of education in general and three decades of civil war. To a lesser degree this also applies to other countries with a history of violent conflict and/or grave poverty and weak institutions. At the other end we have good academic research at reasonably well-funded and well-equipped universities and institutions in countries like India, Sri Lanka, or Turkey. The problem here is that most universities concentrate on teaching, whereas the research institutions are often close to government and the political arena. The middle range comprises countries where the political climate is not conducive to academic research. The use, and even more the control of violence can be contentious or taboo. Gender relations may be very sensitive, or elements of the country's own history, and sometimes the role of religion in violence. Often forms of violence are so politicized that it might be difficult to do serious research rather than "taking sides" and engaging in political rhetoric. It is unsurprising therefore, to find no systematic and in-depth research on violence (or many other topics) in these circumstances.

As a result, research by outside scholars or local academics working abroad, in particular in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Western Europe, still dominates many areas of study (Skidmore and Lawrence 2007; Hinnells and King 2007; Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Cady and Simon 2007). By the same token, many analyses stemming from the region, in particular those on political violence, are written by journalists (Rana 2004) or by civil society and political activists (A. Roy 2009; Haqqani 2005). Although they may lack theoretical underpinning, these studies are crucial in providing basic information on events, perpetrators, and victims.

Although this article has an eye to journalistic accounts as well, its main focus is on academic violence research. Given the range of countries and the number of available studies, the choice of literature presented here is by necessity selective. Only studies written for a global audience will be considered here, which essentially means those written in the English language, and not those in Arabic, Persian, Hindi, or Urdu.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Historical and Sociological Background: Power, Domination, and Violence

Major works of historical and political sociology claim that the exercise of physical violence, and even more the control of it, depends on economic development, the dominant principles of social organization, and the institutionalization of power (Tilly 1990; Axtmann 2000; Migdal 2001; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001): The rules and norms that regulate the use of force in society are not contingent; they are at the core of political domination. If this is true, then we can expect to find patterns in the use and control of violence that are specific to political communities, nations, and countries, and maybe even wider regions. Even today, it can be argued, despite all the transnationalization and globalization of violence and crime, political domination by the state matters. Thus we consider it a useful exercise to begin our review on violence and violence research in West and South Asia with a historical and sociological overview of power relations and political domination in these regions.

West Asia and South Asia are usually regarded as two distinct entities with little in common: Historically, the legacies of the Ottoman and Persian Empires loom large in West Asia, whereas South Asia's political institutions were shaped to large extent by British colonialism; culturally, West Asia's Islam stands against South Asia's Hinduism or religious pluralism; and politically, West Asia stands for authoritarianism, while South Asia has at its heart the world's largest democracy, India. As with many clichés, there is some truth in these portrayals, but there is also something missing: West and South Asia's common heri-

<sup>2</sup> Few studies from the region discuss this issue. One exception is the volume on Pakistan edited by S. Akbar Zaidi (2003).

<sup>3</sup> Occasionally, articles in French, German, and Turkish will be mentioned as well.

tage. From the eleventh to seventeenth century, the two regions represented the center of an extended area of long-distance-trade, which reached from the Mediterranean to Indonesia, and whose cultural underpinning was Islam. The European colonizing powers later took advantage of the economic prosperity, cultural standardization, and political institutions established by this Indo-Islamic empire (Wink 1988, 2007). Even today the common heritage of West and South Asia plays a role in Islamic discourses of power, resistance, and violence (Jalal 2008; Nasr 2001).<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that the uniting force was not Islam as such, but Islamic empires with bureaucratic rules and cultural standards (Eisenstadt 1963). Rulers adhered to the Islamic faith, and political domination was justified primarily with reference to Islam, but the population never was religiously (or culturally) homogenous. The variations in political domination and control of violence we see today are not attributable to religion or faith as such. In “Islamic” West Asia, we find loosely structured “tribal” societies that have retained their characteristics over centuries, sometimes even against Islamic teachings. And it is perhaps no coincidence that many of these areas remained economically poor, institutionally weak, and politically marginal until a few decades ago: the southern rim of the Persian Gulf, Libya, Iraq are cases in point. At the other end of the spectrum we have highly stratified societies with sophisticated political institutions and economic diversification; most of these areas belonged to the respective inner core of the old Ottoman, Persian, or Mogul empires before, or belonged to an even more ancient political culture like Egypt (Khoury and Kostiner 1990; Richards 1996; Inalcik 2000; Inalcik et al. 1997).

What is often perceived as “Hindu” South Asia has its very own Islamic legacy: The most basic political-administrative foundations of British India, which shape the political landscape of South Asia to this day, had already been laid by the Mogul Empire. The British Raj built on the political achiev-

ements of its predecessors. It makes hardly any sense to break South Asian political history into religiously defined periods, because Hindu, Muslim and Christian rulers all learned from each other. Political domination in South Asia is the result of a long-term and open-ended process of state-formation with no clear center or master cleavage (Doornbos and Kaviraj 1997). Somewhat excluded from this South Asian political amalgam is the southern part of the subcontinent (including Sri Lanka), which was barely touched by the Mogul Empire, and the “tribal” systems that can be found in the hill regions in Northern and Central India and the plains bordering Iran and West Asia. These regions were at the periphery of both Mogul and British rule, and retained much of their distinct cultural and political identity (Titus 1998; Bhattacharjee 2006; Raatan 2006).

The decline of the Mogul and Ottoman empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not just a result of foreign aggression, but also of internal developments and decay and of the emergence of new, regional powers. Europeans were, at the beginning, not the only foreign rulers in the region, but the subjugation of Asia by Europeans was certainly a defining moment. European colonialism was a sea-change, symbolized in the early nineteenth century by the Napoleonic conquest of Ottoman Egypt and the British penetration of India (Albertini 1976). In many countries colonialism came later: Algeria in 1830, Morocco (formally a French protectorate only after 1912, but indirectly controlled long before that), Egypt (British sphere of influence after 1882), or Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Trans-jordan (French and British protectorates after the First World War). The timing and tools employed by the colonizing powers (England, France and Russia) made a difference. Some parts were subjected to direct domination (North Africa, parts of Central and South Asia, later also Palestine, Syria, Jordan and other parts of West Asia), others indirect (Iran, Egypt). In any case, colonialism as a form of foreign rule provoked resistance, as exemplified by the Indian Mutiny of 1858, the Arab insurgency against the Ottomans during the First World War, or by Kurdish

<sup>4</sup> To highlight this all-Asian link even conceptually, we cling to the old Nehruvian West Asia (Abhyankar 2008) and avoid the Eurocentric term Middle East.



movements against the Ottoman/Turkish, Iraqi, and Iranian governments.

The consequences of colonial domination did vary. Whereas British rule over South Asia, which lasted more than two centuries, was instrumental in bringing major political and economic change (Alavi and Harriss 1989), colonialism did not take such deep roots in West Asia: Large parts of this region were under the tutelage of the Ottoman Empire until the First World War, and Iran was never subjected to foreign rule at all (Owen 2006; Cleveland and Bunton 2009). Accordingly, the mechanisms of control of violence vary today: While in most parts of South Asia the legacy of a coherent and coercive state apparatus, the “steel frame” of former times (Woodruff 1954), still shapes practices and discourses of power and violence (Barlas 1995), the picture is less clear in West Asia (Albrecht et al. 2006).<sup>5</sup>

After the Second World War, the colonial era came to an end, first of all in South Asia. Although the colonial power gave up peacefully in 1947, the hasty partition of British India into predominantly Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan displaced more than ten million South Asians and left hundreds of thousands dead, many as victims of ethnic (or rather religious) cleansing (Talbot and Singh 2009). After the dissolution of the British Raj, the independent states of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (which seceded from Pakistan in 1971) evolved as semi-strong, moderately democratic developmental states (Jalal 1995). The role of the former colonial power and the new superpowers in day-to-day politics was limited, with India becoming a strong proponent of Third World assertiveness in the context of the non-aligned movement (Dixit 1998). Pakistan is a notable exception in this regard, developing close military ties with the United States in the 1950s, with authoritarianism establishing its roots at about the same time (Alavi 1998).

The emerging independent countries of West Asia tended to be weaker internally and externally. To begin with, decolonization involved armed conflicts, like the Arab insur-

gency against French control in Syria, against the British in Iraq, or against France in the Algerian War of Independence. Other outbreaks of violence occurred in state-formation and modernization processes, like in Turkey against the Armenians, in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq against the Kurds, or in Iran against the opposition. In most cases, independence barely changed the character of political domination, with local elites running a marginally altered quasi-colonial state (Farhad 1975; Halliday 1979; Al-Barghouti 2008). States generally allied themselves with Western countries (first Britain/France, then increasingly the United States), or turned to the Soviet Union for support for non-Western development models. Authoritarian or dictatorial regimes became the norm.

Two important developments changed the situation: One new factor was the establishment of the state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict that has dominated regional policies ever since; the second was the discovery of crude oil and natural gas reserves in several countries (Libya, Gulf states) in connection with a dramatic increase in world energy prices (after the 1973 oil shock). This created stronger “rentier states”, making rulers more independent of their subjects, since their income came from external sources, not local taxes (Beblawi and Luciani 1987); and it revived old economic and cultural ties between West and South Asia, when millions of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis temporarily migrated to the Gulf States. On their return, these migrants brought not just money, but new ideas about the role of Islam in society as well (Addleton 1992).

With the end of the Cold War many countries, particularly in West Asia, lost the actual or potential support of the Soviet Union and were not longer able to play off the two superpowers against each other. The Second Gulf War (1991) indicated how a country like Iraq might try to exploit the new situation to expand its own regional role; but the result of that and of the Third Gulf War (2003) demonstrated the limits for would-be regional hegemons. Along different lines, India and Pakistan became more assertive

5 It should be noted that one of the few societies that remained largely untouched by the bureaucratization efforts of the old empires and the later colo-

nialists was Afghanistan. As a buffer state with weak institutions, this country turned out to be unable to channel social change peacefully, and outside inter-

vention during the Cold War finally led to its disintegration (Rubin 1995).



politically and economically, with different levels of success: Pakistan has become victim of its own (successful) “jihadist” policies towards Afghanistan and is now witnessing institutional decay (Cohen 2004); India, by contrast, seems to be on its way to becoming a global power (Cohen 2001). As in other regions, state capacities to govern effectively seem to be in decline, while citizens’ abilities to claim their rights are on the rise (Shafqat 2006; Chatterjee 2004).

### 3. Topics and Issues in Violence Research in West and South Asia

We focus here particularly on political violence (3.1.), examining separately violence related to inter-state conflicts (3.1.1.) and to intra-state conflicts such as civil war, insurgency, terrorism, and repression (3.1.2.), . Religious and communal violence (3.2.), youth violence (3.3.) and, finally, domestic and gendered violence (3.4.) will be discussed rather briefly. The rationale is to put research and research conditions into a structural and historical framework of the evolution of power and violence in both regions, so that strengths and weaknesses in the literature can be identified and contextualized. Facts and figures, if available, will be provided first, followed by a brief assessment of the available literature.

We must begin with a few remarks on terminology: Categories like political violence, religious violence, or domestic violence are subject to debate. In our view, violence should be considered *political* if and when it aims at the *state*. This can happen in two ways: either *directly*, by targeting politicians, civil servants, and offices, or *indirectly*, by spreading fear among the population and thereby undermining the state’s writ and legitimacy.<sup>6</sup> Hence political violence is ultimately about access to and command over public offices, distribution of public funds, or the formulation or interpretation of the symbolic order of society.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, however, that political violence rarely manifests itself as such. In most cases, actors do not state their political aims overtly, instead hiding behind ideological goals, relig-

ious motives, and romantic ideals. For that reason, we treat many ethnic conflicts and religious conflicts mentioned in the literature essentially as political conflicts (Mehta 1998; de Silva 2001; Sahadevan 2002; Cady and Simon 2007).

Another category for distinguishing between political and non-political conflicts is social organization. Those involved in violent political acts are usually members of tightly controlled, formal organizations whose membership transgresses primordial ties such as kinship (though leadership positions may be occupied by families or clans). *Criminal* actors may share these organizational features, but not the political goals. To be sure, there is considerable overlap between organized crime and (organized) political violence, from the level of individual careers (Schlichte 2010) to institution building (Tilly 1985). Yet despite these gray areas, most acts of political violence can be distinguished clearly from non-political acts by the effects they have (or are supposed to have) on the public. By the same token, not every act of *religious* violence is political; just think of the struggle for religious hegemony among sectarian groups (Hinnells and King 2007; Zaman 2002; Nasr 2000). Very much like violent conflicts among local *communities* or among youth, religious violence can acquire political meaning if cleavages overlap at the national or international level (Kalyvas 2003). *Domestic* violence comes at the opposite end of the spectrum from political violence. This does not mean that its prevention and prosecution cannot become a political issue (Shahidullah and Derby 2009), but perpetrators do not act violently in the domestic sphere in order to pursue political goals. Arguably, actors of domestic, communal, and youth violence share a low level of organization. They involve mostly individuals who are not formally controlled, but are tied by kinship alone.

### 3.1. Political Violence

Political violence has many faces: wars and international conflicts, insurgencies and guerrilla campaigns, riots and

<sup>6</sup> Terrorist attacks, for instance, are such acts of political violence that aim to generate psychological or psycho-social effects that reach beyond the ultimate victims.

<sup>7</sup> There is a hidden assumption here, namely that the state as a political form is sociologically relevant in almost all parts of contemporary world society. Although we acknowledge, of course, that the conflicts most relevant to local society do not necessarily concern the state, as has been aptly shown by

numerous works in political anthropology (Barth 1959; Scott 1998), we do consider this to be a passing phenomenon, as state power is set to penetrate each and every corner of the modern world (Gupta 1995; Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005).

uprisings, massacres and genocide, stone-throwing and terrorist attacks, military occupation and state repression, and so on. We could also differentiate by perpetrator, which might be an individual or an informal group, a political movement or party, a civil society organization or a state agency, a foreign private or state actor, or an intelligence agency. A very basic yet useful distinction is that the involvement of the state as an actor makes a difference: If two or more states are involved, it is *inter-state* violence, or international conflict; if only one state is involved, we have a case of *intra-state* violence, also labeled civil war or insurgency; and if the state is not a declared party to the conflict, or if there is no acknowledged conflict at all, but still violence, we have *other forms* of political violence.

### 3.1.1. Violence Related to International Conflicts

The available data show frequent involvement of the state in political conflicts in West and South Asia, at least compared to other global regions.<sup>8</sup> Even inter-state wars, which have been in decline ever since the end of the Second World War, are quite frequent. International conflicts between *Israel* and the *Arab states* (in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1969, 1973) and between the formerly independent northern and southern parts of *Yemen* (from 1955 to 1958 and from 1963 to 1967, in 1969 and in 1972) (O'Ballance 1971; Walker 2005) are cases in point, not to mention the three Gulf Wars involving *Iraq* (from 1980 to 1988, 1991, since 2003) (Simpson 2004; O. Roy 2007; Hippler 2008). *India* and *Pakistan* have been to war five times (in 1949, 1965, 1971, 1984, and 1999) (Ganguly 2003; Ganguly 1986), with China going to war with India as well (in 1962) (Maxwell 1970). Another object of inter-state warfare is *Afghanistan*: Since 1978 the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and many other NATO and allied countries have been militarily involved in this conflict, not to mention neighboring states like Pakistan and Iran (Coll 2005; Dorronsoro 2005).

As regards the institutional quality of the concerned states, we can see that a loosely structured polity like Yemen has been affected by international conflict almost as much as a bureaucratic giant like India. Involvement by interventionist powers has been less in strong and semi-strong states than in weak states, and generally more in West than in South Asia. With reference to the object of conflict, we can say that most international conflicts in West and South Asia are territorial disputes and/or struggles for independence or autonomy, mostly from (quasi-)colonial powers, which means they become mixed up with intra-state conflicts: The question of Palestinian statehood lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflicts (Jung 2004), and the question of autonomy or independence for the former princely state of Kashmir has long been a major stumbling block of Indo-Pakistan relations (Lamb 1991).<sup>9</sup>

*Palestine, Kashmir*, (India vs. Pakistan) and the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan are major international issues; arguably, these four conflicts have attracted the most international media and academic attention, producing enough studies to fill whole libraries. The majority of publications have been authored by Western scholars, or by local academics working abroad. Irrespective of authorship and origin, there is a clear bias towards these conflicts, which are regularly highlighted in the international media. On conflicts like those in *Yemen* or *Western Sahara* there are few studies available (O'Ballance 1971; Wedeen 2004; Lawless 1987; Shelley 2004). Generally speaking, however, there is no great lacuna with regard to coverage of international conflicts as such; it is easy to find books and articles that report the facts and provide interpretations. The missing link with regard to violence research generally is the actual impact of international warfare on society, namely on how power and violence control are institutionalized in a country, both domestically and internationally. Civil and military bureaucracies thrive, by and

<sup>8</sup> Data on international conflict and civil wars presented in this article is based on the comprehensive figures in Gantzel and Schwinghammer (2000), and the regular updates of this database (in German) at [www.akuf.de](http://www.akuf.de) (Schreiber 2010). Central findings and conclusions are in accord with other authors (Beaumont 1995; Fearon and Laitin 2003) and databases

(SIPRI 2010).

<sup>9</sup> On the actual impact of the fighting on people and society at large there are hardly any reliable figures available, at least on the regional and global level. We know that international conflicts are short-lived, with fewer casualties than many intra-state

conflicts. But even data collections like AKUF (Gantzel and Schwinghammer 2000), PRIO and SIPRI (SIPRI 2010; Eck and Hultman 2007) have to rely mainly on news reporting. For that reason, we refrain from providing aggregated figures on victims and damages here.

large, at the cost of civil society (Rosen 1996; Rizvi 2000; Siddiqua 2007; Cloughley 2008; Ahram 2009). A great many of the new regional powers we read about in the media have reinforced their state apparatus during wartime, or in preparation to avoid international conflict through deterrence (Dixit 1998; Cohen 2001).

As a notable side effect, in some countries regularly involved in international conflicts, academic (sub-)disciplines of *security studies* and *peace and conflict research* have emerged, and are, in many respects, at the same level as their Western counterparts (Chari et al. 2007; Singh 2006; Kasturi 2006; Saikia 2006; Sahadevan 2002). In countries like Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, Iran, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, scholars have developed a strong and independent perspective on the legitimacy and appropriateness of international violence among states, in particular among states of the Global South, which has so far been ignored internationally (Ayoob 2004; Singh 2007).<sup>10</sup> Many of these scholars, however, are attached not to universities, but to government-controlled think tanks, and at least until very recently, most of their articles were written from a national, state-centered perspective. As a rule, conflicts are put into the context of each country's particular struggle to achieve or maintain independence, peace, and security, and few attempts have been made to compare current scenarios with other historical cases. This is true even for peace research. Regime type and institutional background do not make a huge difference here (Sawant 2000; Krishna and Chari 2001; Mazari 2003).<sup>11</sup>

As regards the purpose and object of study, we can distinguish three kinds of analyses: Many studies focus on the effects of a particular conflict on international affairs and world politics, for instance by highlighting the potential or actual role of international powers in the conflict (Schofield 2010; Ali 2004; Rashid 2008). Another strand of analysis reflects upon ways and means to end violence, in particular by (peaceful) intervention from outside (ICG

2006; Ismael and Ismael 2005; Al-Marashi and Keskin 2008; Carter 2006). Fewer studies focus on the effect of violence on local society and civilian population (Chayes 2006; Giustozzi 2007; Bhatia and Sedra 2008), on professional soldiers (Key 2007; Buzzell 2005; Ben-Ari 2004; Musa 1984), or on civil-military relations (Kukreja 1991). Since theories of civil-military relations rely almost entirely on Western experiences (Feaver 1999), we see a huge potential for research here, in particular for collaboration between researchers in different countries. The entire field of security studies deserves a fresh approach from the South, to take into consideration the particular societal and political conditions of these regions (Ayoob 2002). Arguably, conditions for such endeavors are better in South Asia than in West Asia: the influence of foreign powers that might dominate the research field with their own staff and experiences is more limited; the scientific community is more established; and there are studies to build upon (Bajpai 1995). It will be interesting to see whether the (long-term) involvement of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan, or the rivalry between the United States and China, will change these parameters, or if it might instigate a new debate on the legitimacy of violence (Vicziány 2003; Singh 2007; Jalal 2008; Bhatia 2009; Tripathi 2009; Hussain 2010)

### 3.1.2. Violence Related to Civil War, Insurgency, Terrorism

Since the end of the Second World War, almost every country in West and South Asia (and North Africa) has been affected by insurgency, civil war, or terrorism (Beaumont 1995; Gantzel and Schwinghammer 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003).<sup>12</sup> If we look at governance and forms of political domination, we find, to different degrees, that central political institutions are rather weak, governments are ineffective, political authority is weak, nationalism as a binding force is in its infancy, even the most basic human rights are violated regularly, and power is upheld by force rather than persuasion (Ayubi 1995; Chowdhury 2003; Corbridge et al. 2005; Waseem 1994). It may be disputable

<sup>10</sup> For example *Strategic Analysis*, published by the Institute for Strategic and Defense Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi. Of late, a number of websites have been established that compete with these journals.

See for example [www.southasiaanalysis.org](http://www.southasiaanalysis.org).

<sup>11</sup> Here we should forget that many Western authors in this field also provide analysis with a strong political bias.

<sup>12</sup> In West Asia (eighteen countries) only Qatar and the United Arab Emirates were not affected; in South Asia (seven countries) only Bhutan has seen no civil war.

whether a India, as democracy, fits in here, but numerous ongoing political conflicts doubtlessly take their toll on state legitimacy (Barlas 1995, Jalal 1995, A. Roy 2009). Since findings from other regions as well as theoretical contributions come to similar conclusions (Schlichte 2005; Migdal 1988; Huntington 1968), it is fair to say that, contrary to an impression created in recent debates (Hironaka 2008; Kaldor 1999; Barber 1996), intra-state warfare, terrorism, state failure, bad governance, and the like are by no means new phenomena in the Global South; rather, they have been part of an ongoing state- and nation-building process ever since independence (Kalyvas 2001; Duyvesteyn 2004; Jung 2005).

We mention these well-known facts because new studies on terrorism and state failure after September 11, 2001, explicitly or implicitly refer to West Asia and Asia (Stern 2003; Moghadam 2006; Kfir 2007; Young 2007; Rashid 2008). We want to steer clear of the notion that political violence in West and South Asia is of recent origin, has been brought in by outside intervention, or is tied to a particular set of (religious) inspirations (Tuastad 2003; Etienne 2007).<sup>13</sup> This is not to deny that U.S. intervention in Iraq, for instance, triggered a new wave of political violence in that country, or that religious identity played an important role in mobilizing fighters (Hatina 2005; Fisk 2006; Jalal 2008). But as a rule, intra-state warfare is a recurrent phenomenon, which is local in origin, serves many purposes, and is tied to a huge number of motivations, legitimizations, and ideologies.

For that reason, it is pointless to discuss whether the recourse to violence by opposition groups is, generally speaking, cause or effect of this state of affairs (Ayoob 1995). In the same way one could discuss endlessly whether violent opponents of oppressive regimes seek power for the common good, or simply to redistribute resources among supporters (Kalyvas 2003). Whether ethnic or religious diversity causes violence (Sahadevan 2002), or is instead its

effect (Schetter 2005) is another futile discussion. Empirical studies on armed groups show that motivations and ideologies can be very different, but the effects of organized political violence remain the same (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009). These questions cannot be answered on an abstract level, but only on a case by case basis.

So what can be said about violence in intra-state conflicts in West and South Asia? There is one well-known fact that is often taken too lightly: Intra-state violence not only involves the state as an actor; it is also directed against the state, to topple the government, to get more autonomy, or to gain independence. Here we can make a distinction, on a solid empirical basis: In West Asia, very much like in Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America, most rebel groups aim at toppling the government, whereas insurgents in South Asia tend to be more “ambitious”: the majority of civil wars there are fought for autonomy or secession, sometimes even with irredentist objectives. If we consider the historical background of the two regions under study here, these somewhat superficial empirical findings can easily be put into context.

### 3.1.2.1. West Asia

In West Asia, most intra-state conflicts are part and parcel of a state-formation process, in which the territories of the former Ottoman Empire are still involved (Jung 2006). The post-colonial states affected by violent conflict are very weak, with few links between state apparatus, traditional elites, and rulers on the one hand and the majority population on the other. In contrast to many other regions, there were, during Ottoman rule, few unifying anti-colonial movements that connected the different ethnic and religious groups. As a result, and again in contrast to most parts of Latin America, South-East Asia and South Asia, neither post-colonial elites nor the public sphere as a whole were well organized. To this day, nationalism is not yet the dominant ideology or form of political legitimization, and loyalties relate principally to families, clans, and

<sup>13</sup> The surge in studies on political violence is discussed only very selectively here. Although some new insights must be acknowledged, in particular on suicide terrorism (Dogu 2000; Atran 2004; Hafez 2006; Asad 2007; Ali and Post 2008), the bulk of

work serves rather as an introduction to the topic of intra-state warfare for a previously ill-informed Western audience (Gunaratna 2002; Rotberg 2003). Some studies even focus on terrorism’s effects on Western countries, or are written from a perspective

that aims at improving Western counterinsurgency strategies, and not on the subject matter itself (Rotberg 2004; Hoffmann 2006; Mockaitis 2008).

“tribes”; occasionally, charismatic leaders, religious ideologies (Islamism), or political ideologies come into play (Ayubi 1995; Houry and Kostiner 1990). Interestingly, nationalistic sentiment in this region seeks its fulfillment not in a particular state, but in Arab identity at large – with the notable exception of Iran, of course, where Persian nationalism is long-established and mature.

Under these circumstances, organized political violence in civil wars is primarily directed against at times isolated, at times well-guarded oppressive regimes, which basically means against a tight security apparatus that serves the interests of small (traditional) elite groups. Excluded groups use violent means to claim the most basic political and civil rights, to be in some way part of the state and claim some of its resources, often as a last resort after years of peaceful struggle. This has been a pattern in *Yemen* for a long time (1948; 1962 to 1969; 1968 to 1969; 1978 to 1982; 1986; 1994; since 2004): Here, a state apparatus captured by traditional elite groups has repetitively been attacked by upwardly mobile groups – at the beginning by those with secular, pan-Arabic and leftist leanings, more recently by those influenced by Islamist ideologies (O’Ballance 1971; Wedeen 2004; Hamidi 2009). More recent cases are Saddam Hussein’s *Iraq*, where a despotic secular regime dominated by Sunni elites was attacked by Shiite opposition groups from 1991 to 1996 (Jabar 2003; Nakash 2003), and *Algeria* (since 1992), where Islamist militias took on an authoritarian bureaucratic government – and the civilian population (Hafiz 2000; Bozarlan and Jolly 1997). In these cases, Islamist opposition is often only one very vocal (and violent) segment of a larger civil society striving to contain a predatory state apparatus.

Autonomist and separatist violence is rare in West Asia; it is more or less limited to three cases. The vast majority of instances of civil war are connected with the nationalist aspirations of the *Kurdish* communities in Iraq (1945; 1961 to 1966; 1969; 1974 to 1996), Iran (1991 to 1995), and Turkey (1984 to 2001; since 2001) (Lawrence 2009; Bozarlan 2009). These non-Arab and non-Persian communities essentially strive for nation- and statehood; they represent the rare case of a process of nation- and state-building that remains in its infancy even in the twenty-first century; it

remains to be seen whether the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish territory in northern Iraq will change that. Under these circumstances, otherwise banal aspirations of freshly mobilized segments of society take on a separatist form.

The second case of separatism relates to *Lebanon’s* civil war from 1975 to 1990. In the West Asian context, Lebanon represents the exceptional case of a cultural-political mélange of distinct religiously defined communities within one state; at some point during the political mobilization process of the 1970s, however, the political arrangements behind this synthesis broke down and the respective communities claimed their own territories (Barak 2002; Picard 1997). *Israel and Palestine* stands for the last West Asian anomaly: armed resistance against foreign occupation by a neighboring country (Lesch 2008; Mishal and Sela 2000). Conflict potential is increased by two features: firstly, the occupying country is essentially a religiously defined, expanding settler colony, with little inclination for compromise on land issues; secondly, the occupied territory’s indigenous population is politically disorganized.

A feature common to almost every intra-state conflict in West Asia is the involvement of international actors. Great powers like the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom have all been party to various disputes over the last century. Interventionist policies already began during the decline of Ottoman rule and the ensuing internationalization of its territories after the First World War under League of Nations trusteeship. Then, Western capital started to penetrate the emerging Gulf economies, turning the struggle for the command and control of a political economy like Saudi Arabia or Persia into a matter of international affairs (Frye 1951). After the Second World War, the tendency to treat almost any case of political violence in the “Middle East” as an international issue has been reinforced by the Arab-Israeli conflict (Singh 2003). Even during the Cold War era, when international media, international relations, and political science concentrated on superpower rivalry, intra-state conflicts in West Asia gained significant attention, in particular if and when superpowers were involved. The unprecedented media attention the Third Gulf War received and the volume of propaganda



mobilized by the warring parties, can thus be seen as the apex of a protracted internationalization of violent conflicts in the region (Debrix 2006; Atawneh 2009).

Against this background, we can see why the bulk of literature is written by international, mostly Western, academics (Bouillon 2007; Cordesman 2008; Hoffmann 2006), journalists (Tripathi 2009), and even practitioners (Scheuer 2008). Conflict and violence are often viewed from outside, focusing on the interventionist's perspective and problems (Pelletière 2007; Feith 2008). Many studies, even those from the region, focus on ways and means to find an end to the conflict, following post-conflict peace-building frameworks (Ismael and Ismael 2005; Al-Marashi and Keskin 2008), although the number of critical studies that look into interventions as problem producers rather than problem solvers is increasing (Ajami 2006; Wahab 2006; Glosemeyer 2004; Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002;). Even in this field it is not uncommon to find publications with a more explicit political (as opposed to research) agenda, especially in the Palestinian and Lebanese contexts. In addition, media and academic coverage give a distorted view of conflicts in the region: Following international news value, exceptional cases like Palestine and the Lebanon tend to get much more coverage than a protracted conflict like Yemen or a pivotal state like Egypt.

In recent years, however, we have been seeing a reorientation. Regional scholars, many of them working abroad, have found the opportunity to conduct more detailed research on inner contradictions within their societies, on patterns of violence in daily life, and on how this leads to or prolongs violent conflict (Ahram 2009; Hamidi 2009). It is fair to say that alongside well-funded research programs at international universities, international organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Crisis Group (ICG) play an important role, giving local scholars an opportunity to conduct professional and critical research. ICG reports have touched upon on many sensitive issues, like religious minorities (ICG 2005, 2010) or radical opposition movements (ICG 2008), and it has done empirical research under difficult circumstances (ICG 2007, 2009). UNDP (2003) has published an "Arab Human Development Re-

port," which was researched and written by an excellent group of Arab intellectuals. The assessment of Arab universities in UNDP's 2003 report on "Building a Knowledge Society" is worth quoting to understand why organizations like UNDP and ICG matter in the Arab world:

One of the main features of many universities in the Arab world is their lack of autonomy, i.e., they fall under the direct control of the ruling regime. Nevertheless, universities are often the arenas for political and ideological conflict, the more so because of restrictions imposed on political participation in general and the promotion of political currents that owe allegiance to the regime. These contextual features have adverse effects on the degree of freedom allowed for education and research. (UNDP 2003, 56)

Internationalization of print and especially electronic media facilitated this development. Because of the internet, we potentially have (hidden) public debate about almost every issue in almost every country, at least among educated middle classes. Violent conflicts figure among them, in particular if and when covered by the global media (Lynch 2006; Berenger 2006). It remains to be seen whether what we have here is a nascent international civil society that could finally transform authoritarian structures and lead to better research conditions.

### 3.1.2.2. South Asia

In contemporary world society, South Asia is probably the region with the highest number of armed formations engaged in political violence, and the greatest variation in terms of their ideological orientation. We can make out numerous kinds of ethnic or "tribal" (sub-)nationalism, a plethora of religious fundamentalisms, and even different strands of revolutionary Marxism (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Rana 2004; Ali 1993). Most insurgencies in South Asia have been fought by national or sub-national groupings under the flag of autonomy or separatism: in *India* Kashmiris (since 1990), Sikhs (1982 to 1993), Assamese (since 1990), Nagas (1954 to 1975), Mizos (1966 to 1980), Tripuris (since 1999), Manipuris (since 2005), and Bodos (1997 to 2005); in *Pakistan* Sindhis (1986 to 1995), Muhajris (1986 to 1995), and Balochis (1973 to 1977; since 2005); in *Sri Lanka* Tamils (1983 to 2002; 2005 to 2008); and in *Bangladesh* the Bengalis for separation from Pakistan (1971) and later, internally, the ethnic groups of the

Chittagong Hill Tracts (1973 to 1993).. There are few cases in which rebels took up arms to topple the government and/or change the system of governance: the Maoist uprisings in *India* (since 1997) and *Nepal* (1999 to 2006), the insurgency of the “*Pakistani Taliban*” (since 2007), and the civil war in *Afghanistan* (since 1978) are cases in point.

It should also be noted that despite the magnitude of political violence and intra-state warfare, the subcontinent has been subject to little direct foreign intervention. In stark contrast to West Asia, the major powers in particular have not shaped the post-colonial political landscape by use of military force. It looks like a paradox: Although autonomist and separatist rebellions (in South Asia) have a bigger potential impact on the international system, since they could change the number of units, they have triggered less intervention than anti-government rebellions in West Asia. This paradox can at least partly be explained by the nature of state-formation in both regions and the capacity of post-colonial states to deter (would-be) interventionists (Ayoob 2004). It remains to be seen whether U.S. and NATO intervention in Afghanistan will change the state of affairs in the region (Tripathi 2009; Rashid 2008; Bhatia and Sedra 2008).

The best explanation at hand for a pattern of organized political violence that is so different from West Asia (and from Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, too) is the pre-colonial and colonial formation of the region and the form of decolonization. Almost the whole subcontinent inherited comparatively strong post-colonial institutions from the British Raj, some of which even had roots in the pre-colonial era (Bose and Jalal 1998). At the same time, colonial rule involuntarily brought forth strong anti-colonial national movements, although their strength differed geographically depending on the type of rule (direct vs. indirect), the degree of colonial transformation, and the type of pre-colonial structures. When the British Empire became militarily overstretched during the Second World War, the Quit India Movement was ready to capitalize on this weakness: by August 1947 the colonial era had come to an end, at least in most parts of South Asia. Although the sudden, indeed hasty, dissolution of the British Empire led initially to a huge wave of political violence, in retrospect it can be

argued that an initially violent process of state formation enabled the post-colonial elites to put their institutions to an early test and to tie large parts of the population closer to the state apparatus (Moore 1979; Harrison 1960).

As a result, state institutions are usually more viable in South Asia than in West Asia; moreover, national identity building processes had been taken further. These favorable conditions, however, brought not peace, but conflict. State power works both ways: it can provide protection, and it can uproot people (Nandy 2003). As it turned out, international boundaries in South Asia, very much like in other parts of Asia, did and do not match the settlement areas of linguistic communities; in some cases two or more post-colonial states even vie for the same territory, and its people (Lamb 1968). As state power gained more and more leverage, local and national elites competed for control over people and land, sometimes across borders. India, Pakistan and, later, Bangladesh became engulfed by rebellions of local status groups that could not be reconciled (Ali 1993; Samad 1995; Amin 1988). Uprisings of “tribal” groups in North-East India (Nagas, Mizos) (Nepram 2002; Bhūshāṇa 2004) and in western Pakistan (Balochis) (Titus 1998; Scholz 2002; Bansal 2006) are cases in point, as are Kashmiris in India (Geelani 2006; Lamb 1991) and Bengalis in pre-divided Pakistan (Sisson and Rose 1990). In all these cases, members of ethnically defined communities, mostly traditional or newly mobilized (local) elites, which had been living territorially and/or culturally at the margins of mainstream society, struggled for collective political rights vis-à-vis the state and the nation. In many cases, ethnic or sub-national consciousness had been fostered by exactly the same colonial or post-colonial state institutions that came under attack (de Silva 2001). Interestingly, federally structured India has been able to accommodate many of these claims, whereas centralized polities like Pakistan and Sri Lanka have not (Adeney 2007).

Another aspect of colonial rule that pitted communities against each other is positive or reverse discrimination. British divide and rule policies gave preference to minority groups, such as particular ethnic, religious or caste communities; under a more democratic dispensation, post-colonial governments swung support to the majority

groups, thereby indirectly discriminating against privileged minorities, some of whom took up arms. Tamils in *Sri Lanka* and Sikhs in *India* are examples (Deol 2000; Chima 2010; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1994; Winslow and Woost 2004). Arguably, closer ties between central rulers and the citizenry, and even democratic institutions are factors that increase the risk of autonomist or secessionist rebellion, because rebels do not face only the government but have to struggle against a national consensus as well, even if rebel groups receive support on the local level.

For each and every conflict there are, to be sure, many root causes that can be identified, as there are many motivations and many kinds of reasoning involved. We do not claim that colonial factors explain everything; but they do to a certain extent explain why people react in specific ways to stress and pressure. As is to be expected, religion, national and cultural pride, and inequality rank very high among the motivational factors voiced by the actors themselves (Das 1992; Tambiah 1996; Hinnells and King 2007). The case of the Naxalite (Maoist) rebellion in eastern and central parts of *India*, which currently affects almost one third of the country's territory (Misra 2002; Mehra 2000; see also Singh 1995), the thirty years of war in *Afghanistan*, and the Taliban insurgency in *Pakistan* are the reference points (Rana, Sial, and Basit 2010; Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Mir 2009; Giustozzi 2007; Dorronsoro 2005). These are, not coincidentally, the cases where insurgents seek political power and system change rather than autonomy or separation. They are indications of a deeper crisis: in India in the less developed parts of the country, in Pakistan within the Pushtun belt in the west, and in Afghanistan on the national level. In all three cases, the legitimacy and the survival of the state is at stake, at least in the long run. That is why all three governments give top priority to these cases.<sup>14</sup>

International attention in the mass media, but also in international relations think tanks and university political science departments focuses on the so-called AFPAK region (Zahab and Roy 2004). The surge of terrorism-related work

on Afghanistan and Pakistan over the last ten years has produced a volume of literature that is almost impossible to comprehensively review. As regards the quality of the literature, our conclusions are similar to those for terrorism-related studies in West Asia: Some studies have to be seen as introductions for previously uninformed audiences (Crews and Tarzi 2008; Jones 2009), some discuss policy problems and options for the international community (Hussain 2010; Dobbins 2008), and others have brought new insights, in particular on social organization and violence (Giustozzi 2007; Dorronsoro 2005; Esser 2004). Recent studies tend to distort the real picture by creating the impression that religiously motivated violence is the main, if not the sole source of armed conflict in the region (Gunarathna 2002). Few studies give an accurate picture of the burden South Asian societies face in terms of political violence. In fact, a democracy like India suffers greatly, and subnationalism, not religion, is the biggest source of violence in the region (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Ali 1993; Das 1992).

Fortunately the South Asian academic community researching conflict and violence is stronger than in many other parts of the Global South. India, Sri Lanka and, to a lesser extent, Bangladesh have comparatively solid research infrastructures, and even in Pakistan, where militarization has a grip on politics and society, many critical studies have been undertaken (Jalal 1990; Khattak 1996; Haqqani 2005; Siddiqi 2007). There is, however, a structural problem. Research literature basically falls into three categories: First, there is a strong tradition in security studies, which is state-centered by nature and gives little attention to sociological analysis (Marwah 1995; Krishna and Chari 2001; Kumaraswamy 2004); then we have, as a counterweight, society-centered analyses (Fuller and Bénéti 2001; Misra 2002) that follow the tradition of subaltern studies historiography (Chatterjee 2009; Guha 2010). These studies have more sociological depth, disaggregate the state apparatus, and deconstruct national (security) myths (Khattak 1996; Navlakha 1997; see also Ayoob 2002). And thirdly, there are a good number of studies without any clear theoretical lean-

<sup>14</sup> India's central government has repeatedly declared that the Maoist rebellion is the biggest threat (Sahni and Cheria 2005). In Pakistan the same has

been said by President Musharraf about the Taliban threat (Abbas 2005); the same goes without saying for Afghanistan.

ing, which just report the “facts” on current onlicts (Mir 2009; Ray 2007; Rana 2004; Banerjee 1980). This literature is extremely valuable, but largely disconnected from (mainstream) academia. Take North-East India: Here, a surge of literature, mainly done by scholars at local universities, has greatly enhanced empirical knowledge (Bhattacharjee 2006; Bhūshana 2004; Das 2004; Nepram 2002; Maitra 1998), but this has gone largely unnoticed in national and international political and violence research. What is needed is an infrastructure linking up empirical, theoretical, and pragmatic approaches in and for this region.

### 3.1.2.3. Synopsis

Most studies on civil wars, insurgencies and terrorism are descriptive. These accounts of “what actually happened” are typically authored by scholars (Mazari 2003; Nayar 2005; Schofield 2010), journalists (Rana 2004; Coll 2005; Rashid 2008), and practitioners (Buzzell 2005; Dobbins 2008; Scheuer 2008) whose cultural (and symbolic) capital is essentially local knowledge, whether first hand or not. They rarely focus on the use of violence as such; some even take it for granted that individuals or groups will at some point use physical force. Next we have well-researched purely academic case studies, many of which are written by sociologists and social anthropologists (Dorransoro 2005; Giustozzi 2007; Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009). These studies give a more detailed, yet limited account of actors and practices, and rather than taking the use of violence for granted, they explicitly ask why, when, and how violence was used. Then we have an increasing number of academic articles with empirical insights and a background in a specific theoretical debate (Jalkh 1996; Esser 2004; Wedeen 2004; Blom et al. 2008). They represent a new generation of theoretically guided, empirical studies on violence in its different forms. Finally, we have the very rare systematic and comprehensive designs addressing the causes and inner dynamics of violence (Rubin 1995; Ganguly 2003; Verkaaik 2004). Most studies by regional scholars fall into the first or second category and have had little influence on academic debate.

As is to be expected, interpretations and theoretical conclusions on organized political violence in West and in South Asia are deeply influenced by international debates. With regard to implicit or explicit assumptions about the

causes of conflict and the motivation of parties, we can identify a pattern. Since both Kashmir and Palestine are protracted conflicts, they can be used here to identify shifts in explanation: At the beginning, both cases were portrayed as nationalist struggles for political independence (Singh 2003; Lamb 1991), then as *jihad* for an Islamic order (Swami 2008), and recently as the result of a failure of India and Israel respectively (and of the Palestinian Authority) to provide basic public goods (Abu-Amr 1994; Geelani 2006; King-Irani 2005). These variants of interpretation and legitimization clearly echo international debates in the mass media and academia, like those on national development in the 1960s (Huntington 1965; Shils 1965), on political Islam in the 1980s and since 2001 (O. Roy 2004, 1994), and on failed states in recent years (Rotberg 2003; Helman and Ratner 1992); they are evidence that international discourse agendas do influence research on political violence in West and South Asia to a great extent.

### 3.1.3. Repression, Militarism and Other Forms of Political Violence

For international conflicts and civil wars, we can rely on reasonably accurate and consistent information across countries and regions. This enables us to give judgments on strengths, weaknesses, and lacunae in research. This is not true with regard to other forms of violence, those without declared parties to an unmistakably identifiable conflict. Many acts of political violence in West and South Asia are not bound to a conflictive issue, but are rather part of ordinary political power struggles. We have to keep in mind that in principle, violence is a resource open to everybody (Popitz 1992). Whether physical violence may be applied as a means to political ends depends on the (informal) rules of the game (Bailey 1969). Given the nature of such political conflicts, there is no reliable data collection at hand on the magnitude and the effects on these forms of political violence. Studies in political sociology and political anthropology can enlighten us on these phenomena only on a case by case basis (Barth 1959). All we can do in this overview is to offer a fairly basic categorization of these forms of political violence and to give some empirical insights.

We propose a differentiation of three basic forms of political violence below the level of war: government repression, violent protest (including individual terrorism), and viol-

ent political infighting. *State violence* against peaceful opposition movements and activists is still one of the dominant forms of political violence in most countries of West Asia, and to a lesser extent in South Asia. Reports of human rights organizations like *Amnesty International*, *Human Rights Watch*, or *Reporters sans frontières* provide basic information on most countries. As a rule, however, these organizations do not maintain regional chapters or local offices on a systematic basis, so they generally have to rely on second-hand reporting (media, eyewitnesses). Local human rights organizations exist, again more in South Asia than in West Asia. Here the available information varies greatly according to regime type. While academic research and investigative reporting on conflicts may be easier than is commonly perceived (Romano 2006), inquiries into fundamental human rights issues are often dangerous.

Systematic academic work on the topic is very rare. And for those who invest their time and investigate the subject, it is very difficult, given the subject matter, to avoid short-term perspectives and taking sides. There are some notable exceptions on sensitive issues such as torture, in countries like Israel (Araj 2008; Falah 2008), Turkey (Göregenli 2005; Aydın 1997), and India (Pelly 2009; Asian Centre for Human Rights 2010). In addition, torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners by U.S. authorities in Guantanamo, Baghram, and elsewhere has attracted both political and academic interest (Finlay 2007; Feinman 2007). It should be noted that in countries under de-facto foreign occupation, like Iraq or Afghanistan, reporting and research may be facilitated by the larger number of people able to provide information, such as (foreign) journalists, aid workers, and government officials – although it is fair to assume that such information assembled by outsiders is more prone to false conclusions than that provided by locals.

*Violent protest* often leads to or results from government repression. But it can be argued that the exercise of physical violence is often a strategic tool as well, to raise the stakes of the political power game, or to provoke (international) media attention (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003). In both West and South Asia, and in both democratic and authoritarian regimes, such strategic exercise of violence by the opposition is very much part of politics

(Shimray 2004; Geelani 2006; Bouckaert 2009). Blockades and political strikes that bring public life to a standstill are regularly and successfully implemented by opposition movements, in particular in a democracy like India (Chatterjee 2004). The same applies to violent political infighting. In times of crisis (and thereafter), even mainstream political parties maintain front organizations, which at times intimidate and occasionally liquidate political opponents (Fuller and Bénéi 2001). Note that warring parties in many intra-state wars start their line of business in such a manner. A good example is the violent politics of southern Punjab in Pakistan (Nasr 2000; Zaman 2002). Here, local political and religious leaders, organized along the lines of the established and the outsiders, founded militant sectarian organizations (Shiite and Sunni), which provide recruits for *jihadi* terrorism to this day.

To conclude, we can say that there are concepts and isolated comparative studies on political violence below the level of civil war (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003), but there is no solid research infrastructure in West and South Asia (or North Africa) for empirical research along these lines.

### 3.2. Religious Violence and Communalism

We turn now to violent acts against members and parts of society committed by organizations that pursue no political goals and are, as a rule, less organized, at least on the national level. It should be kept in mind that the state is by no means the only organization in contemporary society (Ahrne 1990). In particular in the Global South, “traditional” organizations like families, clans, local communities, or religious communities are more important than state organs for daily life at the grass-roots level. In some recent studies, these “functional equivalents” to the modern state have been portrayed as institutional alternatives where states and governments are inefficient or lack legitimacy (Draude 2007). It should not be overlooked, however, that the same functional equivalents can turn out to be dysfunctional themselves. It is quite possible that the amount of violence committed within and between those communal organizations and groups in a given society in the Global South may dwarf the violence committed by and against the state.



Religious violence and communal violence belong in that category (Juergensmeyer 2003; Hajjar 2004; Hinnells and King 2007; Selengut 2008). Again on a very basic (and indeed abstract) level, we can distinguish between three main types of religious or communal violence: violence *within* communities and organizations, violence *between* communities and organizations (sectarian violence), and religious and communal violence in (local) political conflicts.

Let us begin with the last category. Here there is no razor-sharp delineation from the political violence discussed above. Religious violence in the strict and narrow sense is often the precursor of religiously legitimated violence in political conflicts. Or, to put it the other way around: violence among religious communities may become political. Religious violence occurs in the context of civil war, when religious leaders collaborate with political ones, or if they develop political ambitions themselves.<sup>15</sup> The civil wars in Lebanon (Barak 2002; ICG 2010; Picard 1997) and Algeria (Hafiz 2000) are cases in point, as are the Islamist insurgencies in Iraq (Jabar 2003), Afghanistan (Edwards 2002), Pakistan (Zahab and Roy 2004; Mir 2009), and Palestine (Bloom 2004; Robinson 2007).

Beyond these well-covered conflicts, it is more difficult to get reliable data on the extent of religious and communal violence in West and South Asia. We should note that in many Muslim majority countries violence is described and presented in a religious context. State-sponsored vigilante groups and morality police claim to “purify society of evils.” Such violence may be seen in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and other countries in the region. For example, violence against sex workers, eunuchs (hijras), and religious minorities (like the Ahmadi community in Pakistan) is considered a religious duty by some vigilante groups.

Analytically, we can identify two kinds of religious violence *among and between* communities. Although these types of violence are not strictly apolitical, it is fair to say that state power is neither an issue nor a party here. One is *sectarian-*

*ism*. This is about power struggles between competing sects within a single religion, in particular Sunnis and Shias. These struggles occur all over West and South Asia (Al-Marashi and Keskin 2008; Nasr 2000). This kind of violent struggle is not trivial. It requires that individuals, or rather families, have a religious choice. For that reason, this kind of violence typically occurs in urban and suburban settings, and not in rural ones. In the case of South Asia there is also fierce competition between different strands of Sunni Islam, namely Deabandi and Barelvi Islam, and between the orthodox “Islam of the book” and popular Sufi Islam (Lassen and Skyhawk 2008). Here again we find outbreaks of violence mostly in urban and semi-urban settings. Literature on this kind of religious violence is sparse and unsystematic.

Another South Asian peculiarity is communalist violence between Hindu and Muslim communities (Shani 2007; Sen 2007; Engineer 2010; Chandra 2008). This sort of violence is more “political,” because it affects the very social fabric of a multicultural and multi-religious society like India. At the same time, since the division of British India into India and Pakistan is based on religious (“communalist”) criteria, it affects relations between India and its neighbor. Lately, (Islamic) terrorism and communalist violence by Hindu extremists have become serious challenges to the social order. That is why communalist violence, although following a similar logic, is more political than other forms of religious violence.

The literature on religious and communalist violence in West and South Asia is scattered. The question when and how religious activism turns violent is not well researched. On a more abstract level, however, there is a broad and long-standing range of literature and research on the link between religion and violence. After September 11, 2001, interest has increased considerably, and focuses even more on the link between Islam or Islamist radicalism and violence.

We might differentiate three main trends here: (a) research which is critical in regard to religion generally, raising the

15 It is often difficult, to be sure, to separate political and non-political, in this case religious, motivations. At the same time, the autonomy and inner

logic of the religious sphere in West and South Asian societies cannot not be denied (Zaman 2002; Roy 2004). We should be careful with assumptions here.

To struggle for recognition and power in the religious field can be meaningful in itself, and it can make sense to use violent means.

point that religion has or can have a strong link to violence (Avalos 2005); (b) research which assumes or discusses an especially strong affinity to violence in *monotheistic* religions (in contrast to others), generally because of their relative lack of pluralism (Assmann 2009); and (c) an approach which concentrates its focus on Islam and Islamism and their link to violence (O. Roy 2004; Kepel 2003). In all of these categories, many scholars take the opposite viewpoint, and portray religions as inherently peaceful or stress their potential for peace (Appleby 2000), and in several cases the authors combine several approaches (Juergen-smeyer 2003, 1992).

### 3.3. Youth Violence

Youth violence as a separate category is applicable mainly if and when young people, mostly young men, dissociate at least to a degree from their family, set up their own groups or organizations, and engage in violence. In contrast to societies in Latin America or Sub-Saharan Africa (let alone Europe), it seems that in West and South Asia this has not been very much the case, at least until recently.

Youth violence has not been very high on the agenda, although a few contributions do exist, including on school violence, football hooliganism, and vandalism (Gerler 2008). Possibly, academic attention in these regions has been absorbed by the more spectacular kinds of violence, like insurgencies, civil wars, terrorism, and the like; or it may be the case that the violence of youth gangs seen in many other regions has somehow been absorbed into the more politicized forms of violence. Student organizations in South Asia may be mentioned here, having played an important role in the initial phases of civil wars in North-East India and Sri Lanka. There may be a cultural reason as well, which is the extent to which youths are still controlled by the family in Asian countries. Therefore, youth gangs, so important in some other parts of the world, are less relevant here – probably because youth with an inclination to violent acts have often been integrated into political or political-religious groups, and rarely act in isolation.

The cases of India and Pakistan are of interest here. Since the 1970s young men have been systematically recruited by mainstream political parties, in order to boost their “muscle power” in extra-parliamentary struggles and street fights. It should be noted that this phenomenon is tied to democratic competition. In some local arenas, such as the megacities Mumbai and Karachi, young men for a time became the dominant political players, racketeers controlling entire districts, even cities (Verkaaik 2004; Eckert 2003). It is perhaps no coincidence that this happened in two cities great inward migration (Laitin 2009).

### 3.4. Domestic and Gendered Violence

The main problem in West South Asian societies is that interpersonal violence is inaccurately documented. Domestic violence, generally against women and children is obviously not specific to West and South Asia, but takes place in all countries though in varying degrees. So-called “honor-killings” (Nanes 2003; Faqir 2001) are definitely more specific to West and South Asian countries, compared to Europe or Latin America.<sup>16</sup> These categories of violence can also take culturally or regionally specific forms, or they can be “justified” in specific ways. For example, sometimes violence against women is explained or justified in ethnic or other forms of cultural distinctiveness, framing the roles of women in societies. “Tribal” codes of conduct or religiously framed local traditions of inequality are good examples.

Violence in social relationships (e.g. parent-child, teacher-student, and employer-employee) is also common. Such types of violence may even be tolerated if the perpetrator can claim that it was “justified and necessary for the welfare of the victim.” “Tribal” feuds, sectarian violence, and racial and ethnic conflicts are all occurrences of daily life.

In contrast to the few works on youth violence, the topic of violence against women (and to a much lesser degree against children) has not been overlooked. The volume is much smaller than in connection with terrorism or civil wars, but it is still a relevant field of research. The dramatic

<sup>16</sup> It should, however, be noted that honor killings normally happen in tribal areas, and in the case of Iran are mainly specific to the south-east provinces

(near the border with Iraq) and rarely occur in the cities.

rise in the proportion of females in higher education in recent years in many countries in the region, particularly in Iran, and the consolidation of women's activities for equal rights may play a significant role in drawing the attention of scholars towards domestic and gender violence (Nojomi, Agaee, and Eslami 2007; Johnson and Kuttub 2001; Jamal 2001; Haj-Yahia 2002; Clark et al. 2008; Boy and Kulczycki 2008; Aliverdinia and Pridemore 2009). Publications on violent child abuse are less developed, but some articles can still be found (Mikhail 2002; Al-Motwa 2008). Another topic concerns the fate of women in civil wars (Pandey 2006; Afshar 2003).

#### 4. Conclusion

Obviously, this brief overview cannot cover the whole field of violence-related research. Among the topics omitted here are the psychological results of violence suffered either as a direct victim or witness (Punamäki et al. 2008; Montgomery 2008). Also, there has been no mention of criminal violence, very little about historical examples and historical violence research, or about violence and perceptions concerning violence and media, nor the re-shaping of societies by experiences of major violence and insecurity, or the discussion of violence in the military context, to name but a few relevant topics.

Our main aim has been to give a structural overview centered on political violence. Here the literature is quite rich, but often focused on phenomena that impact on Western actors or interests, like terrorism and (counter)-insurgency. Some contributions are politically charged or culturally biased. The assumption or insinuation that religion (Islam or Islamism) is a major *cause* of violence in the West or South Asia, while treating Christianity as of less relevance in regard to Western violence is a case in point. Political violence is the most persistent and the most complex prob-

lem in both West and South Asia. The process of creating congruent state, territory, and population is still under way in most societies here. Political transformations like those underway in West Asia after the "Arab Spring" of 2011 are likely to accentuate the challenges that lie ahead. We can also expect the political differences to be articulated in numerous cultural forms, in particular religious. Sadly, research on "religious" forms of violence is often dominated by the international debates with little regard to the realities on the ground. Some studies give an impression that monolithic religions more likely to inculcate violent behavior in their followers than the other religions. However there are few studies providing in-depth analysis of the causes of political violence beyond the religious and ideological explanations.

It is highly desirable for scholars from West and South Asia and North Africa to play a more important and active role in violence research, in both its political and personal dimensions. There is some reason for optimism, because in recent years, some universities in West and South Asia and North Africa have increased their connectivity and global out-reach. There could be credible research on different types of violence in local languages, especially Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and Urdu. It would be helpful if abstracts at least were translated into English language and made available in the relevant research databases. Some Turkish universities have already started translating local research into English and putting it on research databases for academic consumption. Intelligent and efficient use of technology can be helpful in increasing global accessibility of their indigenous research and can reduce the isolation of universities by an exchange of ideas and perspectives with the international scientific community, but it is not enough. What we need is an exchange of researchers, research experiences, and ideas.

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# Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia: Main Themes and Directions

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

► **Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)





# Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia: Main Themes and Directions

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The study analyses research on violence in the Northeast and Southeast Asia with respect to four types: political, urban, domestic and youth violence, highlighting current research themes, tendencies and gaps in violence research on and in the region, and identifying needs for further research. Commonalities and differences between countries and subregions are examined, along with a treatment of the colonial experience that influenced political violence in post-colonial countries.

With the exception of political violence, violence in Northeast and Southeast Asia has been thoroughly understudied, particularly within the region.<sup>1</sup> One obvious reason for this is that many countries have been governed by authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes that applied political violence for the purpose of staying in power and had no intention of allowing independent research. Most research has therefore come from Western Europe, the United States, and particularly Australia.

For this reason, Australian and U.S. research institutes have also traditionally seen the presence of a large number of regional scholars. It is only in recent years, when most countries experienced some form of democratic opening between 1989 and 1999, that regional scholarship on violence has gained more prominence. Regional scholarship is unevenly spread across countries: six of the region's fifteen countries have small or negligible research infrastructure (Laos, Cambodia, Burma, East Timor, North Korea and Brunei). Of these, Laos, Cambodia, Burma and East Timor have all experienced several decades of internal violence.

The present paper has two purposes: First, it will detail the state of the art in violence research in Northeast and Southeast Asia. Second, it is designed to identify gaps in this research. The study analyses research on violence in the region with respect to four types: political, urban, domestic and youth violence. In order to examine the literature and to identify needs for further research, the paper highlights current research themes, tendencies and gaps in violence research on and in the region. This includes commonalities and differences between countries or subregions and an illumination of the colonial experience that influenced political violence in post-colonial countries.

Violence research in Northeast and Southeast Asia has traditionally focussed on political violence, reflecting the violent history of most countries in the region after World War II. Most forms of political violence are discussed through the lens of post-colonial nation-building and therefore in relation to specific political contexts: ethno-religious violence, secessionism, and state violence to preserve national unity and government power; the ideological contest in the Second and Third Indochina Wars; and domestic conflicts,

<sup>1</sup> Northeast Asia comprises China, the Koreas, Japan, and Taiwan. Southeast Asia is subdivided into continental Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, Cam-

bodia, Laos, and Vietnam); and insular Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Brunei, and the Philippines).



in the form of communist insurgencies, anti-communist counterinsurgencies, and generalised civil wars.

In contrast, youth, urban and domestic violence have only recently become part of the scientific discourse, whereby youth violence still plays a marginal role. Youth violence is discussed in connection with political events, such as the violence surrounding the independence of East Timor, and also against the backdrop of paternalistic societies in which youth join gangs in order to find a role for themselves in society. This latter context is also the frame for the discourse on domestic violence: paternalistic societies, in which women struggle to make themselves heard and in which judges and legislators often relegate wife abuse to the private sphere. In the cases of youth violence and domestic violence, the context of authoritarian paternalistic societies meant that researchers neglected the issue until liberalising tendencies during the last two decades, which have allowed the emergence of a body of literature that is still thin for youth violence but already sizeable for domestic violence. Urban violence has also only lately made it onto the research agenda, given the low levels of economic development and urbanisation in many countries in the region.

The paper begins with an overview over the colonial histories of the countries in the region. These histories are linked to forms of political violence. It is therefore the aim of the history part to highlight causes of political violence as inherent in the colonial experience. Political violence is analysed along three lines: identity and sovereignty in borderlands, ethno-religious and communal violence, and violence perpetrated by authoritarian governments that exclude the wider population from access to resources through elite political processes. The sections that follow discuss causes and risk factors for urban, domestic and youth violence. A conclusion will synthesise the main points of analysis and outline potentials for future research.

### 1. Historical Introduction

Summarising the history of Northeast and Southeast Asia is no easy matter, due to the immense political, economic,

cultural and social diversity between and within the countries. Most crucially, all countries except Thailand, the Korea and Japan were colonised;<sup>2</sup> China was a semi-colony whose own imperial government remained in power, but where Western imperialism carved out spheres of influence.

#### 1.1. The Impact of Colonialism on Current Conflict Patterns

While colonialism had a profound political, social and economic impact on some colonies, life in other societies continued almost uninterrupted. Laos, Cambodia and East Timor were relatively unaffected by colonialism, with their agrarian societies and autonomous villages remaining largely intact. In these territories, it was post-colonial developments, rather than the colonial experience, that triggered political and social conflicts. These countries had not experienced strong, penetrative centralized bureaucracies prior to colonialism, and colonialism did nothing to change that. We will return to this point later. In other countries, colonialism firmly took hold, as the ruling powers constructed empires that required efficient administration and large-scale infrastructure (such as road and rail networks and deep-water ports) for the extraction and shipping of resources on a mass scale to fuel European industrialisation.

Colonialism had a variety of impacts on these places. First, it created new countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 drew an artificial line through the Malay archipelago to settle the hostilities between the British and Dutch. The creation of Indonesia from the Dutch colony is largely responsible for the secessionist conflicts in Aceh and Papua. When Sukarno became the first Indonesian president in 1949, he attempted to create a nation-state that included all of the Dutch East Indies under the slogan “From Sabang to Marauke”. Aceh and Papua resisted post-colonial incorporation into an Indonesian nation through their respective independence movements: the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was established in 1976 and the Free Papua Movement (OPM) in 1965. Aceh was an independent sultanate colonised by the Dutch in 1873. After Indonesian independence it was merged with North Sumatra despite its insistence that it was ethnically

<sup>2</sup> Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and colonised Thailand during World War II.

and religiously distinct from the other tribal groups in the area. As for Papua, the Dutch stayed in the small territory and created a statist entity independent from events in Indonesia, where Papuans were employed in the civil service and the army. The Dutch withdrew in 1963 under pressure from U.S. President Kennedy, whose administration warned that a military conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia would ultimately benefit the communists in Indonesia (Lintner 2009b; Webster 2007).

As for Malaysia, the area consisted of small sultanates in pre-colonial times. British colonialism not only put an end to this political diversity, it greatly changed the ethnic composition of the area when the British encouraged mass Indian and Chinese immigration. Although Indian and Chinese traders had been present in the area long before British colonialism arrived, mass migration occurred between 1786 (when Britain took possession of Penang) and 1957 (when Malaysia became independent). The peak of Indian and Chinese migration was in the second half of the nineteenth century when the establishment of rubber and coffee plantations created the need for large amounts of labour. The British authorities brought Indians from British India and negotiated the transfer of Chinese workers with the Chinese government. Both Chinese and Indians came initially as indentured labourers. Some Indians came to Malaya accompanying the British from India as domestic servants or in other functions. The early twentieth century then saw Indian migration in higher occupational categories, such as doctors and lawyers (Sandhu 1969; Periasamy 2007; Arasaratnam 1979). As a consequence of Indian and Chinese concentration on business, these two ethnic groups came to dominate economic life. British pre-independence plans to grant citizenship to Indians and Chinese resulted in mass protests by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which became the dominant political party after independence. In order to achieve an accommodation between the ethnic groups, the British formed the Malay Chinese Association, which was mostly active among Malay Chinese, as a non-communist alternative to the Malay Communist Party. The Malayan Indian

Congress agreed to join a coalition with UMNO and the Malay Chinese Association. This gave birth to the Barisan Nasional alliance, which came to dominate politics in Malaysia after independence.

As a result of immigration, Indians make up roughly 7 percent of Malaysia's population, Chinese almost 24 percent. Malays and other indigenous peoples make up only roughly 60 percent of the population of modern Malaysia. The relative economic success of Malay Chinese and Malay Indians in comparison to the indigenous population led to the race riots of 1969, which led the government to introduce affirmative action in employment and education (Chakravarti and Roslan 2005; Balasubramaniam 2006).

The Philippines were made up of a number of seafaring states that were at times part of the Malay kingdoms of Srivijaya, Majapahit and Brunei. The legacy of the Spanish, Dutch and British empires here is still the root of territorial conflicts between Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei. The imposition of Spanish colonialism on the island group created the modern state of the Philippines. It also created a class of commercially oriented landowners, *caciques*, who were mostly Chinese *mestizos*.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of an indigenous aristocracy and bureaucracy the *caciques* became the Philippines' economic elite by the latter half of the nineteenth century. When the United States took over the Spanish colony in 1898 and moved to create a political system modelled on the U.S. presidential system, the *cacique* families came to dominate the political institutions from the localities to the central level. This gave rise to the characterisation of Filipino democracy as "cacique democracy" (Anderson 1988), indicating the domination of parliament and government by landowning families. Virtually all Filipino presidents since independence in 1946 came from landowning families, including post-Marcos President Corazon Aquino (1986–1992), President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001–2010), and the current President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino, son of ex-president Corazon Aquino and assassinated senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino.

<sup>3</sup> For a history of the Chinese in the Philippines see Wickberg 1964.

The Muslim population of Mindanao, collectively known as Moro since Spanish colonial times but consisting of diverse linguistic and cultural groups, resisted both colonial domination and inclusion into the post-colonial state. Spanish rule converted most Filipinos to Roman Catholicism, thus creating a religious element in the Mindanao struggle against domination by the north. While the Spanish had never fully subjugated the Muslim population, U.S. policies eventually managed to do that, using land laws that encouraged Christian Filipino migration and the establishment of plantations by U.S. and Filipino companies. Continued discriminatory policies in the post-colonial Philippines, including migration into Muslim areas, sparked an insurgency against the government in Manila in the 1960s (McKenna 1998; McKenna 2007; Concepcion et. al. 2003). The conflict remains unresolved to the present day.

The second impact of colonialism, which is related to the creation of entirely new countries, is the imposition of the nation-state ideal in countries that were previously governed by traditional concepts of kingship. This created new problems of ethno-nationalism as new forms of national narrative developed and the new ethnic minorities resisted the new hierarchical patterns of domination in the nation-state. Conflicts erupted in Indonesia with Aceh and Papua, and in the Philippines with the Mindanao Muslims, as post-colonial governments attempted to extend their reach by force into minority areas. But also in the old kingdom of Burma, ethnic groups such as the Karen and the Kachin suddenly found themselves in conflict with a new government that sought their forcible subjugation to a Burmese state (Rajah 2002; Kuroiwa and Verkuyten 2008). And in Thailand, the Malay majority of the southern provinces resisted economic marginalisation and neglect by Bangkok. All these issues remain unresolved.

The third impact of colonialism was the temporary suspension of pre-colonial conflicts between the ancient states of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, which broke out again after independence. The conflicts in this area stem largely from the succession of great empires: Khmer, Vietnamese and Thai. At the time when the French colonised Indochina, the Siamese and Vietnamese kingdoms had come to dominate large areas that had been under the con-

rol of a powerful Khmer kingdom during the Angkor period (802–1431). By the time the French arrived, Cambodia was already much reduced and the Angkor cities and temples lay in ruins in the forests. Restoration efforts began in the late-nineteenth century by the *École Française d'Extrême Orient*, that is, on the initiative of the French colonial power. After independence, the Angkor period became a major source of Cambodian nationalism.

The French advance stopped the Thai and Vietnamese states encroaching on Cambodian territory and thus effectively rescued Cambodia from disappearing. The unsolved issues are still visible today in the ongoing political and sometimes military conflict between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple at the Thai-Cambodian border. The temple, built during the Angkor period, has been a source of conflict between the two countries since 1962, when a ruling by the International Court of Justice in The Hague asserted that the temple was on the Cambodian side of the border. The dispute stems from the cession of Thai territory to the French protectorate of Cambodia and the demarcation of the Siamese-Cambodian border in 1907, when the French survey team placed the temple on the Cambodian side of the border in contravention of an agreement that the border follow the watershed in the Dang Raek mountains. In 1954, Cambodia complained to the International Court of Justice after Thailand invaded the border area (Prescott 1996). Another military border conflict was sparked in 2008, when the temple was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. In 2011, Indonesia agreed to negotiate in the conflict. Similarly, Cambodia and Vietnam are at odds over the Mekong Delta region, a formerly Cambodian territory but ceded to Vietnam under French colonialism. The Mekong Delta area is still referred to in Cambodia as Kampuchea Krom, or Lower Cambodia.

The fourth impact of colonialism consisted in the introduction of new means of mass production (rubber plantations, tin mining, etc.) during European industrialisation, which created a proletariat. In Vietnam, for instance, economic changes attached Vietnam's economy to the international market. This development precipitated profound social changes. In the villages, the extension of French control manifested itself in the introduction of a

pervasive money economy, enforced tax collection, private property and agricultural production for the market (especially rice). These economic processes replaced the communal village organisation, village autonomy, subsistence farming, and the widespread acceptance of taxes in kind. As a result, peasants were not only forced into commercialized relationships under market conditions (replacing communal supra-familial institutions); events such as loan default, a drop in market prices, or a bad harvest could make subsistence farmers landless or turn them into poor peasants, tenants, or agricultural laborers (Chesneaux 1955; Ngo 1991).

In the urban areas, colonial industrialisation led to the emergence of an industrial proletariat that grew strongly during World War I due to France's need for raw materials, and continued to grow after the war, reaching its maximum in 1929 in the fields of commerce and industry, plantation agriculture, and mining (McAlister 1969). The proletariat was joined by landless subsistence farmers who moved to the cities as migrant workers in search of employment (Chesneaux 1955; Karnow 1991). The urban areas also saw the rise of an indigenous bourgeoisie, composed of absentee landlords, entrepreneurs and colonial officials, and a petit bourgeoisie composed of shopkeepers, small traders, artisans, clerks, managers, interpreters, primary school teachers, journalists, and technicians (Marr 1984).

The emergence of new social classes spurred by industrialisation and agro-industrial development occurred across the colonies with the exception of Laos, Cambodia and East Timor; in the Philippines the economy continued to be dominated by the indigenous *cacique* class. The appearance of new social classes was accompanied during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by radicalising – but nevertheless factionalised – independence movements. During the nineteenth century, members of the indigenous elite began to advocate reform of political and education systems (for example the One Hundred Days Reform Movement in China or the Young Men's Buddhist Association in Burma). The aim was a cultural revival and a

strengthening of political and social institutions vis-à-vis the colonialists. However, the ineffectiveness of the reformers due to the inertia of conservative forces and the heavy-handed response of the colonialists gave rise to more radical ideas of anti-colonial struggle and revolution informed by readings of a cross-section of Western political philosophy (Cady 1958, 168–72; Fleischmann 1989, 1–3; Htin Aung Maung 1967, 268–83; Lintner 1990, 5; Smith 1993, 49–57; Trager 1966, 169; Thompson and Adloff 1950, 82–83; Harrison 2001).

The end of World War I marked a watershed, when it transpired that Woodrow Wilson's ideas of self-determination did not apply to the colonies. In China, for example, the German enclave of Shandong was handed over to Japan rather than returned to China. In the eyes of those advocating radical changes, this discredited not only domestic reformists and the old social classes, but also the democratic and capitalist countries. At the same time, the success of the Russian Revolution provided a direct template for changes reaching far beyond mere reforms.<sup>4</sup> The crisis of the world economy in the late 1920s greatly magnified both anti-colonial sentiment and the attraction of communism. The formation of unions and political parties (especially social democratic and communist) lent a structure. Concerted action began, including boycotts of Western products and strikes.

Communist parties had a major impact on all post-colonial countries including especially China. In 1949, the communist party under Mao won the civil war against the nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek. While Chiang retreated to Taiwan, wiped out the local political elite in bloody purges, and erected a military dictatorship that lasted until 1987, mainland China became communist. After a period of economic recovery it plunged into the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960) followed by the violence and upheaval of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) (Gao 2008), after which it set out to implement major economic reforms, which have brought strong economic growth rates since the 1980s.

<sup>4</sup> For more detail see Marr (1981), Harrison (2001), van de Ven (2003), and Thornton (2007).

The Potsdam Conference in 1945 divided Korea along the 38th parallel into a communist North and a capitalist South. In South Korea, U.S. occupation led to the suppression of the radical labour movement and the rural insurgency. Under American sponsorship, Syngman Rhee became South Korea's first post-war president. While nominally democratic, Rhee was authoritarian as well as corrupt, and Korea experienced a period of political instability which ended only with the military coup led by Park Chung-hee in 1961. While economically extremely successful, Park established a brutal anti-communist regime which oversaw Korea's transformation into an industrialised state harnessing economies of scale in shipbuilding, car-making, heavy engineering and chemicals. Later, South Korea moved into high-technology industries such as semiconductors. Park was assassinated in 1979, but military rule continued until 1987, when South Korea embarked on democratisation at a time when economic success began to falter and a civil society began to emerge.<sup>5</sup>

Cambodia became independent in 1954, and was led Norodom Sihanouk whose officially neutral and nominally democratic regime showed its true authoritarian nature in repressing any challenges to his rule. This eroded the democratic institutions that had been half-heartedly introduced by the French colonial authorities and increasing repression forced the communists underground.

In 1968, the communists embarked on a nation-wide insurgency, which was the beginning of the Cambodian crisis that was to last until 1991. In addition, the army leadership under Lon Nol detested Sihanouk's neutral foreign policy and his refusal to take part in the Vietnam War. In 1970, the army under Lon Nol toppled Sihanouk, supported by the United States. The Lon Nol government was initially welcomed by the urban elite as a respite from the corruption and repression of the Sihanouk regime.

However, Lon Nol proved to be highly corrupt as well. In addition, the army campaign against the communist insur-

gency in combination with U.S. carpet bombing of Cambodian territory used by the North Vietnamese army led to mass flight to the cities, particularly Phnom Penh where the population rose from 600,000 in 1969 to 3 million in 1975. The army campaign against the insurgency proved futile, however. Unable to fend off the communists and sustained only by U.S. military assistance, the Lon Nol government was expelled by the communists led by Pol Pot in 1975.

Pol Pot erected a radically anti-Vietnamese communist state modelled on Maoist principles that was to last until 1979. Vietnam regarded constant border violations as a security risk, and in 1979 intervened and ousted Pol Pot. His regime fled to the Thai border, and the civil war that ensued between the new government and Pol Pot's forces dragged on until 1991 when it was ended by the intervention of a UN peacekeeping force.<sup>6</sup>

In Burma, independent since 1948, the government was challenged by a communist insurgency that was made worse by ethnic conflict. After a phase of unstable liberal democracy, the civilian government handed power to a military caretaker regime in 1958. When instability continued after the restoration of civilian rule in 1960, the military took over completely in 1962. In November 2010, general elections were held to institute a shift from military to civilian rule. However, political parties linked with the military, reserved seats for the military in the new parliament, and the ban preventing Aung San Suu Kyi from participating in the elections put a question mark over the sincerity of the military's intention to introduce democracy.

In Indonesia, independent since 1949, President Sukarno had to balance two domestic political forces: the communist party and the military. This produced political instability, exacerbated by a faltering economy and ethnic conflict. In 1965, the military blamed an attempted coup on the communist party and organised a hunt for real and alleged communists that led to mass killing of suspected communists.

<sup>5</sup> For South Korea's development see Amsden (1989), C. Lee (1992), Cho (1994), and Yeon-Ho Lee (1996).

<sup>6</sup> For a history of the Cambodia conflict see for example Chandler (2008) and Hood and Ablin (1987).



In 1967, Suharto toppled Sukarno, became president, and established his New Order regime that pursued capitalist expansion and institutionalised a political role for the military under the *dwi fungsi* doctrine.<sup>7</sup> In the following period, Suharto created a wide patronage network with the economic elite that profited from exploiting resources, such as timber from the forests in West Kalimantan and Borneo. His rule was sustained by criminal and paramilitary groups that acted on the state's behalf, in a process which normalised violence and criminality as state practice (Wilson 2006). The collapse of the Suharto regime in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997 produced a power vacuum that would lead to communal and anti-Chinese violence.

In the Philippines, a communist insurgency began in the 1960s against the U.S.-leaning regime of President Marcos when the Communist Party of the Philippines formed its guerrilla army, the New People's Army. The insurgency coincided with the revival of the independence struggle of the Mindanao Muslims. In 1972, President Marcos declared martial law and in 1973 assumed absolute powers. In 1986, he was toppled after broad mass protests led by Corazon Aquino, who reinstated democratic rule.

In Malaysia, the Malayan Communist Party was outlawed and defeated by the British authorities in the Malayan Emergency of 1948–1960.

## 2. Themes in Regional Violence Research

### 2.1. Political Violence

Today, Japan and South Korea are the only countries in the region that are free from political violence. For the others, contemporary discourses on political violence can be grouped into three categories: first, the problem of state sovereignty in borderlands inhabited by minorities where the identity conflict is often also a secessionist conflict or one seeking autonomy from the central government (Burma, China, Indonesia including East Timor and Thailand). The second category encompasses ethno-religious violence and communal conflicts not involving demands for

autonomy or secession (Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor). Both of these categories have direct links to the colonial past through the colonial project of creating state and nation-state (Jemadu 2004; for a general overview see Yeung 2002). They are also interlinked as they both relate to regime survival and territorial integrity in multi-ethnic states. The analysis will therefore cross over to touch on other causes of conflict where necessary. The third category consists of specific forms of political system and types of state – neopatrimonialism and so-called predatory states – and their links to particular forms of state-sponsored violence.

#### 2.1.1. Borderlands and Rim Provinces: Problems of Sovereignty and Identity

As a result of an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to integrate ethnically disparate territories into a single colony, Indonesia has been riven by ethnic, religious and regional tensions that produced political and economic instability.

In West Papua, different visions of community, state and nation clashed during decolonisation and the early years of nation-building after independence. Sukarno's civic concept of nation-building failed to take into account West Papua's ethnic diversity that was employed by the ethno-cultural variant of nation-building in Malaysia in 1963 when Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah were integrated into the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia (Kreuzer 2006; Kreuzer and Weiberg 2005, 6–9 and 27–37; Kirksey and Roemajauw 2002; for Islam in Malaysia see Teik 2006).

In Aceh, the conflict between the central government in Jakarta and the region of Aceh also dates back to Dutch colonial rule. After Indonesian independence, Aceh was denied the autonomy it hoped for, sparking Muslim-led rebellions. Autonomy was finally granted in 2005 in the wake of the December 2004 tsunami. After autonomy, Aceh introduced Shariah law in a development that pushed aside moderate Muslims in the province. As a consequence, the literature on Aceh focusses on the role of Islam and the relationship between Islam and nationalism (Barter 2010; Aspinall 2007).

7 Anderson 2001; for the capitalist development of Indonesia under Suharto see Farid 2005; for the issue of political rehabilitation in post-Suharto In-

donesia of those imprisoned as alleged communists in 1965 see McGregor and Hearman 2007.

The conflict with East Timor has its roots in Portuguese decolonisation, which set in after the Portuguese Carnation Revolution of 1974. When Portugal withdrew from East Timor, Indonesia occupied the territory and integrated it into the Indonesian state. This sparked an insurgency that was to last until 1999 when Indonesia allowed a referendum to be held over the future political status of East Timor. This caught international attention when pro-Indonesian militias and the Indonesian military terrorised the local population before the referendum vote. Since independence, East Timor has been a weak state and has seen successive UN missions sent to stabilise the country (see section 2.1.2. Ethno-religious and Communal Violence).

The fact that Aceh and East Timor gained autonomy and independence respectively made them the focal point of research regarding the secessionist conflicts in Indonesia. In contrast, West Papua has received little attention.

Thailand, too, has seen secessionist conflicts. In Buddhist Thailand, the southern provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Satun have Muslim majorities. The conflict began after World War II as part of the Malay national liberation struggle (Wattana 2006). It is therefore a conflict between the Malay-Muslim south and the Buddhist central government. A famous rebellion occurred in 1948, when Malay-Muslim villagers clashed with Thai security forces (Satha-Anand 2006). The conflict owes its existence to “religious, cultural, economic, and political causes such as cultural discrimination, relative economic deprivation, and political alienation” (Croissant 2007).

Among the Thai Muslim population feelings of disenfranchisement from political decision-making processes and religious discrimination by the Buddhist-dominated central government are prevalent. The increasing intensity and radicalisation since 2004 is fuelled by two parallel developments: First, a radicalisation of Muslim ideology at home and abroad that draws on the failure of past secularist development projects and is increasingly dividing moderate and radical Muslims (Jitpiromsri, and Panyasak 2006; Wattana 2006). International terrorist networks are suspected of involvement in the 2004 attacks, but there is no

hard evidence (Liow 2004). The second factor is changes in intra-Thai political dynamics (McCargo 2006; Croissant 2007).

McCargo shows that the relative peace in southern Thailand during the two decades leading up to 2004 was upset by the anti-royalist Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Believing that the south was controlled by monarchist forces loyal to the palace – an idea called network monarchy – he upset this balance and unleashed a renewed insurgency (McCargo 2006). The monarchists struck back, however, forcing Thaksin to make concessions to the separatists (convening a National Reconciliation Commission), and shortly afterwards removed him from power in the 2006 coup. As a result of this escalation in the south and between Thai royalist and anti-royalist elites, experts predict a deepening of rifts in Thai society and an erosion of liberal democracy toward a semi-democratic, one-party regime (Pathmanand 2006; Croissant 2007).

A third country beset with secessionism is the Philippines. In the south, Mindanao is home to a Muslim minority in a predominantly Catholic country. The largest armed insurgency movement is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. A second Muslim separatist group is the Moro National Liberation Front. The most militant, however, is Abu Sayyaf, a fundamentalist group that split from the Moro National Liberation Front. Abu Sayyaf is suspected of maintaining links with al-Qaeda. The Moro groups are suspected of having links to the Indonesian terror group Jemaah Islamiah, which has training camps in the Philippines and also is suspected to have links to al-Qaeda (Ressa 2003).

Having resisted integration into the colony since Spanish times, Muslim groups greeted the independent republic of 1946 with suspicion. Filipino Muslims continued to resist political domination by Manila, leading to widespread conflict (Collier 2005; Kreuzer and Weiberg 2005, 10–18). At the time of Filipino independence, the stereotype of the southern Muslim Moros as backward was firmly held by Christian Filipinos. In addition, the government continues to encourage Christian immigration into Mindanao, leading to feelings of marginalisation among Muslims (Turner 2003).

The conflict in Mindanao has more facets than simply rebel groups fighting against central government domination. Mindanao is beset with clan feuds and inter-ethnic conflict, producing a highly complex landscape of violent central-local and inter-local conflicts (Torres 2007). Even more complexity is injected by the insurgency of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front. In addition, guerillas who leave the underground pass their networks and skills on to a number of other actors: some are employed by local strongmen and the military; others join NGOs and campaign for better access to resources for the poor. This changes the provincial power distribution between state, local strongmen, and local society (Rutten 2001).

Burma, too, has been shaken by ethnic violence. The focus of the violence discourse is on the government's relations with the ethnic minorities, particularly the Wa, Shan and Karen. The conflict is a direct result of British colonial rule and the imposition of the nation-state ideal on an ethnically diverse entity. When Burma became independent in 1948, minority insurgencies such as those of the Karen produced a highly unstable political environment as they resisted central rule from Rangoon and integration into the new polity (Wee and Lang 2006).

Since the military regime took over in a national emergency in 1962, it has fought against the minorities that occupy the border lands in its drive to implement the official policy of "non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of national solidarity." The Shan and the Karen in particular have put up much of the resistance against the military government. Research is looking into how the government dominates civilian life in the minority and majority areas through the destruction of homes, villages and means of livelihood, and the resistance that this provokes (Hudson-Rodd and Hunt 2005).

The Karen in particular have been constructing a national narrative across their linguistic and religious subgroups. Having experienced a separate education system and Christian missionary exposure during colonial times, the Karen have established a narrative that sets them apart as a

nation from the Union of Myanmar (Bryant 1997; Kuroiwa and Verkuyten 2008; Rajah 2002). The Karen traded teak with the British during colonial times, and use of forests was important in Karen identity. After independence, war broke out between the Karen and the Burmese army, and the illegal teak trade provided an important source of income for the Karen armed forces. From this point on the military government in Burma set out to destroy the forest, in an attack on both Karen income and also the Karen identity and livelihood which were intimately linked with forestry (Horstmann 2004).

The Karen are politically split, with the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army having separated from the Karen National Union and siding with the military government. However, a splinter group of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, Brigade 5, engaged in a military confrontation with the Burmese army one day after the national elections of 7 November 2010 to voice their opposition against the government plan to consolidate ethnic minority armies into a centrally controlled border force (*BBC News* 2010). Fighting between the Karen National Union and the Burmese army had already erupted earlier in 2010 over the government's border patrol plans.

Other studies look not at processes of political control themselves, but specifically at the government's human rights abuses that are inherent to these processes of control. Here, the ethnic minorities, especially the Shan, and their subjugation to means of control such as forced population transfers, are often the subject of research (Beyrer 2001). As the Shan and other ethnic minorities occupy Burma's border areas, research also explores the transnational dimension of the refugee issue and the civil conflict as a contributing factor for the trafficking of Shan women and girls into prostitution (Beyrer 2001).

China with its unruly provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang stands somewhat apart from these ethnic conflicts. Having been incorporated into the Chinese polity under the Qing Dynasty long before Western colonialism arrived in China, the provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang have since proven difficult to control for the central government in Beijing. Studies here focus mostly on how China attempts to draw

Tibet into the mainstream of Chinese modernisation, which has sparked a number of atheism campaigns (to diminish the social and political influence of Buddhism) and violent suppression of demonstrations (Matou 2005).

For Xinjiang, studies focus on rebellions by the Muslim Uighurs sparked by feelings of racial discrimination by the majority Han population, the Chinese government's suppression of Uighur nationalism, and issues of Uighur identity (Petersen 2006; Hyer 2006). The conflict in Xinjiang is thought to be exacerbated by contact between radical Uighurs and militant Islamists in neighbouring Pakistan – especially the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) (Vicziány 2003; Haider 2005).

### 2.1.2. Ethno-religious and Communal Violence

In Indonesia, the financial crisis of 1998 ended the Suharto regime as criticism increased over the regime's handling of the economic downturn. In May 1998, riots broke out across Indonesia, often targeting the Indonesian Chinese, who were blamed for the economic crisis. The riots were reportedly instigated by the military and police, some of whose members took part in the rioting wearing plain clothes. During the riots, ethnic Chinese were hunted down and killed (Purdey 2006).<sup>8</sup> Suharto was forced to resign on May 21. In other parts of Indonesia, especially in the outer islands, ethno-religious violence broke out, most prominently in the Maluku islands, North, Central and South Sulawesi, and Central and West Kalimantan. The conflicts were compounded by difficult ethnic relations between Indonesia's minorities and the Javanese majority population, and by the promotion of "Javaneness" (Sutarto 2006; Coppel 2006).<sup>9</sup> Secessionist conflicts in Aceh, West Papua and East Timor gained new strength.

The end of Suharto's rule created a power vacuum. The patronage networks that had underpinned his government fragmented, and the criminal and paramilitary groups were no longer controlled by the central government. While this reduced central government-sponsored violence, violence

by private vigilantes and paramilitary groups increased. Group identification was often based on religion and ethnicity at a time when the state was perceived as having failed in the provision of essential services such as security and employment (Nursalim 2003; Wilson 2006). In addition, government associations with the criminal underworld and militias partly shifted from central government to local governments, leading to the criminalisation of everyday Indonesian politics at the local level (Bertrand 2004; also Hadiz 2003).

In Jakarta and other cities, the Chinese community again confronted the debate between assimilation and integration and the definition of their identity in Indonesia. This debate had raged among the Indonesian Chinese in the 1950s and 1960s, but was violently terminated by the 1965 coup and Suharto's subsequent assumption of power in 1967 (Purdey 2003; Turner 2003; Turner and Allen 2007).

Regarding the non-secessionist conflicts, researchers have looked into various issues that re-emerged when the central government's strong grip on power suddenly disintegrated. What all of these debates have in common is a focus on the re-shaping of community identities. The majority of studies on post-Suharto communal violence warn that these conflicts need to be located and understood in their context of colonial and post-colonial modernisation and capitalist expansion in order to understand their dynamics (Adams 2006, 194, 193–208 citing Sidel 2001, 48, and Bubandt 2001, 228; Colombijn and Lindblad 2002; Thorburn 2005; Azca 2005; van Klinken 2007; Wilson 2008). These conflicts have their roots in old animosities between ethnic or religious groups, grievances produced by Suharto and his cronies, or migration of ethnic groups to new areas (Arifianto 2009).

In North Sulawesi, conflict occurred between the local population and internally displaced people who had fled the violence that broke out in North Maluku in 1999. This conflict is therefore one between the original population

<sup>8</sup> For a deeper discussion of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia see Lindsey and Pausacker (2005).

<sup>9</sup> For details on colonial policies in the Dutch East Indies concerning the Indonesian provinces on Borneo see Wadley (2001). For the ethnic gang violence

in relation to the Betawi community in Jakarta see Brown and Wilson (2007) and Bertrand (2008).

and roughly 35,000 internally displaced persons. The effects of the influx of refugees included falling wages and rising housing costs, which led to conflicts. In addition, aid for the refugees caused suspicion and jealousy among the North Sulawesi people. Civil servants and members of the local population treated the arrivals with distrust and hostility (Duncan 2005).

Central Sulawesi was shaken by Christian-Muslim conflict from 1998 to 2001. Although since then the violence has not reached the levels of the post-Suharto period, it does still break out occasionally. Decentralisation programmes in post-Suharto Indonesia led to political tensions between local elites as central government appointees for the regions were replaced by directly elected local politicians. An increase in the number of positions in the newly established legislatures and offices led to political rivalry.<sup>10</sup> Decentralisation involved redrawing administrative boundaries, leading to increased ethno-religious segregation, and voting has also opened up new conflicts as voting behaviour may now mirror different group identities (Diprose 2008).

During the 1998–2001 conflict, militias emerged up on both sides, Christian and Muslim, in a development where local residents were drawn into the conflict leading to district-wide riots. In fact, the roots of the power struggle are not religious but result from a combination of the legacy of policies under Dutch colonialism, power struggles between local elites and security forces, migration of settlers from Java and Bali, resulting competition for farmland between new arrivals and the indigenous population, and resource extraction (Davidson 2003; Aspinall and Berger 2001; Ariyanto 2009).

In Central Kalimantan, conflict erupted in 1996 over long-standing grievances between Madurese migrants and the indigenous Dayaks. The conflict was mostly over land and was exacerbated by political competition during the decentralisation programmes, leading to mass killings in 2001

(Bouvier and Smith 2006). In West Kalimantan, meanwhile, the rubber plantations and timber forests had been part of identity construction between Dayak, Malays, and Chinese in colonial and post-colonial times. When state institutions were in disarray after the overthrow of Suharto, a realignment of ethnic relations occurred as different groups exploited the power vacuum to gain control over natural resources, particularly timber, which had been part of a thriving black economy since the Suharto era (Peluso 2009; van Klinken 2008; Davidson 2003).

Communal violence has also beset East Timor, which did not become part of Indonesia until 1975 when the Indonesian army invaded after Portugal ended its colonial rule. Indonesia's occupation generated a vigorous resistance movement, Fretilin, and in the following decades, its rule in East Timor was characterised by brutal suppression. In 1998, after Suharto resigned, President Habibie suggested that East Timor might be given autonomy. In 1999, the Indonesian government agreed that a referendum be held to choose between autonomy and independence. In the run up to the vote in September 1999, militias loyal to Indonesia and supported by the Indonesian military provoked bloodshed in order to scare the East Timorese into voting for autonomy rather than independence (Savage 2002; Wheeler and Ddunne 2001; Harper 2005).

Despite this, the referendum showed 78 percent in favour of independence. In response, Indonesia loyalists ransacked towns and cities and went on a killing spree across the country. A UN peacekeeping mission was sent to East Timor to stop the violence and put the newly independent country on its feet. After East Timor became officially independent in 2002, East Timor and Indonesia set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the occupation period.

The UN left East Timor in 2005. In 2006, communal violence broke out and was to last for two years. The violence involved youth gangs, especially in the capital Dili (Goldsmith

<sup>10</sup> The decentralisation process that was initiated shortly after Suharto's resignation has produced the problem that local governments all over Indonesia

are often captured by local elites that are not accountable to the public and are highly corrupt (Malley 2003).



2009), former soldiers, and martial arts groups, and exposed the fragmented state of East Timor's social and political order after independence (Scambray 2009). The violence started as a conflict between the government and sacked soldiers but erupted into wider factional violence. Prime Minister Alkatiri of FRETILIN resigned over his inability to maintain peace and was succeeded by Jose Ramos-Horta.

Another UN mission was sent to East Timor to stop the violence. In 2007, in the second parliamentary elections, Fretilin won a relative majority in parliament, but could not govern alone. Rather than its leader Alkatiri, Xanana Gusmão was elected prime minister. Violent protests followed this contentious decision, igniting a period of political instability. In 2008, Gusmão was shot by rebel soldiers. The shot was not lethal, however, and in 2009, twenty-seven people were tried. The communal violence of 2006 and the assassination attempt on Gusmão revealed the incomplete reconciliation processes, ongoing processes of nation-building, and conflicting ethnic, social, and political identities (Scambray 2009; Kingston 2006).

Three violent episodes of post-colonial East Timorese history are discussed in the literature: the Indonesian occupation from 1975 to 1999, the violence surrounding the 1999 referendum, and the violence of 2006. Given that only a decade has passed since the vote for independence, most studies focus on the question of whether East Timor can become a viable state. This is linked with discussions of international humanitarian intervention, post-conflict peacebuilding and transitional justice (Bain 2003, 140–73).

Some studies in this field discuss the challenges of building peace in a politically divided society, particularly when the two main security institutions, the Timor-Leste Defence Force and the National Police of Timor-Leste are unable to cooperate and ridden by factional struggles (Goldsmith 2009; Lemay-Hebert 2009). Other studies focus on specific issues: the origins of the militias that created chaos in East Timor in 1999 (Robinson 2001), and the need for reconciliation between the different Timorese factions. Through reconciliation political violence can be decreased, the argument goes. Salla suggests five levels of reconciliation: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national and

international (2000). The goal of the reconciliation process is the establishment of sustainable institutions of governance through elite negotiation and social dialogue to transform a society that resorts to violence into one that employs peaceful means of conflict settlement (Samuels 2005). These institutions need to be born out of the context of local institutional and legal traditions in order to be sustainable (Salla 2000).

This also holds true for transitional justice, which has to take into account the nature of the conflict and local cultures when deciding on the mix of legal instruments to be applied during transition periods (Harper 2005). Some studies critically examine the work of the hybrid tribunal and the Truth Commission that were part of the reconciliation process. Nevins, for example, argues that the Timorese Truth Commission did not achieve much as it focussed on individual acts and events of violence rather than on systemic forms of violence that include both direct and indirect forms as they may be intrinsic in social and economic systems (Nevins 2003; also Kingston 2006).

In northern Thailand there are conflicts over forest resources between the central government in Bangkok and ethnic minorities in the highlands. These include protected forests, which have traditionally served as source of livelihood for the local communities. This is therefore a conflict of identities between the majority population in the lowlands and the minorities in the highlands (Wittayapak 2008). However, this conflict garners little attention. Studies on political violence in Thailand focus on the secessionist conflict in the south and the continuing political instability following the coup against Thaksin.

Similar conflicts occur in Vietnam between the central government and the ethnic minorities of the Central Highlands, collectively referred to as Montagnards since French colonial times. Ever since they supported the United States during the Vietnam War, the central government has viewed the Montagnards with suspicion. Violent conflicts occurred in 1997/98, 2001 and 2004 over land and religious issues. The minorities of the Central Highlands are members of small Christian churches – so-called house churches – which the Vietnamese government does not recognize. They

also claim that they are deprived of their land to make space for economic development projects. While no organised conflicts have occurred since 2004, arrests are frequent. For example, in 2009 at least forty people were arrested in Gia Lai province, because they were members of the Dega house church (*Tin Lanh Dega*) (Jones 2002; Jordan 2004; *BBC News* 2004; De Launey 2004).

The Hmong in Laos have faced a similar problem since groups of them were recruited into a secret army by the CIA during the Vietnam War. While many Hmong left Laos after the communist victory in 1975, some of those who stayed behind are thought to have fought a low-level war against the communist government, which has regarded them with suspicion ever since their involvement in the U.S. war effort. During the conflict with the Laotian government many Hmong fled to refugee camps on the Thai side of the border. In 2009 the Thai government began to forcibly repatriate Hmong to Laos (Head 2009; McGeown 2003; Jinkinson 2004).

While largely free of ethnic violence today, Malaysia does have a violent past. Despite the careful creation of an ethnically balanced polity under British tutelage, political and economic disputes between Singapore and the federal government increased after independence, along with ethnic tensions between the Malay majority and Chinese-dominated Singapore, to such an extent that Singapore was expelled from Malaysia in 1965. Singapore henceforth prospered under an authoritarian regime that carefully managed its ethnic diversity through depoliticisation of ethnicity and government (Chua 1995; Means 1998; Vasil 2000; Lawson 2001; George 2007).

The Malaysian government gave preferential treatment to the majority Malay population, the *bumiputras*, or “sons of the soil”, thus preserving Malay political prerogatives from the colonial period. While Chinese and Indian immigrants were granted citizenship and dominated the economy, Malays were given control over politics. The trade-off resulted in a delicate political balance, which failed during the 1969

race riots in the face of continued Malay backwardness and lack of economic advancement. The affirmative action programme introduced in response by the government in 1971, the New Economic Policy, has since prevented the recurrence of race riots (Case 2000).<sup>11</sup>

The situation in Singapore was also ethnically delicate. Race riots in 1963 and a social crisis particularly related to housing produced an authoritarian turn by the People’s Action Party that was directed at depoliticising race. The People’s Action Party has since then presided over an authoritarian Singapore and co-opts opposition groups to preempt challenges to its rule (Huff 1995; Hill and Lian 1995; Rodan 2004; George 2007).

### 2.1.3. Neopatrimonialism, Predatory Politics and Elite Political Systems

Cambodia is among the few countries in the region not beset by ethnic and religious violence. For political violence in Cambodia, two discourses are dominant: the discourse on a culture of violence, and the discourse on predatory politics. The first argues that three decades of civil war have socialised Cambodians into a preference for violent resolution of conflicts. After the civil war, which ended in 1991, international organisations working with Cambodian NGOs implemented weapons collection programmes. However, distrust of fellow-citizens, the security forces and the government in a volatile security climate led many to secretly keep weapons. The failure of weapons collections programmes therefore left an extraordinary number of weapons in the hands of ordinary people, who use them to settle conflicts with neighbours, family members, and others in their community (Huot 2005).

Post-war adversity combined with a weak state and an underdeveloped legal culture to produce a high homicide rate, including not only political violence but also general mayhem, banditry and murder-robbery (Broadhurst 2002). Cambodia had to embark on a second nation-building process, because the first one that followed decolonisation was aborted when Cambodia was drawn into the Vietnam War and its own three decades of political conflict (Freistein 2002).

11 For an early report immediately after the 1969 race riots see Gagliano (1970).

The end of the civil war in 1991 did not end the political conflict. Instead, the major civil war parties struggled for pre-dominance in the post-war political system. Assassinations became a routine means of dealing with political opponents, including opposition parties, trade unions, journalists, and social activists (Un 2005). Political violence only decreased after the post-war power struggle between the major parties was resolved in the wake of Hun Sen's 1997 coup against Ranariddh (Widyono 2008). In the volatile political climate, homicide rates reached the post-war rate of 1993 (11.6 per 100,000), partly brought about by police and mob killings that were not investigated by the judiciary (Broadhurst 2002).

A number of studies challenge the culture of violence hypothesis, warning against a culturalism that employs images of Oriental despotism and authoritarianism. In reality, these authors argue, violent conflict does not emerge because it is inherent to a particular culture, but because conflict is inherent to processes of political and economic reform (for example Springer 2009a). In particular, the call for marketisation in post-war settings functions as a pretext for elites to maintain an authoritarian political system that counteracts calls for democratisation for the sake of economic stability and neo-liberal reforms (Springer 2009b).

Other studies argue that political processes are path-dependent. Cambodian society is organised along patron-client lines, so these relations also organise the political system and have adapted to the democratic institutions that were introduced after the civil war (Roberts 2002). The present leadership is largely identical to the leadership that came into power after the Vietnamese intervention of 1978. Since then, the same leadership has managed to stay in power despite a UN intervention (1991–1993) that introduced democratic institutions and a defeat in the first national elections in 1993.

The leadership was able to survive any challenge to its rule because it had built up its power base since 1979 by devising a neopatrimonial polity that exercises leverage over the local government level (Pak et al. 2007). All village chiefs

were put in place by the post-1979 government, thus generating a viable power resource that democratic institutions were unable to challenge. After 1991, this neopatrimonial network controlled by the ruling party adjusted to the new institutions and provided Hun Sen with the ability to politically outmanoeuvre his chief rival Prince Ranariddh.

Since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1993, Cambodia's polity has been characterised by rival patronage networks associated with political parties seeking political influence. The fact that the post-1993 political parties had been adversaries during the civil war resulted in widespread political violence, in particular electoral violence, through until the late 1990s. However, since then Hun Sen's ability to consolidate his power at the expense of his political rivals has led to a stark decrease in political violence (Roberts 2002; Un 2005). The legitimacy of political opposition is viewed from this vantage point: political opposition is seen not as a legitimate institution in the democratic system of a pluralist society, but as a rival patronage network that challenges the power holder's resource access.

This relates to the second argument of predatory politics, which proposes that the Cambodian government has created a system of neopatrimonialism in which political and economic power are in the same hands, linked by horizontal relationships between the political and economic elites. In this system, a dominant group secures access to material and immaterial resources: money, land, employment, education, health care, and natural resources such as timber. Vertical patron-client links ensure that the government is not accountable to the general public, and access to resources is restricted to those who are part of these networks (Hadiz 2004; McCulloch 2005; Wong 2008). Violence occurs when NGOs, individuals or members of rival patronage networks attempt to block this access, as when activists tried to publicise illegal logging by companies tied to the political and army leadership. They were subsequently shot, while the perpetrators escaped justice.<sup>12</sup>

12 For details on the exploitation of natural resources by the Cambodian elite see Global Witness (2007).

Land disputes are particularly prominent, with national newspapers reporting forced evictions on an almost daily basis. Forced evictions are the result of companies linked to the political elite acquiring valuable real estate for commercial or infrastructure development and in the process evicting residents, who rarely have clear legal claims. The land registry was destroyed during the Khmer Rouge period and is still being reconstituted. Constant changes of formal or informal land ownership during the war periods from 1968 to 1991 have made the situation entirely unclear (Chan Sophal, Tep Saravy, and Sarthi Acharya 2001). Farmers and slum residents in Phnom Penh are therefore easy targets for politically well-connected businesses. Violence is frequent in these disputes, mostly involving the use of police and military force by the government to remove residents from land. One prominent current case is the ongoing conflict (as of March 2011) about the area around Boeung Kak lake in Phnom Penh.

In the Philippines, the political system has been characterised by clan-based patron-client relations since colonial times and is often labelled a predatory state (Quimpo 2003). Electoral violence is frequent, particularly in the south where rival clans employ private armies. In Maguindanao, violence broke out in 2009 in a local election conflict where a family from the ruling Ampatuan clan ordered the massacre of fifty-seven people who chose to support their rival. The Ampatuan family was said to have been allied with then President Arroyo, who pumped much money into the area, ostensibly for development purposes. As in many other parts of the country, this did not alleviate poverty at all – except perhaps for the Ampatuan family. In response to the massacre Arroyo declared martial law in the province, which she lifted again in December 2009. The episode shows yet another feature of violence in Mindanao: rather than communist-inspired and secessionist, this was a local conflict between rival clans (Rushford 2009; International Crisis Group 2009, 2010).

In Thailand, a coup of 1946 brought a military regime to power. Successive military regimes ruled directly or controlled the government until 1997. By then, fourteen constitutions had been enacted since the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1932. Military control was only interrupted from 1973 to 1976, when the military regime

collapsed in the face of popular opposition. During this period, assassinations by the old elite were a common manifestation of political violence, as new groups such as farmers emerged as political force and demanded participation and land reform (Haberhorn 2009). The military took over again in 1976 and has retained a key role in the political process ever since. However, it was forced to allow more participation by the pluralising Thai society, particularly as NGOs began to blossom during the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1997, a new constitution came into effect, the most democratic to date. It was first tested in the 2001 elections, which brought the entrepreneur Thaksin Shinawatra to power, a populist politician with a strong base in rural communities and the urban poor. Thaksin was controversial in his business dealings, with allegations of corruption, but more importantly he was the first prime minister not to come from the traditional elite around the royal family and the military. This elite viewed Thaksin with suspicion (Hewinson 1997; McCargo 2001), and the military instigated a coup against him in 2006. Since then, Thailand has been in political crisis, with Thaksin loyalists and royalists pitted against each other, and at times taking to the streets in extended mass protests. Despite democratisation and decentralisation processes, the majority of the Thai population has little or no influence on the elite-centred decision-making processes (Arghiros 2002).

## 2.2. Urban Violence

With the exception of political violence, all the forms of violence discussed in this paper are under-studied, including urban violence. Many studies in this field look not at urban violence directly but at risk factors that contribute to urban insecurity and urban crime. They focus mostly on rising inequality and particularly on how segments of the population have been marginalised by economic growth. Some studies on urban poverty touch on urban violence, but the links between urban violence, poverty and poor governance have not been comprehensively analysed. This gap in the literature includes types of violence, reasons for violence, key actors, and most likely victims (Dwyer 2003).

The reason for this lack of research is that urban violence is a relatively recent phenomenon in the region, given the

generally low levels of economic development and urbanisation in all countries except Japan and the Asian Tigers: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. For South Korea and Singapore, research looks into the effectiveness of pro-poor government policies, such as housing (whereby Singapore's housing policy forms part of the government's inventory of social control) (Ha 2002; Lee 2008). For Japan, studies focus on the fact that despite industrialisation crime rates have been declining since World War II.<sup>13</sup> Japan has also the lowest rate of youth homicide worldwide, with 0.4 per 100,000 individuals (UN Habitat 2007, 65).

In China and Vietnam, where communist policies aimed at egalitarian wealth distribution, urban crime has only become prominent since the economic liberalisation programmes created stark differences in wealth distribution during the 1990s. Both countries are in the process of introducing country-wide systems of social welfare, so studies on China and Vietnam analyse progress and effects of national social welfare systems for the urban poor and rural migrants introduced to cope with the potential dangers for urban security (Wu 2009; Gao, Garfinkel and Zhai 2009; Liu, He and Wu 2008; Wang 2006; Salditt, Whiteford and Adema 2008; Liu 2007; Wang, Shi and Zheng 2002; Long and Pfau 2009; Isik-Dikmelik 2006; Shanks and Turk 2003). In addition, China's rapid economic growth has significantly reduced security of housing, as forced evictions and insufficient compensation payments have led to increasing disaffection (UN Habitat 2007, 314–15).

In many of the less developed countries of the region, economic growth has centred on the capital city and a few urban centres (the classic examples are Bangkok in Thailand and Phnom Penh in Cambodia). Most other areas remain dominated by agricultural activity. However, the growth of these centres of economic activity has led to an increase in certain forms of violence, "from street crime, such as muggings, robberies and carjackings, to kidnap-

pings, murder, drug-related violence and organized crime conducted by gangs, to assault, sexual violence, and personal abuse" (Dwyer 2003; see also UN Habitat 2007, 53–66). According to Gulfer Cezayirli, Senior Urban Development Specialist at the Asian Development Bank, an "inadequate urban environment and social and economic exclusion, coupled with a lack of access to safety services, lead to distrust, frustration, and hopelessness, and contribute to circumstances that encourage urban violence" (Dwyer 2003; see also UN Habitat 2007, 66–72).

As a consequence, studies focus on developmental issues and the inability or unwillingness of the state to provide comprehensive welfare programmes owing to clientelistic politics. This is the case in the Philippines, where the tradition of governance allows the elite to pursue predatory politics exploiting material and immaterial resources for their own benefit (Quimpo 2009). Civil society has little or no influence on political decision-making processes, a situation also observed in Thailand (Piaseu and Mitchell 2004; Piaseu, Belza, and Shell-Duncan 2004; Silvey 2001). In Cambodia especially, the state has been unwilling to provide comprehensive welfare: The government, dominated since 1979 by the Cambodian People's Party and Prime Minister Hun Sen, is not publicly accountable, because its power is generated through patron-client relationships with the rural electorate (Roberts 2001). Therefore, when the government recognises a potential threat to its rule from dissatisfied segments of the population, its strategy is to extend control over this group. The government responded in this manner in 2006, when it passed a military service law to place urban youth, who are increasingly threatened by unemployment, under governmental surveillance rather than implementing sustainable anti-poverty programmes (Hensengerth 2008a).

In Phnom Penh, urban crime is on the rise, and Phnom Penh's residents report crime and violence as their major problems (Asian Development Bank 2007, 1). As a consequence of the rise in urban crime, studies examine how

<sup>13</sup> For Japan, studies find that crime rates have declined since World War II despite increased levels of industrialisation. See for example Tsushima (1996).



to reduce crime by fostering social integration through upgrading infrastructure and access to public services such as health care and education (Asian Development Bank 2007, 1; UN Habitat 2007, 304, 313–14). At the same time, the insecurity of land titles stemming from the civil war period has to be clarified in order to put an end to mass evictions carried out by the Cambodian regime and companies under the protection of the police and the courts (Chan, Tep and Acharya 2001).

The most common crimes committed in Phnom Penh are robbery, burglary, motorcycle theft, theft of valuables from passengers, street fights, physical extortion, and gang rape (Asian Development Bank 2007, 2).<sup>14</sup> Gang rape is concentrated in youth gangs in Phnom Penh, where it forms part of a male bonding ritual and hedonistic display of masculinity (Gender and Development for Cambodia 2003). The crime hotspots are the quarters with high concentrations of squatters, drug addicts, and unemployed, where there are also gambling dens and brothels. A corrupt police and judicial system contribute to popular perceptions of insecurity (Asian Development Bank 2007, 2).

This lack of trust in the criminal justice system is a key factor in the feeling of insecurity (Asian Development Bank 2007, 2). This is confirmed by studies on the Cambodian governance system, which argue that the Cambodian judiciary is not only corrupt but also politically controlled. This allows the rich and powerful to evade punishment if they belong to the appropriate patronage networks (for example Kent 2006). Given that members of the political and economic elites are engaged in illegal land seizure, illegal logging, and extortion from owners of brothels and gambling establishments, political control of the judiciary serves to ensure impunity and a constant cash flow between organised crime and members of the ruling elite (Hensengerth 2008a).

### 2.3. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is an issue in all countries in the region, but has only slowly been acknowledged as a social problem

in these patriarchal societies. This contrasts starkly with the high economic growth rates experienced by many of these countries since World War II and the surge in female participation in the labour market.

Across the region, research finds a prevalence of shame, secrecy, non-intervention, police disinterest, a consequently unprepared healthcare system and a connection between abuse and mental illness. Studies find that witnessing parental violence, husbands' unemployment, husbands' frequent alcohol use, women's acceptance of a subservient role, and lack of money in low-income households are risk factors for wife abuse. However, most of these factors were also prevalent in high-income households with domestic violence (Milwertz 2003; Kyu and Kanai 2005; Phillips et al. 2006; Yount and Carrera 2006; Aekplakorn and Kongsakon 2007; Brickell 2008; Ansara and Hindin 2009).<sup>15</sup> Violence against pregnant women is treated as a separate field of research and focuses on the ill effects on maternal health (Sricamsuk 2006). Scholars seeking to generate effective intervention methods distinguish between physical, sexual and psychological abuse (Xu et. al. 2005; Yount and Carrera 2006; Yoshihama et. al. 2007; Nguyen, Ostergren, and Krantz 2008; Ansara and Hindin 2009).

Women's rights discourses in the region are framed with reference to international norm frameworks, most importantly the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Legal Bureau 2007, 8–9, 45).<sup>16</sup>

The most pervasive issue is the situation of women in conservative, male-dominated societies: They occupy low socioeconomic positions despite playing a major role in food production and family care; more women than men are illiterate, and fewer are enrolled in educational institutions; and

<sup>14</sup> Asian Development Bank 2007: 2.

<sup>15</sup> For a general overview of risk factors see Jewkes (2002).

<sup>16</sup> For an overview on human rights norms and their application to violence against women see Walker (1999).

women are financially dependent on their husbands (Asian Population and Development Association and Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 2007, 111–12; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women’s Legal Bureau 2007, 21–22). This affects societies with conservative Islam in Malaysia, Indonesia and minority areas of the Philippines (Hilsdon 2003; Foley 2003; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women’s Legal Bureau 2007, 21–22), conservative Catholicism in the Philippines (Women’s Legal Bureau 2006, 8 and 26; Ansara and Hindin 2009), non-religious ideologies such as Confucianism in China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam (Yoshihama and Sorensen 1994; Doe 2000; Shirahase 2001; Yoshihama 2002c; Xu et. al. 2005; Nguyen, Ostergren, and Krantz 2008), and in general patriarchal societies such as those in Cambodia and Thailand (Yount and Carrera 2006; Aekplakorn and Kongsakon 2007; Brickell 2008).

This raises more fundamental questions of social change. Since the 1950s, countries in the region have experienced the “Asian economic miracle”. Japan was the first country to see strong rapid growth. In the 1960s, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong followed as the newly industrialising economies (NICs) or Asian Tigers. In the 1980s, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were termed the New Tigers or second-generation NICs. This surge in industrialisation precipitated social differentiation and an increase in female employment, mostly in clerical jobs and light manufacturing such as textiles (Shirahase 2001).<sup>17</sup> But social change has not always altered traditional views on gender (Truong 1999).<sup>18</sup> Instead, it has led to new conflicts as women became empowered through wage-earning and better education, leading to a loss of (or a threat to) male identity.

The issue of female subjugation in Muslim societies intersects with the issue of political violence, but is discussed here with reference to women’s rights. Indonesia is one example, where the introduction of an anti-pornography law shows the great influence of conservative Muslim groups

on politics, despite the liberal views of President Yudhoyono and the majority of Indonesian Muslims. The extent to which this can be regarded as a concession to the strengthening of conservative Islam in local governments since the start of decentralisation programmes can be debated (Hadiz 2004; Erb, Sulistiyanto, and Faucher 2005; Sherlock 2005; Drexler 2006; Chauvel 2006; van Klinken 2007; Hainsworth 2007; Miller 2009).

Indonesia has seen a variety of Muslim organisations that cover the spectrum from non-violence to militancy. The latter is usually associated with the Indonesian terror network Jemaah Islamiah. Major terrorist attacks were carried out in Bali (in 2002 and 2005) and in Jakarta (Marriott Hotel in 2003, Australian Embassy in 2004, and the Marriott and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in 2009) (Desker 2003; Liow 2004; Jones 2005; Hamilton-Hart 2005; Cady and Simon (eds.) 2006; Park and Niyozov 2008; Sidel 2008; Aljunied 2009).<sup>19</sup> Yet, there are other radical Muslim groups in Indonesia that have only recently been influenced by transnational Islamist networks and whose origin can be traced back to the 1940s (van Bruinessen 2002).

Aceh, on the northern tip of Sumatra island, was first allowed to institute Sharia law in 2001 as part of a peace deal with the Jakarta government. After becoming autonomous in 2005, Aceh’s government put more stipulations of Sharia law into effect. While at first this involved less controversial passages, in September 2009 Aceh’s parliament legislated stoning as punishment for adultery (*BBC News* 2009).

A similar strengthening of conservative Islam can be observed in Malaysia. However, this is mostly superficial as the government has employed a deliberate strategy of co-opting conservative groups in order to fend off challenges by more radical Muslim groups and accusations by fundamentalists that Malaysia is not sufficiently Islamic. In conjunction with the government’s moderate stance, such a policy also protects the economically important Indian and

17 For an overview of the social effects of economic restructuring particularly after the Asian financial crisis see Deyo and Agartan (2003); Lee (2006).

18 Truong presents further detailed analyses of the effects of economic growth on gender practices in the workplace, e.g. the introduction of childcare facilities.

19 For a non-violent radical Islamist group in Indonesia, the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, see Ward (2009).

Chinese minorities.<sup>20</sup> Despite the government's efforts to forestall the advance of radical groups, Malaysia made headlines when a court ordered the whipping of a woman who had drunk beer in public (the punishment was deferred after widespread protests) (Fuller 2009).

In order to combat the subjugation of women and their exposure to abuse in the family, women's rights NGOs have formed regional networks to advocate for women's education, raise their awareness about their rights under international human rights treaties and change traditions that have a preference for boys over girls. For this to occur, they believe that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations must be lobbied for the protection of human rights; governments must be lobbied to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; an independent body to document human rights violations must be established; legal changes must be advanced through legislation and judicial practice; networks joining affected women must be created; and activists must engage with the younger generation to institute generational change (Asian Population and Development Association and Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 2007, 113–14; Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 2001; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development and Women's Legal Bureau 2007, 29–30, 45–46). More specific suggestions include the application of the due diligence principle, the precondition of which is transparency and accountability of government and security forces (Pusey 2008).

Importantly, the measures suggested here go beyond legal rights derived from international frameworks, and do more than request governments to pass appropriate legislation. They aim to bring about a profound socio-cultural change in the role of women in traditional societies by using proactive and strategic approaches rather than only formalistic legal instruments (Hebert 2008).

The application of international norms is also a key point in country analyses. In China, feminist activists have generated new knowledge drawn from international discourses on women's rights to form an epistemic community that subscribes to global norms in order to overcome local notions of masculinity (Milwertz and Bu 2007). Women's rights have a history in China, beginning with marriage reform under the communist government after 1949 and female leadership of paramilitary groups at the height of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1967. Still, however, this has not changed the basic patterns of male domination of the household, given that Confucian principles of family organisation survived both the 1949 revolution and the Cultural Revolution (Milwertz 2003; Xu et. al. 2005). The economic reforms introduced after 1978 did little to change this, as men continue to be seen as those who uphold the family line (Women's Feature Service 2004; Milwertz 2003). Traditional attitudes toward gender relations and the justification of wife-beating are associated with a higher risk of exposure to domestic violence (Xu et. al. 2005).

The problem begins at birth, with boys being assigned higher value than girls. Currently China is experiencing a shortage of girls, and treatment of women may improve. However, better treatment does not automatically increase women's autonomy, as their subordinate position in the family may stay the same (Das Gupta and Li 1999). The Chinese Communist Party has been trying to counteract this trend by instituting rule of law in marriage policy to supersede traditional notions of masculinity and gender dominance. The latest amendment of the Marriage Law in 2001 enhanced the protection of women against domestic violence (Zhang 2002). However, the weakness of legal intervention in China is implementation. Another problem is the patriarchal political system that rarely allows women to rise to top positions in politics. Since the reform process in the late 1970s, the only woman who has attained a leading position was Wu Yi, who was Vice Premier between 2003 and 2007 and Acting First Vice Premier between 2007 and 2008.<sup>21</sup>

20 On the political situation of Islam in Malaysia see Haneef (2001), Liow (2004), Thirkell-White (2006), Liwo (2009), and Julian C. H. Lee (2010).

21 For statistics on China see for example Parish et. al. (2004) and Xu et. al. (2005).

Hong Kong also struggles with a high incidence of wife abuse. While the practice is to jail wife abusers, there is advocacy for court-mandated counselling, a practice tested in China and Taiwan. The idea is to begin a learning process that encourages non-violent settlement of household conflicts. Court-mandated counselling, it is argued, should engage the local cultural discourse on masculinities rather than attempting to impose a system that carries notions of British culture and is detached from Confucian family tradition (Chiu 2001).

In South Korea, “patriarchal social values . . . had traditional primacy over family members’ human rights” with the result that “husbands often physically abused their wives in the name of maintaining hierarchical order in the family” (Doe 2000, 234). However, the recognition of domestic violence as a social problem led to the passing of the Law for Preventing Domestic Violence in 1997 (Doe 2000, 234). In contrast to this, the Basic Act on Healthy Family of 2004 is seen as a reaction to women’s increased participation in the labour force, decline in fertility rates and increased rates of divorce. Direct government interference in family life is seen especially by feminist scholars as a reaction to this “crisis”, and an attempt to cement women’s subservient status in male-dominated Korean society and their secondary status in the labour force (Park 2005).

Japan also has a history of domestic violence, stemming from the patriarchal social structure and an emphasis on shame rather than justice. Research into the issue is examining the evolving social and policy frameworks that attempt to help abused women. With abuse long having been considered a private matter, official assistance programmes, police protection and political initiatives are still evolving. Family, friends and professionals often blame the victim, making it difficult to escape from physical violence and break out of the social isolation imposed by the husband (Yoshihama 2002a; Nayak et al. 2003).

Shirahase reports that even working women often perceive their status as depending on their husband’s work. This

supports gender asymmetries, which prevail despite the sharp increase in the number of women in the labour force caused by Japanese economic growth after World War II (Shirahase 2001).<sup>22</sup>

Grassroots organisations were the first to take up the issue, helping women to break out of their isolation (Yoshihama 2002a; Nayak et al. 2003). According to Yoshihama (2002c, 345), domestic violence has been recognised as a social problem only since 1992 when a national survey revealed that domestic violence occurred frequently and was not treated as a criminal matter, but as a quarrel between a married couple. Mediators at family courts tended to tell women to accept their subordinate status, thus imposing conservative norms.

The 1992 study helped domestic grassroots organisations take the issue to the international level. At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 a workshop on violence against Asia Pacific women was held in cooperation with the Asian Women’s Human Rights Council. In addition, the UN Conference on Women in Beijing generated publicity across the region (Yoshihama 2002c, 351 and 355).

Japan’s social and political climate slowly improved since then, encouraging medical research into the connection between depression and anxiety in women and physical, sexual, and psychological abuse at home. This, it is hoped, will assist the development of medical care for victims and inform the political process to ensure better legal protection and healthcare systems for women (Weingourt et al. 2001; Yoshihama 2002b).

In Vietnam, domestic abuse of women is associated with mental health problems that meet an unprepared health care system and a lack of policy initiatives. Violence against women is treated as a private matter, and a culture of shame and the prevalence of traditional gender roles often discourages women from revealing their abuse and seeking help (Vung, Ostergren, and Krantz 2009; Jonzon et al. 2007). Patriarchal family norms and traditional gender

22 Shirahase’s data are based on the 1995 Japanese Social Stratification and Mobility Survey.

norms “continue to prevail” even though “more than 70 percent of women of working age (16–55) participate in the labour market and women constitute 52 percent of the total workforce” (Nguyen, Ostergren, and Krantz 2008), and despite the fact that – like China – Vietnam experienced socialist revolution and embarked on an economic reform programme in 1986.

In Thailand, the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 has not yet improved the situation: it encourages reconciliation; police officers still turn women away saying that domestic violence is a private problem; and medical staff in the One Stop Crisis Centers of the Public Health Ministry are not sensitive to gender-specific problems (*IRIN News* 2008). Most women who seek help turn to friends or family members and only rarely to the police and the courts (Institute of Population and Social Research at Mahidol University and Foundation for Women 2003). While some studies of high- and low-income families find no significant difference in the frequency of domestic violence incidents (Hindin and Adair 2002; *The Nation* 2006), others associate low income, poor education and low occupational status with higher risks of domestic violence (Hoffman, Demo, and Edwards 1995).

For Cambodia, studies find that a lack of economic resources in the family (such as financial problems due to unemployment) and the resulting frustration and alcohol abuse increase the risk of violence (Zimmerman 1994; Yount and Carrera 2006; Brickell 2008). Women’s economic dependence on their husbands also makes them more tolerant of partner abuse and exposes them to a higher risk of abuse (Yount and Carrera 2006). A woman who has experienced violence between her parents during childhood is more likely to end up with a violent husband through a process of mate selection, although she is not more likely to accept partner violence as being justified (Yount and Carrera 2006). This shows the importance of family resources and childhood experience of violence between parents as an important factor for domestic violence (Yount and Carrera 2006).

Similar to Thailand, the Cambodian justice system also encourages reconciliation. Violence against women is the result of traditional roles in a hierarchically ordered society in which women have to obey the husband and are often severely beaten for trivialities. Cambodian judges tend to see wife abuse as a criminal act only if the victim is “stabbed, shot, unconscious or dead” (Zimmerman 1994). While men maintained their traditional role of authority in the family, expecting women to remain obedient and sexually available (Surtees 2003, 97, citing Dworkin 1997, 120), post-war employment in industry, particularly in textiles, often favoured women, thus upsetting traditional gender roles. Sexual and physical violence in the family engender shame, while friends, family and neighbours ask the victim to remain quiet so as not to worsen the situation. Attempts are made to overcome these attitudes by forging partnerships and running awareness-raising campaigns with local police and communities (Spindel, Levy, and Connor 2000, 57–69).

In Indonesia, the government long denied that violence against women was a problem on a mass scale. However, the mass rape of Chinese Indonesian and other ethnic minority women in the May 1998 riots forced the government to acknowledge the scale of the problem. The issue of mass rape of Chinese women is discussed in the broader framework of masculinity and sexual violence in Indonesia (Strassler 2004). In response to the crisis, the government established the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan, KNAKTP). The move was heralded as a major policy step, but concrete outcomes are lacking (Wandita 1998; Budianta 2000; Tan 2006).<sup>23</sup>

In Singapore, police have been slow to respond to marital violence, despite legal reform. The problem here is to be found in police subcultures and the conditions under which the Singaporean police force operates. The issue is therefore not so much legal change, but the organisational response of the police force (Ganapathy 2002, 2006, 2008).

23 See also UNIFEM’s annotated list of Indonesian women’s NGOs at <http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/projects/evaw/vawngo/vamindo.htm>.



A study on domestic violence in the Philippines reports that regular church attendance in the Roman Catholic country is associated with a lower risk of domestic violence (Ansara and Hindin 2009). The same study found that women were just as likely as men to perpetrate aggression against their spouse. However, women are more likely to need medical attention, and women are frequently subjected to sexual coercion. Thus, forms of violence (psychological, physical and sexual abuse) vary between genders while frequency does not. Church attendance especially by both partners is a cultural factor that appears to lower the risk of violence perpetration (Ansara and Hindin 2009). A study on intergenerational transmission of partner violence in Cebu found an association with the experience of interparental violence by at least one of the partners (Fehringer and Hindin 2009).

Studies on Thailand found that women were as much subject to physical and psychological abuse in low-income families where violence is often about money problems, as they were in high-income families where women pursue an independent career (Hindin and Adair 2002; *The Nation* 2006). It was found that patterns of household decision-making are a better predictor of violence than income and employment status: Men are more likely to use violence when they dominate household decisions. Women who dominate household decisions are also more likely to experience violence. Men are most likely to refrain from violence in households where decisions are made jointly by husband and wife (Hindin and Adair 2002).

In contrast to the above studies, the domestic violence discourse in East Timor is part of the peace-building process initiated after the violent excesses surrounding the 1999 independence referendum. Here, the argument is that the democratic opening and the high international profile during the 1999 referendum brought international norms that are being internalised in the peace-building process and are used by women's NGOs to promote awareness-raising campaigns that aim to empower women in the new democratic spaces (Hall 2009). However, a quantitative study compar-

ing the pre-1999 and post-1999 situation argues that the incidence of intimate partner violence against women has not declined since the crisis, although there is a significant decline in sexual and physical assaults against women by perpetrators outside the family (Hynes et al. 2004). These findings are partly corroborated by Simião, who argues that the modernisation process and the fight against domestic violence in East Timor require an understanding of the different meanings of violence, body and gender that complicate the current processes of reform (2006).

#### 2.4. Youth Violence

Like domestic violence, youth violence can partly be seen as a result of social change. Youth violence is the most neglected of the four forms of violence discussed in this study, and research is rare. To some extent, this may reflect widely held beliefs that youth in Northeast and Southeast Asia, are well controlled and integrated into rigorous public and private institutions of social control, such as schools and families.<sup>24</sup> Psychologists, particularly in Japan and Singapore where the profession is well developed, challenge this assumption, and it is psychologists rather than social scientists who also appear more likely to investigate the issue of youth violence in their respective countries. Studies on youth violence in the region all agree that youth gangs form as self-help systems, resulting from various forms of social exclusion in paternalistic societies.

The issue of attaining visibility through gangs is tied to the question of social change – urbanisation, globalisation, migration, and economic structures shifting away from an agrarian economy (Hensengerth 2008b; Roeske 2006, 6–17). In such a situation young people are caught between tradition and modernity. Their transition from childhood to adulthood is made more difficult by having to negotiate their parents' values with a new youth culture that uses symbols of consumption such as pop music, mobile phones or motorbikes. In authoritarian societies, the emergence of this new social group may contrast with the "exclusion of the young from national economies" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005; Milnitsky 2006, 196–97; Gender and Devel-

24 Confidential interview in Phnom Penh, 31 May 2007.

opment for Cambodia 2003, part 3). The rise of youth as a new consumer group with distinct lifestyles has produced new identities, leading to conflicts with teachers and parents as traditional patterns of interaction lose their value within the new group (Gender and Development for Cambodia 2003, part 3; Roeske 2002, 6; Milnitsky 2006, 203).

In Cambodia, youth gangs form as systems of self-help in a society that is paternalistic and structured by patron-client relations. In this system, youth have no opportunities to partake in political decision-making. Although the system is formally a democracy, political processes cannot be influenced by the public and are controlled instead by the political and economic elite through a system of neopatrimonialism. Economic growth rests on three pillars, textiles, construction and tourism, and is geographically concentrated on the capital Phnom Penh, the port city of Sihanoukville, and the tourism centre of Siem Reap. The rest of the country remains largely untouched.

With the formal economy so small, many young people migrate to Phnom Penh to work in the textile industry, or they have to seek employment in the informal economy. Once in Phnom Penh, rural youth are often picked up by one of the gangs. These gangs are usually led by children of the political, economic, or military elites and are therefore immune from prosecution. In turn, they may be functionalised by these elites for acts of violence against the opposition (Hinton 2006). The gangs provide access to jobs, education, and healthcare for their poorer members, arranged by the gang leader who enjoys access to these resources owing to his influential family background. The gang leader therefore occupies the position of patron, the members further down the internal hierarchy are his clients. As a result, Cambodian gangs adopt the patron-client structure of Cambodian society (Gender and Development for Cambodia 2003; Hensengerth 2008a; Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation 2002, 38–39).

The origins of Cambodian youth gangs lie in the low levels of human development after the civil war. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation reports that after the war, many children were left to

live by themselves and had to find their own food. Dysfunctional families and domestic violence led children to run away from home and live on the streets. Juvenile delinquency and the formation of youth gangs in the cities emerged as a new phenomenon. Crimes committed by youth include theft, robbery, and drug use (Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation 2002, 37–38).

The situation is unchanged today, with a government that is not accountable to the general public having failed to provide national social security systems in almost two decades of post-civil-war development. Youth are also disenfranchised, as they have no influence on political processes. Instead, the approach to integrating delinquent youth is authoritarian and follows the patronage approach. The military service law passed in 2006 is such a tool, aimed at integrating a potentially destabilising and critical social group into the neopatrimonial system (Hensengerth 2008a).

In Singapore, too, adolescents join gangs to achieve social visibility and status. However, rather than coming from families where they are abused or where the parents are uninvolved in their children's lives, Singaporean youth tend to join gangs from families in which the mother is "over-protective, over-controlling, critical, guilt-inducing" (Kee et al. 2003). Gang youth have lower self-esteem and higher levels of aggression than peers who do not join gangs (Kee et al. 2003). As to the question of why youth violence occurs in a highly collectivised society such as Singapore, Lim and Chang argue that collective self-esteem is a factor in the execution of violence (2007). The key factor is allocentrism, the social obligation to the ingroup, particularly when the ingroup advocates violence. This tendency of collectivism in relation to the ingroup is in line with the demands of a collectivist society and explains how youth violence may become a phenomenon in such societies (Lim and Chang 2007).

A second strand of Singaporean youth gang research deals with minority street corner gangs, which often consist of lower class Tamils who are seen as a threat by the police because of their potential to upset the relationship between the police and Chinese secret societies. The police enlist the help of secret society members to keep the peace in areas the police cannot effectively control: prostitution, illegal

moneylending, coffee shop owners, hawkers, newspaper vendors, contractors, and massage parlours and karaoke bars. In return, the secret society in the area gains control over the territory and its legal and illegal economic activities. Tamil street corner gangs are viewed by the police as upsetting this relationship when they try to gain a foothold in the criminal underworld. Gangs comprised of working class Tamils therefore experience failure not only in the legitimate Singaporean society, but also in the underworld scene (Ganapathy and Lian 2002).

In Japan, youth violence has traditionally been discussed in terms of violence against family members, so research focuses on individual acts of violence rather than youth gangs. But individual youth violence has only attracted increased attention in the last ten years as juvenile delinquency has risen. The crimes range from general anti-social behaviour to sexual offences and murder. This is especially the case for violence in schools, where pressure exerted by parents often causes frustration even among students with good results. These children and adolescents often have no history of crime; their delinquency appears suddenly with the development path leading to the violent act undetected. School bullying and pervasive developmental disorder are among the risk factors frequently cited by psychologists. But the justice system and popular opinion are geared towards stricter punishment rather than treatment and prevention of mental problems (Ono and Pumariega 2008; also Hayes and Kameguchi 2005).

In China, research focuses on youth gangs. By the point when they are picked up by the police, youth in gangs already have a history of violence. The organisational level of youth gangs is low, however. Gangs are often composed of fellow workers or people that originated from the same geographical area. So gangs are based on the traditional social organising principles of work unit and interpersonal relationships defined by area of origin. The reaction of the Chinese state is similar to the reactions in other countries in the region: the administration of severe punishment (Zhang et al. 1997; Zhang and Liu 2007; Zhang 2008).

Like the domestic violence discourse, discussion links youth violence in East Timor to the events following independence.

Adolescents were prominently involved in the communal violence of 2006 to 2008. They were organised in rival martial arts groups (which date back to Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian rule and linked up with the factionalised security forces after independence); ethnicity-based gangs fighting for economic control; gangs led by resistance figures with loyalties to different political parties and military factions (whose antipathy dates back to the anti-Indonesian resistance); and diverse disenfranchised groups led by ex-combatants, opposition politicians, former militia members, and unemployed youth who migrated from the rural areas to Dili and feel socially, politically and economically excluded. Of all these groups, it was the marginalised youth who caused most of the violence (Scambaro 2006, 2009; Arnold 2009). The diversity of groups shows not only the complexity of East Timorese society (Scambaro 2009), but also the detachment of youth from the solidarity of the resistance era and a process in which youth are disenfranchised from political decision-making processes that are controlled by members of the former resistance (Arnold 2009).

### 3. Conclusion

Patterns of political violence hinge at least partly on colonial experiences: minority problems caused by colonial-era frontiers, and, tied to this, the creation of a nation-state ideal where ethnic majorities dominate central government and attempted to subjugate ethnic minorities into a centralised state. Colonialism also created new social classes, ultimately triggering ideological conflicts between capitalism and communism in East Asia.

Post-war economic growth increased social differentiation and female participation in the workforce, leading to conflicts between modern and traditional gender attitudes. A focus on shame, privacy, reconciliation in the legal system and traditional gender roles clashes with ideas of women's rights, thus trapping women between tradition and modernity.

In lockstep with economic modernisation, globalisation has created new patterns of consumption that lead to generational conflicts. New youth cultures emphasise new symbols of identification that deviate from social values of hierarchy and obedience in paternalistic societies. One way out for youth is the formation of gangs in order to achieve

social visibility and to gain access to jobs and services that are otherwise unavailable – be it because an elite political system blocks access or because of a general lack of resources after war.

In contrast to the above types of violence, urban violence is often addressed indirectly by studying poverty or economic marginalisation as risk factors that emerge during urbanisation. Urban insecurity and urban crime are the focus of this research, along with rising inequality, marginalisation and deprivation. In this sense, urban crime is linked to certain forms of youth violence where gang violence emerges from slum quarters. Here, violence and deprivation are linked and demand strategies of social integration.

Regarding the thrust of violence research, youth and urban violence are the least well-researched forms in East Asia. The goal of coordinated violence research must therefore

be to strengthen research on the emergence and forms of youth and urban violence. This should include suggestions for sustainable strategies of youth integration and exit strategies for adolescents.

To achieve this, existing strands of research scattered across disciplines and themes (such as urbanisation, deprivation, youth gangs and social exclusion) should be drawn together in order to gain a clearer picture of causes and links between urban violence (including its subtypes), poverty, violent actors and victims.

Such an endeavour could enlist the expertise of interested international organisations and donor agencies. Cooperation of this kind could help not only to research causes and forms of violence, but also to assist in devising strategies for minimising violence.

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

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:**  
**Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

► **Violence Research in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Literature**

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1. Historical Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. The State of Research

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

### 2.1. Some Data on Violence in the Americas

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

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

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

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

**Table 1: Homicide rates among youths aged 10–29**

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.2. Forms and Differentiations of Violence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 2.3. Actual Violence Scenarios:

#### **Persisting Forms, Changing Types, New Discourses**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

##### **2.4.1. Mexico**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 2.4.2. Central America

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### 2.4.3. Caribbean Countries

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 2.4.4. Colombia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 2.4.5. Venezuela

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

#### 2.4.6. Andean Region

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 2.4.7. Brazil

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

#### 2.4.8. The States of the Cono Sur

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 2.5. Causes and Determinants of Crime and Violence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Table 2: The ecological model of violence**

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

Source: WHO (2002)

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



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

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

### 2.6. The Social Costs and Consequences of Violence and Crime

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

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

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

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

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

**Table 3: A typology of socioeconomic costs of violence**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 2.7. Strategies against Violence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3. Youth and Violence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



ing clear territories of control and rivalries among different gangs.

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4. Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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A more extensive bibliography on violence in Latin America and the Caribbean can be found at

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**Appendix: Links, Internet Sources, Data**

**1. National Statistics Offices**

*Mexico and Central America:*

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

*Caribbean Region:*

- Dominican Republic: ONE [www.one.gob.do](http://www.one.gob.do)
- Jamaica: Statistical Institute of Jamaica [www.statinja.com](http://www.statinja.com)
- Cuba: ONE [www.one.cu](http://www.one.cu)

*Andean Region:*

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

*Brazil:*

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

*Cono Sur:*

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

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

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### Mexico

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

### Caribbean

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

### Venezuela

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

### Brazil

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

### United States

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

### Central America

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

### Colombia

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

### Andean countries

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

### Cono Sur

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

### Europe

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

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

Center for Disease Control, Atlanta  
www.cdc.gov

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

Centroamerica joven, FLACSO El Salvador  
www.centroamericajuven.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inter-American Development Bank  
www.iadb.org

Interdisciplinary Latin America Center, Bonn  
www.ilz.uni-bonn.de/links\_es.html

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

International Women's Tribune Center  
www.iwtc.org

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

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

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

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

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

Latinobarómetro  
www.latinobarometro.org

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

Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence  
www.massviolence.org

Pan American Health Organization  
www.paho.org

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

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

Sexual Violence Research Initiative  
www.svri.org/



Stop Violence against Women (SVAW), Advocates for  
Human Rights  
[www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org)

United Nations Development Program  
[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs  
[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime\\_cicp\\_research.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_cicp_research.html)

Washington Office on Latin America  
[www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org)

United Nations Surveys of Crime Trends and Operations of  
Criminal Justice Systems  
[www.uncjin.org/stats/wcs.html](http://www.uncjin.org/stats/wcs.html)

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

World Health Organization  
[www.who.int/violence-injury-prevention/violence/en/](http://www.who.int/violence-injury-prevention/violence/en/)

World Bank  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

Youth Portal for Latin America and the Caribbean  
[www.youthlac.org](http://www.youthlac.org)

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

*Crime and Violence: Causes and Policy Responses*

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

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

June 4–5, 2001, Cancún, México

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

LSE, May 26–27, 2005, London

*Coloquio: Violencias, Culturas Institucionales y Sociabilidad*

FLACSO, November 8–10, 2006, Buenos Aires

*Seminário: Violência Urbana*

CEBRAP / ILANUD, December 4, 2006, São Paulo

*Primera Jornada de Investigaciones en Violencia y Justicia*

IDES, December 7, 2006, Buenos Aires

*Security Sector Reform in Latin America: Impact of Irregular Threats*

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

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

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

*Colloquium: The Role of the Police in Crime Prevention*

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

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

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

*New Directions for the Study of Citizen Security in Latin America*

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

*The Politics of Violence in Latin America*

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

*Seminario: Prevención de las Conductas de Riesgo entre la Juventud*

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

*Congreso Internacional sobre Paz, Violencia y Desarrollo*

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

*Representations of Violence in Latin America*

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

*Violent Crime and Democratization in the Global South*

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

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

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

*III Encontro Anual: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública*

April 1–3, 2009, Vitória

*Violence Prevention – A Critical Dimension of Development*

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

*Workshop: The Politics of Violence in Latin America*

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

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

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

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# Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources and Conflict

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

- **Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources and Conflict

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Natural resources can contribute to economic growth, employment, and fiscal revenues. But many resource-rich and resource-dependent countries are, in fact, characterized by disappointing growth rates, high inequality and wide-spread impoverishment, bad governance, and an increased risk of civil violence. A vast body of literature is devoted to the issue of intrastate resource conflicts. These studies can be broadly divided into two groups: studies which focus on resource scarcity and conflict, and studies that analyse the relationship between resource abundance and conflict. While studying resources and intrastate conflict is anything but new, we show that the main findings from the literature, which are often conflicting, are difficult to compare due to a lack of adequate, general definitions and measurements of scarcity, abundance, and conflict. After overviews of research on resource scarcity and conflict and on resource abundance and conflict, we discuss the central terminology and approaches to measuring independent and dependent variables (resources and conflict).

Access to natural resources is increasingly perceived as the security risk of the twenty-first century. Natural resources are, according to the WTO, “stocks of materials that exist in the natural environment that are both scarce and economically useful in production or consumption, either in their raw state or after a minimal amount of processing” (WTO 2010).<sup>1</sup> They include renewable (water, land, forest, fish, etc.) and depletable resources (minerals, metals, oil, diamonds, etc.). According to the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which was convened by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2004, commodity shortages can help trigger social unrest and civil wars. In 2009, the UNEP’s Expert Advisory Group on Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding found that “there is significant potential for conflicts over natural resources to intensify in the coming decades” (UNEP 2009).

As the 2010 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research Conflict Barometer (HIIK 2010) shows, resource

conflicts are a serious phenomenon. Although the Conflict Barometer documents only seven cases where resources were the sole cause, overall, resources were the second-most frequent conflict item in the 363 conflicts recorded in 2010 (80 cases representing 22 percent; after system/ideology with 117 cases). Resources typically occur together with other conflict items: territory, regional predominance, system/ideology, autonomy and secession. The data also show that resources are the predominant conflict item in Sub-Saharan Africa (32 of 85, 38 percent) – far more than in other regions of the world. The HIIK also finds that in 2010 intrastate conflicts involving resources were considerably more common than interstate conflicts, with 50 cases compared to 30. Of 32 resource conflicts in Africa, 25 took place within states, while only seven were interstate conflicts. Interstate conflicts were also less violent on average: They were assigned an intensity level of 1 or 2 (where 5 equals war). In contrast, of 25 conflicts within African countries, only ten were of minor, or low intensity (level 1

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the term “scarcity,” please see section 3. “The Challenge of Definitions: Scarcity, Abundance, and Conflict.”



or 2), while twelve conflicts were of medium intensity (level 3), two were severe crises (level 4) and one conflict was a war (level 5) (HIIK 2010).

The vast body of literature devoted to analysing the relationship between resources and conflict can be broadly divided into two groups: studies which focus on resource scarcity and conflict, and studies that analyse the relationship between resource abundance and conflict. The methods applied vary from vast quantitative efforts (econometric modelling and statistical regressions, cross-country and time-series analyses) to qualitative analyses (comparative and individual case studies). We broadly follow the timeline in which the literature (journal articles and books) has evolved, but divide it according to research questions, applied methods, and results, highlighting the main findings and conflicting evidence as well as identifying remaining research gaps.

We start with an overview of studies on resource *scarcity* and conflict. Many early studies found a positive relationship between resource scarcity and conflict. They suggest that depriving people of their livelihoods leaves them no choice but to fight for survival. The relationship between resource scarcity and conflict remains highly contested, however. Critics argue that there are too many intervening non-environmental variables to establish a direct link between population growth and scarcity-induced conflicts or that real scarcity rarely occurs because technological innovation, substitution, and international trade provide remedies.

We discuss resource *abundance* and conflict in the second part of our review. Advocates of this school of thought originally identified two causes of such conflicts: similar to conflicts involving resource scarcity, “grievances”, i.e. the deprivation of basic needs, can be the cause. In addition, “greed”, i.e. opportunistic and selfish appropriation of resources, can trigger conflict. Le Billon (2008) calls the grievance mechanism “resource conflicts”: conflicts arising due to control of a resource by one group that excludes others or destroys the resources they depend on for a living. He calls the greed mechanism “conflict resources” because some resources motivate civilians, soldiers, and state officials to enrich themselves. In *The Political Economy of*

*Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (2003), however, Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman argue that the incentives to start or prolong a conflict are more complex than previously suggested. Not only can greed and grievance both be the causes of a conflict. Economic considerations may motivate conflicts in some cases, in others they are not the root cause, contributing instead to pre-existing causes of conflict. This section is therefore divided into two subparts. The first discusses studies that focus on rebels as the main actors; the second summarizes the literature on weak states.

The third part of our review is devoted to a discussion of central terminology and approaches to measuring independent and dependent variables (resources and conflict). In general, scarcity, abundance, and conflict are still not satisfactorily defined, and scholars frequently use diverging definitions. This reduces explanatory power to the extent that comparisons of results become quite difficult.

In view of the enormous number of studies on the issue, it is necessary to limit our focus. First of all, we concentrate on violent, intrastate conflicts. As the 2010 HIIK data show, intrastate resource conflicts were more common than international or regional conflicts. Besides, there are few studies on violent, interstate conflicts because international negotiations have – so far – been more successful at preventing violent outbreaks between states. The region most affected by resource conflicts is Sub-Saharan Africa. It does not come as a surprise that many of the studies we review also focus on this region. The focus on African intrastate conflicts explains why we selected certain resources, such as land, forests, oil, metals and diamonds, and give less attention to drug and international water conflicts, even though they also can pose significant conflict risks.

### 1. Resource Scarcity and Conflict

Many researchers, among them Homer-Dixon (1994), Bächler, Böge, and Klötzli (1996), Hauge and Ellingsen (1998), Raleigh and Urdal (2007), and Urdal (2008), find a positive relationship between resource scarcity and conflict. They suggest that depriving people of their livelihoods leaves them no choice apart from fighting for survival. Following a neo-Malthusian line of argument, they assume

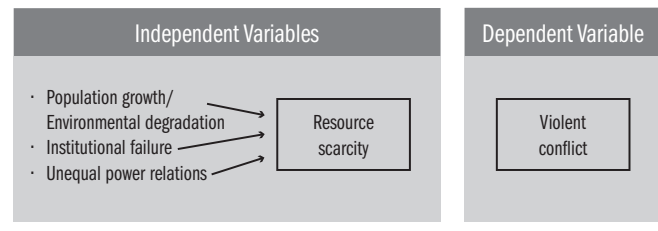
that population growth reduces the availability of natural resources because populations grow faster than food supplies. This induces competition and, ultimately, conflicts over means of existence. The research group led by Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999) is often cited as this perspective's most decisive representative. According to their research, conflicts take three forms: conflicts between states, group identity conflicts, and civil strife and insurgency. Empirical evidence from earlier studies suggests, first, that *international* conflict over scarce (mostly renewable) resources is rare. Second, scarcity can initiate migration, resulting in ethnic conflict and rivalry in the host area. Third, scarcity often causes economic deprivation and ensuing conflict, especially when institutions prove ineffective. Fourth, developing countries suffer greater harm from scarcity and conflict because they are less well-equipped to alleviate grievances.

However, this line of reasoning has been heavily challenged. Critics of the neo-Malthusian approach either argue that there are too many intervening non-environmental variables to establish a direct link between population growth and scarcity-induced conflicts (Le Billon 2001; Bates et al. 2003; Giordano, Giordano, and Wolf 2005; Theisen 2008; Brown 2010) or, as in the cornucopian tradition, that absolute scarcity rarely occurs because of, first and foremost, technological innovation, substitution, and international trade (Boserup 1965; Simon 1996; Lomborg 2001; Juul 2005; Mortimore 2005). Cornucopian scholars are convinced that people are able to substitute resources or invent new technologies, creating remedies for scarcity. The concept of social resilience – intelligent human beings are able to adapt to environmental changes – gives rise to a similar interpretation of scarcity: Scarcity is not necessarily a threat to livelihood, but an opportunity to be flexible, given adequate means. Over the last few years, the question has become salient again due to the threat of climate change-induced scarcity (Barnett and Adger 2007; Reuveny 2007; Hendrix and Glaser 2007; Raleigh and Urdal 2007; Meier, Bond, and Bond 2007).

The following figure is a schematic illustration of the mechanisms leading to scarcity and, possibly, conflict. The box on the left shows which factors, according to the literature,

induce scarcity. Once resource scarcity has been identified, studies search for a causal relationship with conflict.

Figure 1: How resource scarcity can cause conflict



### 1.1. Demand-Induced Scarcity and Violent Conflict: Population Growth

Does resource scarcity cause violent conflict? And if so, under which conditions? The starting point for our literature review is the Canadian Environmental Change and Acute Conflict Project led by Thomas Homer-Dixon (1994; 1999). The project approached the research question from a neo-Malthusian perspective. Homer-Dixon developed a theoretical model based on sixteen case studies, assuming scarcity to result from three factors: (1) degradation and depletion of cropland, forests, water, and fish stocks, (2) increased demand through population growth and/or rising living standards, and (3) unequal distribution of resources (1994). These factors could contribute to violent conflict in the form of ethnic clashes, insurgency, banditry or military coups. For example, a dwindling supply of renewable resources could induce powerful groups to shift resource distribution in their favour, leaving less and less for poorer and weaker groups (“resource capture”). Ensuing grievances then cause violence and conflict. Furthermore, increasing resource scarcity could trigger mass migration and, as a consequence, resource degradation or depletion in other regions. People native to the host region might feel their livelihood is threatened and use violence as a means to assert power, the consequence being ethnic clashes (“ecological marginalization”). In a case study of South Africa, Homer-Dixon and Percival (1998) tested the model and hypothesized that pre-election turmoil was caused by land degradation and fuel/wood/water scarcity in combination with high population density. Admitting that other factors, such as ethnicity, strong group identities, and the transition to democracy, contributed to the conflicts, they concluded

that grievances were exacerbated by migration, scarcities in urban black communities, poverty, and manipulation of access by warlords, leading to violence.

However, Homer-Dixon's research team was harshly criticized for its generalizations. Goldstone (2001), for example, called for specification of the independent variables *environment* and *population* and the dependent variable *conflict*. Concerning environmental factors, his empirical evidence since the 1970s showed that long-term degradation alone did not cause large-scale violence. More often, scarcity was a contributing factor in previously unstable areas. Turning to population variables, Goldstone criticizes that it is not population growth or density alone that causes violence. Instead, he finds that rapid urbanization and education, a growing proportion of youth in the population, and unequal growth of different ethnic groups, for example through migration, contribute to the onset of domestic violent conflicts. In addition, he questions the homogeneity of the dependent variable *conflict*, rightly pointing out that not all resource conflicts had to be violent. More often, they are resolved peacefully through negotiations and compromise as armed conflict is the most expensive solution.

Several studies question population as the sole driver of conflict. While Urdal (2005), for example, finds that population growth and land scarcity are significantly and positively related, he argues that armed conflict onset could be better explained with other variables, including unstable regimes, slow economic growth, and a low level of development. In the end, most quantitative cross-country regression analyses fail to establish a clear causal relationship between population-induced resource scarcity and conflict as many other variables may affect the likeliness of an outbreak. For example, Timura (2001) criticizes Homer-Dixon's macro-level model for its lack of a proper contextual analysis of social and cultural components, including history, perception, and local economies, which impede good policy solutions. Tir and Diehl (1998) indicate that population growth and density are only weakly related to conflict initiation and escalation to war. However, a third dependent variable, involvement in militarized interstate disputes, is significantly and positively related to population growth, in particular if military spending is high. Tir

and Diehl also find that not all countries are equally vulnerable to conflict risks. Countries with a high level of technological development were better equipped to reduce the effects of population growth on conflict formation.

### **1.2. Supply-Induced Scarcity and Violent Conflict: Environmental Degradation and Conflict**

It is admittedly difficult to draw a clear line between environmental degradation and population growth as sources of scarcity. Nonetheless, some authors have shifted the focus from the variable population to environment. The most prominent of these projects is the Swiss Environments and Conflict Project of Bächler, Böge, and Klötzli (1996), who summarize their theoretical and empirical results on degradation and armed conflict in three volumes. The project concludes, first, that degradation of renewable resources contributes to violent conflicts in regions of political, economic, and social instability. Second, armed conflict related to environmental degradation only erupts if several of the following conditions occur simultaneously: degraded resources are not substitutable and people depend on them for their existence; powerful institutions to ensure sustainable use of resources are not present; environmental degradation is used by groups with special interests to construct group identities; organization and armament is possible; there are pre-existing conflicts.

As influential as Bächler's research was a project launched by the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO), publishing its results in the institute's *Journal of Peace Research*. Hauge and Ellingsen (1998) analyse environmental variables and conflict (1980 to 1992) in a mixed cross-sectional and diachronic analysis and a pure cross-sectional analysis. Their dependent variable "incidence" is operationalized as domestic armed conflict (between two or more organized parties, of which at least one was the government, with at least 25 annual battle deaths) and civil war (at least 1,000 annual battle deaths). As a proxy for the severity of conflict they used battle deaths as a percentage of the total population. Independent variables were the annual change in forest coverage, land degradation, freshwater availability per capita, population density, and income inequality. They find that land degradation is positively related to armed conflict and civil war. The variables

deforestation and freshwater availability, on the other hand, were only significant with regard to the less severe category of armed conflict, not civil war. But their results were put into perspective by fellow PRIO researcher Theisen in 2008, who finds that land degradation did enlarge conflict risks, but economic factors were more important. Theisen emphasizes the role of poverty, state capacity, and institutional instability, questioning whether it was resource scarcity or rather unequal distribution that caused conflicts.

In the course of the recent climate change debate, the issue has regained prominence. An issue of the journal *Political Geography* in 2007 dedicated to climate change and conflict represented a first attempt to build a framework linking climate change impacts to conflict. Nordås and Gleditsch (2007) review the literature and identify a knowledge gap: the causal chains between climate change and conflict have hardly been explored. Effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, flooding, and drought, can significantly alter the availability of natural resources, most importantly land and water, that are crucial for agricultural production. Conflict may arise either directly in the battle for livelihoods or indirectly as a consequence of migration. Barnett and Adger (2007) argue that a climate change-induced reduction in quantity and quality of natural resources increase the risk of conflict. They see the main cause of conflict in better recruitment opportunities for rebel movements, especially in those countries where a majority of the population depends on the primary sector for employment. According to Reuveny (2007), failing mitigation efforts resulting in migration were a second hazard. He argues that migration could give rise to violent conflict through four different channels: competition for resources, ethnic tension, distrust among origin and host area, and socioeconomic fault lines. The risk of conflict increased if the host area depended largely on the environment for a livelihood, experienced resource scarcity, and additionally had to deal with political instability. Gleditsch, Nordås, and Salehyan (2007) point to the link between climate change, migration, and conflict, as refugees may bring along arms, organizational structures, social networks, and ideas. Mitigating resource competition, and establishing representative institutions, economic redistribution, and state capacity are the challenges to tackle, they stress.

A quantitative study by Raleigh and Urdal (2007), covering the period between 1990 and 2004, clarifies that climate change-induced land and water scarcities only trigger armed conflict if there are medium to high scarcity levels of land and very high scarcity levels of water. The likelihood of conflict increased further when political and economic variables are included in the model. A quantitative study of temperatures between 1981 and 2002 in Sub-Saharan Africa found that warmer temperatures strongly and positively correlated with an increase in armed conflict (Burke et al. 2009). Buhaug (2010) challenges the robustness of this result. When the conflict variable was expanded to include not only civil wars with more than 1,000 annual battle deaths but also smaller conflicts, temperature was not a reliable predictor of conflict in Africa. Besides, he argues, Africa has seen rising temperatures but fewer civil wars over the last decade. Buhaug claims that ethnic marginalization, poor economic performance, and the collapse of the Cold War system offer better explanations.

There is a large body of literature that finds no significant relationship between resource scarcity and conflict. In their quantitative studies using global data from 1955 to 2002, Bates and colleagues (2003), for example, are unable to find any significant relationship between environmental variables and political instability (sustained violent conflict in revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, genocides, and politicides). Binningsbø, de Soysa, and Gleditsch (2007) choose ecological footprint, biocapacity, and ecological reserve or deficit as independent variables. Drawing on a cross-sectional dataset from the period 1961 to 1999, they fail to establish a clear relationship. Quite the contrary, increased demand for resources might predict peace as a proxy for economic and social development.

Brown (2010) measured environmental degradation in Northern and Western Darfur between 1981 and 2006 with the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), which is an indicator of ecological change where high values mean greater land availability. In parallel, he studied violent conflict between farmers and pastoralists, ethnic conflict, rebellion against government, and intra-community conflict in Sudan. The results speak against a relationship between land degradation and violent conflict because the resource

situation did not deteriorate immediately prior to conflicts. In Western Darfur State, vegetation actually improved.

### 1.3. Institutions Matter

As the discussion in section 1.2. shows, not every case of resource scarcity necessarily produces violent conflict. This may be because various institutions are able to resolve non-violent conflicts over scarce resources before they escalate. North (1990) defines institutions as incentives that guide individual behaviour, interactions with others, and society in general. Informal institutions are a set of rules or norms that are not legally stipulated and are enforced by social mechanisms instead of state agencies; formal institutions are a set of rules fixed in regulations and constitutions (North 1990). Giordano, Giordano, and Wolf (2005), for instance, do not deny that resource scarcities exist and that they could potentially cause conflict. However, they say that a discussion focusing on the supply and demand of natural resources is too narrow. Establishing a theoretical framework on the basis of this assumption leads them to claim that risk of international conflict is increased where institutions are ill-defined, do not exist, or cannot keep up with the pace of environmental change.

But failing institutions are not only a problem in international conflicts – they can also destabilize a country internally and cause violence to break out. Government institutions in Colombia, for example, have proven unable to end agrarian conflicts (Elhawary 2007). Several land reforms introduced over the course of the twentieth century failed in their aim of redistributing land and compensating groups. Because contesting claims could not be settled, violent conflicts over land control recommenced. Subsequent flows of migration caused the government to pass a law protecting displaced people's land in 1997. Enforcement of this law was impeded by a lack of capacities and coordination as well as corruption and rent-seeking. The case of tropical fisheries in Ghana, Bangladesh, and the Turks and Caicos Islands also underlines the importance of institutions. Bennett and colleagues (2001) offer valuable clues about the role of formal and informal institutions. In Bangladesh a largely corrupt government failed to support community efforts; conflict management institutions were largely absent. In Ghana decentralization did not have the desired effects

because resources for enforcement had been eliminated. In the Turks and Caicos Islands special interests in government institutions impeded proper management. Bennett and colleagues conclude that governments should support local-level conflict resolution by managing information flows. With their analysis of a gold mine in Papua New Guinea, Walton and Barnett (2008) confirm that slowness of resolution processes can trigger conflict. Here, unequal distribution of environmental impacts and compensation payments led to non-cooperation and resistance.

Institutions that regulate access to and control of natural resources do not simply appear; they evolve over time producing a certain distribution. Political ecology analyses the historical, cultural, economic, and political structures that shape power relations, which in turn influence the development of institutions. Manger (2005), for example, recognizes adverse institutions in Sudan but concentrates on the power relations leading to these outcomes: new land tenure laws were strongly influenced by colonial history and post-colonial regimes. Government agents used these laws for private interests and enabled so-called land-grabbing, which was further encouraged by current privatization tendencies. Conflicts seemed to be caused by land privatization and water monopolization; population pressure and environmental degradation made the situation more acute. In his analysis of Cameroon, Gausset (2005) argues that relative scarcity – the perceived gap between resources and needs that impairs personal well-being – is most significant. Although population density is low, violence can arise out of agropastoral conflicts due to different perceptions and uses of the same resource, different systems of management, power, and justice, and different cultural and ethical perspectives (Gausset 2005). In northern Thailand, declining forest cover and conservation policies may have had a negative effect on peace but ethnic conflicts are more likely to be the underlying cause of violence (Wittayapak 2008). Analyses of various regions come to similar conclusions: ethnic and economic inequality are the central problems, not declining resource availability (Moyo 2005, Mollett 2006, Jewitt 2008, Benjaminsen, Ba 2009).

To sum up, it is possible for quantitative studies to approximate scarcity with variables such as population



growth, but qualitative analyses show that they do not capture all aspects of scarcity. Case studies that include institutions and power relations in their analysis paint different pictures of resource scarcity. Hence, it remains unclear which factors cause relative scarcity and whether scarcity is a main driver of conflict.

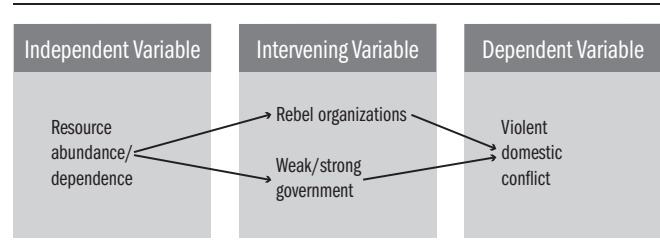
## 2. Resource Abundance and Conflict

While resource *scarcity* remains a contested independent variable, resource *abundance* has found stronger support among conflict scholars. Around the turn of the century, various authors highlighted a possible relationship between resource abundance and conflict, adding to the literature on the so-called resource curse (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Le Billon 2001; de Soysa 2002a, 2002b). Abundance studies differentiate between rebel organizations and the government as actors. According to the “looting rebels model”, resource abundance can represent an opportunity to either finance a rebellion or to exploit resource wealth for personal enrichment (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004). While Collier and Hoeffler consider greed the underlying motive (2004), rebel behaviour can also be motivated by poverty among the population.

In contrast, the “state capacity model” considers the government as the central actor primarily responsible for conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Resource rents are an additional source of government revenue that can weaken state institutions through rent-seeking behaviour and make conflict more likely. Weakened state institutions can facilitate state capture by rebel groups. An alternative model, the “rentier state model” (Beblawi and Luciani 1987; Basedau and Lacher 2006), claims that state authorities become stronger and more repressive, exacerbating grievances among the population (see figure below). Le Billon (2008) calls state-centred mechanisms the “resource curse,” where the government plays a central role in facilitating or containing conflict. While this review separates the actors, it should be kept in mind that the conflict lines and who benefits from resources are not always that clear. In Angola, for example, resources financed conflict: Offshore oil production benefitted the government, whereas diamonds mostly sustained the rebel group (Renner 2002; Cater 2003; Le Billon 2005).

Additional mechanisms have been identified (Humphreys 2005), and resource and conflict characteristics specified (Ross 2003, 2004; Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom 2004; Fearon 2004; Le Billon 2005; Basedau and Lacher 2006; de Soysa and Neumayer 2007; Welsch 2008; Lujala 2009). Because some studies contest the relationship between resource abundance and conflict (Regan and Norton 2005; Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2009; Thies 2010), more research has recently been dedicated to clarifying intervening (context) variables such as socio-economic development and institutional quality (Snyder and Bhavnani 2005; Snyder 2006; Dunning 2005; Franke, Hampel-Milagrosa, and Schure 2007; Sarr and Wick 2010).

**Figure 2: How resource abundance or dependence can cause conflict**



Before engaging in a discussion of mechanisms and specifying resource characteristics, two recent reviews of the literature on resource abundance and conflict should be mentioned. Rosser (2006) surveys the entire literature on the resource curse, distinguishing the effect of resources on economic performance, civil war, and regime type. Our review is limited to discussing the second group. Rosser argues that there are not enough studies focusing on the political and economic contexts that shape outcomes in resource-rich countries. We present a few at the end of this section but generally agree with his finding. Samset’s review (2009) is a good introduction to the abundance literature, defining the most important terms and explaining the connections between abundance and conflict. The idea that research should examine how renewable and depletable resources interact to produce violence is an important conclusion.

### 2.1 Rebels – Opportunity and Feasibility

Collier and Hoeffler (1998) were at the forefront of showing that civil war has economic causes, arguing that the risk

of conflict is determined by the benefits and costs of rebellion. Originally, they claimed that rebellion was triggered by the pursuit of personal enrichment (greed). Violent insurgency occurs when there is opportunity to loot (“opportunity hypothesis”). Rebels weigh the costs of rebellion, expressed in foregone income, against the benefits, reflected in a country’s revenue flow from primary commodity exports. The analysis includes onset and duration of civil war (organized military action with at least 1,000 annual battle deaths) between 1960 and 1992 as dependent variables. In 2004, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) revised their previous assumption – post-conflict benefits to rebels have to cover the costs of rebellion – now claiming that benefits can also in themselves be a cause of conflict. In this case, a civil war erupts because of revenue flows in the form of primary commodity exports. Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2004) confirm the hypothesis of a link between lucrative resource endowments and the risk of civil war. Further, they supposed a higher per capita income to decrease the likelihood of conflict, possibly due to recruits’ higher opportunity costs of war. Another interesting result was an inverted U-shaped relationship between conflict and abundance. This means that very high levels of resource abundance are less likely to lead to conflict than lower levels. In other analyses, this relationship has been used to explain the rentier state model (Basedau and Lay 2009).

Building on these findings – that resource rents are a motivation for rebels to start a civil war – Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004) analyse the factors that affected the duration of civil war between 1960 and 1999, again from an economic perspective. Three different reasons for prolongation were examined: Rebellion is an investment, a business, or a mistake. Their empirical analysis supports the second and third explanations. Theoretically, rebellion could be seen as an investment. If the outcome of a conflict, such as natural resource rents, was profitable, rebels would accept higher costs of a prolonged (violent) conflict. This implies that expected revenues have to cover costs. Winning a civil war could have political payoffs (end repression) or financial ones (gain a share in primary commodity exports). Openness of political institutions and pre-conflict share of primary commodity exports had no effect on the duration of civil war in this analysis. Rebellion as a mistake or as busi-

ness have more explanatory power. In the first case, chances of victory were perceived as overly optimistic; in the second case, rebels gained from conflict because benefits during conflict were higher than costs. This also worked in reverse: A high share of primary commodities in exports and declining world market prices of these export goods reduced the duration of conflict because rebellion became less profitable. The most significant results, however, were reported for per capita income and income inequality. High inequality and low income lengthened civil wars because rebels had low opportunity costs, reducing the prospects for peace.

Recently, Collier and Hoeffler distanced themselves from the “greed” versus “grievance” debate, that is, from motivation as a cause of conflict, and reformulated their model, proposing a “feasibility hypothesis”: Rebellion will occur where it is materially feasible (financially, militarily) (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009). The authors show with an extended dataset that rebellion occurred wherever it was feasible. Previous results are confirmed, but new variables offer more clarity with regard to the causal mechanisms. This explanation does not contradict the “opportunity hypothesis” but rather complements it. Greed can still be a motivation of conflict, but it is only one among many. Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner (2009) explain the difference in their paper: “Our own thinking on proneness to civil war has also evolved. As implied by the title ‘greed and grievance’, our previous paper was still rooted in the traditional focus on the motivation for rebellion. Since then our work has increasingly called into question whether motivation is as important as past emphasis upon it had implied (Collier and Hoeffler 2007). Instead of the circumstances which generate a rebellion being distinctive in terms of motivation, they might be distinctive in the sheer financial and military feasibility of rebellion.”

Several case studies illustrate the importance of particular resources – especially diamonds and minerals – in financing rebellion. Sierra Leone is widely known for its high quality “blood diamonds,” but also for recurring rebellions, banditry, and coups throughout the 1990s. The Revolutionary United Front sought to control diamond production in order to finance arms purchases and for individual enrichment. Soldiers often collaborated with rebels, engaging in looting and illegal mining (Renner 2002;

Cater 2003). However, a resource's characteristics are a decisive determining factor for rebel looting to occur, in particular its lootability. Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore (2005) point out that primary diamonds, which are more labour- and capital-intensive than secondary diamonds and hence more difficult to extract, make conflict less likely. Secondary, or alluvial, diamond production occurs where diamonds are found in loose soil or sediments. This does not require much capital investment as the diamonds are picked by hand or using shovels. Primary diamonds, on the other hand, are found in kimberlite and have to be mined, requiring investment in technology. While Sierra Leone is rich in secondary diamonds, Botswana has predominantly primary diamonds. Diamond production in general is associated with ethnic civil wars, but only after it has started. The discovery of diamond deposits does not affect the risk of civil war. A comprehensive discussion of the conditions for diamond conflicts is also provided by Le Billion (2008). In Côte d'Ivoire, diamonds and gold are concentrated in the rebel zone and therefore benefited above all rebel forces. Although cocoa was more profitable, in part due to its legality, the regional concentration and illegal status of these resources advantaged rebels relative to the government, which cannot engage in illegal trade (Guesnet, Müller, and Schure 2009).

Another prominent example is the DR Congo with its abundant deposits of copper, coltan, cobalt, gold, and diamonds, among others. In the two wars starting in 1996 and 1998, rebels already benefited from resource deals even though they did not control the country. Other African countries got involved and used the opportunity to plunder. As a consequence, allies were rewarded with rights to resources (Renner 2002; Cater 2003). As the case of the DR Congo shows, diamonds may be at the center of media attention, but other minerals can also be the source of intense conflict.

In contrast to Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Fearon (2005) is unable to establish a causal relationship between primary commodity exports, rebel funding, and civil war. While confirming Collier and Hoeffler's finding that income per capita correlates negatively with conflict, Fearon and Laitin (2003) interpret conflicts not as the result of opportunity costs but rather as a measure of state capacity. They con-

clude that resource rents (in this case oil) weaken state institutions, facilitating state capture by rebel groups.

## 2.2 States - Weak and Strong Capacity

The other major causal mechanism that links resources and conflict involves a state's financial, administrative, and political capability. Resources can weaken state capacity – in particular where institutions are already weak – or strengthen it. The literature suggests that weakened state capacity often leads to conflict whereas rulers of strong states are able to secure their position over a long period of time without being seriously contested.

Weak state capacity increases the risk of conflict through three mechanisms: incentivizing rent-seeking behaviour, causing shortages of public goods, and limiting the ability to end violent conflict. Incompetent management of resource rents and unequal treatment of a large part of the population can easily result in violent conflict, while personal enrichment is likely to prolong armed rebellion.

Resources tempt individuals to engage in rent-seeking competition rather than productive economic activities (Auty 2001, 2007, 2009; Torvik 2001; Gylfason 2004). This is the case particularly in conjunction with ill-defined property rights, imperfect or missing markets, and lax legal structures in many developing countries. Rent-seeking can breed corruption, thus distorting the allocation of resources and reducing both economic efficiency and social equity. It can also lead to a concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few, who skew the distribution of income and wealth in their favour.

Furthermore, resource revenues tempt governments to rely on these flows instead of imposing taxes on corporate and personal incomes (Heller 2006: 25). In their quantitative study, Bornhorst, Gupta, and Thornton (2009) look for evidence of an offset between government revenues from hydrocarbon-related activities (oil and gas) and revenues from other domestic sources, using a panel of thirty hydrocarbon-producing countries. They find an offset of about 20 percent: A 1 percent increase in resource revenues reduces non-resource revenues by about 0.2 percent. While the authors do not explain this reduction, McGuirk (2010)

offers a reason. His quantitative study takes a closer look at taxes and accountability, finding that in the presence of high natural resource rents, the political elite lowers the burden of taxation on citizens in order to reduce accountability. Thus, taxation is an important tool for engaging citizens, for increasing scrutiny, and for implementing accountability (Weinthal and Luong 2006). Governments that do not depend on the population's approval (and tax income) tend to provide fewer public goods (health system, education, security, etc.).

Van Klinken (2008) offers a third reason why weak state capacity is related to conflict by analysing timber in Indonesia. This easily lootable resource was one of the main causes of pogroms against a minority in Indonesia in 1996-97 and 1999. Although the central government was never directly involved in the conflicts, it contributed indirectly due to its inability to contain ethnic violence. It was especially weak in timber-rich regions because local leaders financed their offices with illegal timber trading and retained taxes from reforestation, weakening the central government's influence. Local autonomy was both a cause and a consequence of rent-seeking. When Indonesia underwent political transition, local elites seized the opportunity to expand their power. Timber was strategically deployed to buy military and police protection in support of an ethnic group. By the time violence broke out, abundant timber resources had strengthened factions and weakened central government control.

One of the few quantitative studies to measure the impact of resource governance on conflict, with a sample of ninety-two countries between 1996 and 2006, was carried out by Franke, Hampel-Milagrosa, and Schure (2007). Democratic oversight, transparent revenue-sharing, corruption control, a stable investment environment, and the implementation of international control regimes significantly reduce the likelihood of violent conflict in resource-rich countries. Another quantitative analysis of fifty-seven countries over a period of thirty years confirms a previously developed model: the relative effectiveness of rulers and the population in appropriating resources influences whether the ruler spends resource rents on the military or public goods when faced with a possible conflict (Sarr and Wick 2010).

Not all authors confirm the weak state model. In some cases, higher government revenues reduce the risk of conflict, where governments can spend more on the provision of public goods to appease opponents or on military expenditures to deter rebellion. Thies (2010) tests the weak state mechanism with a different proxy for state capacity. Instead of income per capita, he uses government expenditure relative to overall consumption, total revenue (government income), tax ratio (tax revenue as a percentage of GDP), and relative political capacity (an index comparing states with similar levels of development and resources). With these new measures of state capacity, Thies shows that primary commodities and state capacity do not influence the onset of civil war, with oil being an important exception. Second, almost all primary commodities, including oil, strengthen states. Thies shows that rebels and rulers compete for primary commodities, the former to gain financially and the latter to sustain revenue flows. When rulers face opposition, they manipulate property rights to stay in power, effectively preventing conflict.

Thies is not alone in finding that oil abundance actually strengthens certain governments and reduces the risk of rebellion and, hence, violent conflict (Fjelde 2009; Basedau and Lay 2009; also Di John 2007). Although oil production and corruption increase conflict risks when they occur separately, conflicts (with at least 25 annual battle deaths) and civil wars (with at least 1,000 total battle deaths) are, according to Di John, less likely to occur when oil production and corruption coincide. The political elite may use economic incentives strategically to induce cooperation and loyalty. Funding by oil, either to expand military expenditure or to sustain political leaders' patronage networks or both, has been central in Côte d'Ivoire (Guesnet, Müller, and Schure 2009), Nigeria (Renner 2002; Ikelegbe 2006), and Chad (Frank and Guesnet 2009).

### 2.3 Resource Characteristics

Resources seem to be related to conflict in some cases but not in others. How accessible is a resource to potential rebels? Where is production located? How valuable is the primary commodity? Resource characteristics play an important role for the onset, duration and intensity of conflicts.

Resources are diffuse or point, proximate or distant. These characteristics are part of what Le Billon calls “resource accessibility” (2005). Diffuse resources are spread over wide areas and produced by a large number of small operators (alluvial diamonds, gems, minerals, timber, coffee, bananas, rubber), whereas point resources are the exact opposite – concentrated in small areas and in the hands of a few producers (oil, gas, kimberlite diamonds, copper, iron). Rebels have better access to diffuse resources because they are usually not controlled by the government. Accessibility is also influenced by geographical location. Proximate resources are located close to the center of power, distant resources in remote areas that may be politically contested and/or near porous borders. Government control is stronger for proximate resources making illegal trade more difficult. A second broad category is “resource profitability” determined by legality and value-to-weight ratio. Illegal resources are more profitable to rebels because governments cannot engage in illegal trade. Legal resources can be traded by governments, and usually yield higher prices (Le Billon 2005). In Angola, for example, government-controlled oil was more valuable than the diamonds funding the rebels, which is one reason why government forces defeated the rebels.

Another resource characteristic has been suggested. Ross (2003) refers to “lootability” to describe resources that can be extracted and transported relatively easily by small groups of unskilled workers. The lootable resources drugs, especially cocaine and opium, and diamonds are the ones that most often led to civil war between 1990 and 2000. Less significant are “obstructability” (risk of interrupted transportation) and “legality” (tradable on international markets). High value-to-weight ratio resources (drugs, diamonds, gold) can be transported by plane and are, hence, more difficult to obstruct than low value-to-weight resources transported by truck or train (many minerals). Liquid resources transported through pipelines (oil) face the highest risk of being blocked. Most resources are traded legally, with the exception of drugs. These characteristics can advantage either the government or rebel groups in civil war.

In a more recent comparative analysis (2004), Ross qualifies his previous conclusions: Oil increases the risk of conflict

onset, while lootable resources (diamonds and drugs) only influence conflict duration, not onset. A quantitative study by Welsch (2008) confirms the importance of oil in predicting conflict between 1989 and 2002. Contrary to most other studies, oil is classified here as a lootable resource, as pipelines or extraction sites can easily be tapped. Unlike Ross (2004), Welsch finds that other mineral resources (bauxite, gold, diamonds) are also significant concerning the onset of civil war. This may be due to the different proxies for resource abundance (primary commodity exports vs. stock of subsoil assets) or the different thresholds for conflict. De Soysa (2002b) uses similar proxies for abundance and conflict and comes to the same conclusion as Welsch – rising levels of mineral resources increase the risk of conflict. But when energy (oil, gas, coal) and mineral (bauxite, copper, gold, among others) rents are disaggregated and the period is extended (1970 to 1999), energy rents are more significant (de Soysa, Neumayer 2007).

The role of location is not restricted to proximity to central government. Several studies have tested whether resource location inside or outside the conflict zone influences civil war. Rebellion may be more attractive and feasible in regions with abundant resources, regardless of the resource’s lootability. Testing the effect of resource abundance on conflict onset and duration using location as variable, Lujala (2010) finds that civil wars between 1946 and 2003 were likely to occur in regions with onshore oil and secondary diamond production. In addition, secondary diamonds, other gemstones, oil, and gas inside the conflict zone prolonged civil war. A novel finding is that non-lootable resources (oil and gas) affect rebel movements and the duration of civil war, possibly because they are more lootable than previously assumed.

### 3. The Challenge of Definitions: Scarcity, Abundance, and Conflict

A challenge common to all studies is to define and operationalize the variables. Differences in central variables such as scarcity, abundance, and conflict reduce the comparability of the results of the studies we have presented throughout this paper.

*Scarcity:* Resources discussed in the literature on scarcity and conflict are generally renewable, widespread, and



require large labour inputs. Renewable resources regenerate naturally. They can be categorized into those that are subject to depletion (e.g. soil, woodland, and groundwater) and those that are infinite (solar, tidal, wind, geothermal). The scarcity literature focuses on the former. Examples include fish, wood, and land.

One central definition of scarcity can be traced back to Thomas R. Malthus's "Essay on the Principle of Population" (1798). Malthus writes that population and resources are initially in equilibrium, but while populations grow exponentially, food production increases only linearly. The consequence is increasingly intense competition for shrinking food supplies. Resource scarcity is implicitly assumed to be absolute, threatening the means of existence. The depletion of natural resources eventually results in population collapse at the point when the earth's carrying capacity is depleted. Baumgärtner and colleagues (2006) point out the difference between the Malthusian and the Ricardian understanding of scarcity. In the tradition of David Ricardo, scarcity refers to the decreasing quality of land as a natural resource.

The quantitative literature on resource scarcity has developed several variables to measure this kind of scarcity. Whether a renewable resource is scarce or not is often approximated by population growth/density or environmental degradation variables (such as forest coverage, freshwater availability). When the demand for a resource increases or when the supply decreases, scarcity becomes more likely. Demand in a region rises if the population grows or becomes denser (Homer-Dixon 1994; Tir and Diehl 1998; Urdal 2005); supply is depleted as the resource is degraded (Bächler, Böge, and Klötzli 1996; Hauge and Ellingsen 1998; Barnett and Adger 2007; Raleigh and Urdal 2007). Quantitative studies that do not use these independent variables come to different conclusions. Binningsbø, de Soysa, and Gleditsch (2007), for example, measure environmental degradation with the ecological footprint, biocapacity, ecological reserve (or deficit) and Brown (2010) uses the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index. The ecological footprint represents the consumption of land and water for consumption and production purposes in the consumer country, which, if subtracted from biocapacity, is

the ecological reserve or deficit. Biocapacity is the ecological supply. The NDVI measures the sunlight reflected by plants to determine the density of green vegetation. Both authors are unable to confirm previous results about a positive link between scarcity and conflict. A critical discussion of the term scarcity can also be found in De Soysa (2002a).

Absolute scarcity needs to be distinguished from relative scarcity. *Absolute* scarcity is often equated with Malthus's concept of scarcity: there is not enough of the resource to secure everyone's survival. According to Baumgärtner and colleagues (2006), a good is absolutely scarce if it cannot be substituted by other goods on neither the production nor on the consumption side. They refer to *relative* scarcity where a good is scarce in relation to other goods, meaning that obtaining it incurs opportunity costs. In contrast to absolutely scarce goods, relatively scarce ones are substitutable. Resources are also not absolutely scarce if access to them is denied simply because one group controls them. Access can be restricted by institutions (or lack thereof) (Giordano 2005) or historical power relations (Gausset, Whyte, and Birch-Thomson 2005).

*Abundance*: The literature on resource abundance and conflict generally focuses on highly profitable depletable resources such as minerals, metals, oil, and diamonds. Finite, non-renewable resources formed during the course of the earth's history, and although they are replenished in geological cycles, this does not occur within any human timeframe. Examples include oil, gas, diamonds, and metals. Measuring their domestic abundance is a challenge. Accordingly, earlier studies did not clearly differentiate between abundance, intensity, and dependence, using these terms interchangeably. Proxies used to measure the importance of resources for a country were the share of primary commodity exports in the total exports of a country and the share of primary commodity exports in GDP. As Davis explains (2009), this approach infers endowments from a country's revealed comparative advantage. But as Wright and Czelusta point out (2004), this may simply reflect an absence of other internationally competitive sectors in the economy rather than resource abundance. The WTO compiled a list of countries highly dependent on resource exports (2010): fuel makes up more than 90 percent of total

exports in Kuwait, Venezuela, Algeria, Nigeria, and Angola. While mining products generally represent a much smaller share, they still dominate exports in many countries, such as Zambia (80 percent), Chile (60 percent), Niger (58 percent), Jamaica (56 percent), and Peru (43 percent). But this tells us little about the geological availability of the resource in these countries.

Humphreys (2005) points out that primary commodity exports do not produce an exact index of the resource situation because they exclude illegal trade (for example in diamonds) and include re-export of imported resources. He therefore suggests alternative measures: level of production, proven reserves, and share of GDP. Lederman and Maloney (2008) as well as Blanco and Grier (2008) argue against using the ratio of primary commodity exports to GDP, proposing instead to measure natural resource abundance as the value of net exports of resource-intensive commodities per worker. Other authors have proposed using the location of certain resources (Lujala 2010), resource production (Humphreys 2005), or natural resource stocks per capita (de Soysa 2002b). Basedau and Lacher (2006) show that none of these indices, which measure dependence rather than abundance of resources, reflect how well a country is endowed with resources (its resource wealth). They argue that a distinct differentiation offers interesting results: Dependent, rather than resource-abundant, countries face higher risks. This is confirmed by a later quantitative analysis by Basedau and Lay (2009), who engage in a discussion about resource wealth and dependence. Brunnschweiler (2006) also makes the important distinction between resource abundance and resource dependence. In her analysis, abundance describes the amount of natural capital that a country has at its disposal: mineral deposits, oil fields, forests, land, and the like. According to the OECD, “natural capital are natural assets in their role of providing natural resource inputs and environmental services for economic production” (2005). Brunnschweiler defines dependence, on the other hand, as the extent to which a nation depends on these natural resources for its livelihood, for growth, income, and exports. Kropf (2010) also underlines the difference between resource dependence and abundance, noting that variables such as “resource exports to GDP” introduce a bias that makes less developed econ-

omies per se more resource “abundant” than developed economies. She argued for new variables that exclude information on a country’s stage of development.

Not all studies employ these definitions carefully, however. By no means are all countries characterized as resource-rich actually rich in resources, measured in terms of natural capital; they may in fact be dependent on them. The possible negative policy implications of faulty characterizations are evident: Presumed resource wealth can discourage a much needed diversification of the economy.

*Distinguishing scarcity and abundance:* The literature shows that it is difficult to draw a distinct line between resource scarcity and abundance as cause or accelerator of conflicts. First, most natural resources are not characterized by absolute (physical) scarcity. Many resources – apart from a few existential resources such as land and water – can be substituted, many are renewable, and many of those that are non-renewable can be recycled. What matters more than absolute scarcity is relative scarcity, here defined as the allocation of resources (and revenues from resources) and access to them. Likewise, absolute abundance does not exist. Throughout the literature, resources are, in general, considered abundant when they are plentiful in a given region, and potential sources for high profits. On the global level, however, they are often in great demand and scarce.

*Conflict:* The term conflict requires more specification as well. According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), conflicts are “clashes of interest (differences of position) concerning national values (territory, secession, decolonization, autonomy, system/ideology, national power, regional predominance, international power, resources, other). These clashes are of a certain duration and scope, involving at least two parties (organized groups, states, groups of states, organizations of states) determined to pursue their interests and win their cases” (HIIK 2010). They can be subcategorized into: latent conflicts (non-violent of low intensity), manifest conflicts (non-violent of high intensity), crises (violent), severe crises (violent), and wars (violent). The most frequently used data set for quantitative studies is the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, which includes conflicts where at least

one party is the government of a state, and the use of armed force results in at least 25 battle-related deaths per year. Other analyses deviate from this definition, including conflicts between non-state groups or a higher threshold for battle-related deaths. This can be important for conflicts involving scarce resources, since they involve the government less than conflicts over abundant resources do. The Political Instability Task Force expands the definition of conflict by considering not only a threshold but also the intention of the combating parties.

Quantitative studies usually include a variable for violent incidents between two or more groups, one of them being the government, causing a varying number of annual battle deaths. The operationalization of the variable varies widely. Hauge and Ellingsen (1998), for example, define their “incident” variable as domestic armed conflict (between two or more organized parties at least one of which is the government, with at least 25 annual battle deaths) and civil war (at least 1,000 annual battle deaths). As a proxy for the severity of conflict they use battle deaths as a percentage of the total population. Qualitative studies dealing with resource scarcity often also consider conflicts without government involvement (intercommunal conflicts). They also employ a broader understanding of conflict ranging from demonstrations and raids to insurgency and war. This complexity makes analysis and subsequent generalization of findings more difficult.

#### 4. Conclusion

Opinions on the explanatory power of resource scarcity for violent conflict clearly diverge. While scarcity of resources is considered an independent variable by some, others examine it as a dependent or intervening variable. Several of the reviewed studies find that scarcity has adverse effects on peace, although a few consider it to be a motor of innovation. Most of the time, when decreasing supply meets increasing demand, existing frictions in a society are

exacerbated, catalyzing conflict. Migration of a different ethnic group, for example, makes the receiving region more vulnerable to conflict. However, the empirical findings remain rather weak. A clear causal relationship cannot be established convincingly. On the contrary, there are multiple mechanisms connecting demand/supply of resources, scarcity, and conflict. Scarcity (and conflict) do not develop automatically, depending on the (political, social, and cultural) context. More recent studies incorporate short- and long-term context-specific factors, such as integration into international markets, economic development, property regimes, government interventions, composition of the community, historical inequalities, and community-specific values and norms. More research concerning the causal mechanisms is needed.

With regard to resource abundance and conflict, many scholars agree that certain – locally abundant – natural resources can under certain conditions increase the potential for conflict through several coexistent mechanisms. But quantitative studies are only meaningful if the independent and dependent variable are specified. So far, however, researchers have not agreed on a measure of resource abundance. Hence, results are mixed and statements about the relationship between abundance and conflict cannot be made with confidence. Quantitative studies investigating the role of resource characteristics are still limited. Thus, we find significant desiderata that attest an urgent need for more research in this field.

Overall we urge scholars to invest more time in operationalizing their independent and dependent variables, foremost resource scarcity, resource abundance, and conflict, but also their intervening variables such as state capacity, in order to produce convincing results. In the long run, an in-depth investigation of interstate conflict is necessary in order to uncover which resources are most prone to trigger conflict between states.

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# How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

- **How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems  
in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies

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Regional conflict systems are characterised by their complexity of actors, causes, structural conditions and dynamics. Such complexity poses difficulties to those looking to undertake scientific analysis of the regional dynamics of violence. It is still quite unclear how militant violence diffuses in regions and under which conditions a regional conflict system can emerge. This review of existing approaches to regional conflict dynamics in international studies and peace and conflict studies focuses on how the regional conflict dynamics and the causal mechanisms behind the development of regional conflict systems are dealt with, considering process dynamics in space and time as well as in the interactions between possible causal factors. The primary gaps in existing research are identified and possible new research directions sketched out.

Regions and regional conflicts are by no means new concepts in the different research areas of political science.<sup>1</sup> Several approaches in international relations and peace and conflict studies deal with regions and regional conflicts. Especially when it comes to explaining security and violence or interdependence between collective actors, the regional dimension serves as an analytical framework. The regional perspective therefore has a certain tradition in the theories of international relations and peace and conflict studies, even if it is often stuck either on the international or national level. Nevertheless, particular processes and phenomena have so far been inadequately theoretically described. Especially when it comes to the regional dynamics of militant violence, conventional theories neglect actions that take place outside the national or international level.

This is due to an entrenched methodological nationalism and focus on the nation state as the main source of (in-)security and war in the international system. Nevertheless, a change in the characteristics and conditions of warfare can be observed in the decades following the end of the Second World War (Chojnacki 2006; Schlichte 2007; Zangl and Zürn 2003).<sup>2</sup> Wars are no longer only waged between the armies of sovereign nation states, but expand to a multiplicity of transnational actors of violence and security that correlate in complex relations and often compete for political control and the monopoly of violence in a region. The militant violence of collective actors escalates in both horizontal and vertical directions and diffuses to a multiplicity of different actors at different levels – local, national, regional and international level.<sup>3</sup> The regional conflict system that emerges can

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I am grateful for the useful comments from the editors and two anonymous reviewers.

**1** There is no generally accepted definition of regions or regional conflicts. Even in the papers and books discussed here, every author has – according to his or her perspective – his or her own definition with plenty of different characteristics. Two characteristics that are important in most of the discussed studies are geographical proximity of the involved collective actors and a certain amount of in-

teraction – be they cooperative or confrontational. According to the minimal definition of region used in this paper, a regional conflict is a confrontational interaction between two or more collective actors within a particular geographical space.

**2** This general change in the conditions and characteristics of warfare is more or less unchallenged in empirical conflict studies. Nonetheless, the theoretical classification, the methodological approach and the empirical substantiation are still controversial,

especially with regard to the so-called new wars discourse (Kaldor 1999; Münkler 2005). For more see works by Brzoska (2004), Newman (2004) and Chojnacki (2006).

**3** A horizontal escalation involves more actors at the same geographic and political level, a vertical escalation means the diffusion of violence to actors at different levels of action and administration.

be defined as a geographically determined area of insecurity, characterised by interdependent violent conflicts with a plurality of different sub-state, national or transnational actors.

These regional conflict systems are found in different parts of the globe. Striking developments are seen in the global south, where a majority of these regional conflict systems are located (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1998). Very often neighbouring states support or tolerate rebel groups on their territory, as in Chad, Sudan and the Central African Republic (Giroux, Lanz, and Sguaitamatti 2009; Grawert 2008). In other cases like the Great Lakes region, neighbouring governments and rebels help themselves unabashedly to the precious resources of a weak and failed neighbouring state (Montague 2002; Nest 2006). In this region, the rebel groups also utilised the benefits of humanitarian aid to equip for the next fight (Lischer 2003; Mthembu-Salter 2006). State actors might still be existent in these areas, but they are part of a larger conflict structure together with private, local and transnational actors of violence that take over the production of (in-)security in regions where the scope of public authority is limited. These private entrepreneurs of violence both exploit the population and demand money for protecting the people and their areas. West Africa in the 1990s with Sierra Leone and Liberia provides a striking example (HRW 2002; Malejacq 2007). The production of (in-)security and the ensuing economic gains are part of a larger conflict structure. Questions of identity should not be underestimated in this context. The transborder kinship of identity groups can lead to a regional spillover of violence, as happened in the Balkans during the 1990s (Fearon 1998). Moreover, massive refugee flows and the economic and political weakness of a conflict area, as after the genocide in Rwanda and the war in Burundi in the 1990s, can cause tensions in a whole region (Manahl 2000; Prunier 2009).

So regional conflict systems are characterised by their complexity of actors, causes, structural conditions and dynamics. Such complexity, however, poses difficulties to those looking to undertake scientific analysis of the regional dynamics of violence. It is still quite unclear how militant violence diffuses in regions and under which conditions a regional conflict system can emerge.

### 1. Regions and Regional Conflicts in International Relations

Theoretically, the concept of regions is more settled in the theories of international relations than in peace and conflict studies. Even during the height of the Cold War, the dualism of nation state international system was already being questioned by a handful of political scientists, such as Bruce M. Russett (1967), Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel (1970), Barry Buzan (1983), Raimo Väyrynen (1984) and Björn Hettne (1989). These authors point to the possibility of a regional perspective on the dynamics of interactions, and thus try to explain cooperation and confrontation on a regional dimension. Nonetheless, these approaches assume the nation state as the main actor when it comes to the dynamics of peace, security and violence. Consequently, they fail to explain those security dynamics that are not related to state actors but that originate from private transnational security actors beyond the nation state.

Despite these innovative approaches, international research on regional phenomena was still dominated by the classical theories of (neo-)realism and (neo-)liberal institutionalism (Waltz 1979; Vasquez 1993; Mearsheimer 2001; Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane 1984). These conventional theories from international relations deal only marginally with the concept of regions and maintain the nation state as their primary point of reference object. This is due to the methodological nationalism of these approaches, where the nation state is assumed to be the necessary form of society in modernity and thus the natural entity of empirical analysis (for more see Martins 1974, 276; Beck 2000, 21ff.; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Chernilo 2006). The nation, its borders, history, agendas, discourses, etc. are taken for granted without asking how they developed or what alternative forms of organisation and interaction exist. Furthermore, the analytical focus is reduced to the boundaries of nation states (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 307).

In (neo-)realism it is generally conceivable that nation states form alliances at the regional level. But at the same time they say that the main impetus for this behaviour is pursuit of self-interest and protection against insecurity in the anarchic international system (Gilpin 1981; Hurrell 1995, 340; Mearsheimer 1995, 82; Mearsheimer 2001; Morgenthau 1973; Vasquez 1993, 158; Waltz 1979, 118;

Wohlforth 1999). (Neo-)liberal institutionalism emphasises the interdependencies between nation states. The regional level emerges through institutional and economic cooperation between different actors in the nation states. The point of departure for regional cooperation is the desire for increasing prosperity and solutions to common problems. The governments of nation states establish rules, procedures and institutions to regulate and control these trans- and interstate relations (Keohane and Nye 1977, 5; Nye 1971). Such arrangements are called international regimes. These interdependencies are of use for the establishment of regional peace, but also create strong interstate dependencies and increased risk of diffusion of conflict through contagion effects (Keohane and Nye 1977, 9). But even if the concept of region can contribute to explaining the behaviour of nation states in the international system, the region is not the focus of analytical interest in these theoretical approaches. Rather, the nation states and governing elites in the international system remain the main interest of analysis. Regional dynamics of security and violence are therefore inadequately captured.

Not until the end of the Cold War and the breakdown of the Soviet Union did alternative approaches placing greater focus on regions and the regional dynamics of conflict gain in importance. Many of these approaches come from a constructivist background and presume that values and norms are constructed by social actors (Wendt 1992, 1995, 1999; Adler and Barnett 1998b; see also Zangl and Zürn 2003, 127ff.). So there are many different concepts and ideas of the world, even if it is only one world and reality we are living in (Weller 2003, 110).

Barry Buzan's constructivist *Regional Security Complex Theory* (RSCT) which he later enhanced with Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, is of particular importance for research on security and violence dynamics at the regional level (Buzan 1991, 2000; Buzan and Wæver 2003; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). The aim of this theory is to cover actor relations at different levels – national, regional and inter-

national – and allow the possibility of improved explanations of the related security dynamics. These actor relations are affected by amity or enmity. All these different amicable and hostile interdependencies between state actors together constitute a regional security complex, defined as “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another” (Buzan 1991, 190). Regional security complexes are hence sub-systems of the international system, midge anarchies with their own structures and patterns of interactions (Buzan 2000, 4).

Even though this is an interesting and promising approach, it shows some weaknesses. The focus still rests on the global level and security interdependencies between strong security actors such as powerful states, and especially the local or regional security and violence dynamics witnessed in regional conflict systems can only be partially captured. The dynamics of regional violence and the causal mechanisms behind the development of regional conflicts are partly neglected. The focus on global and regional powers leads Buzan to totally omit security interactions in sub-Saharan Africa from his first monograph (1991). In their latest publication, Buzan and Wæver touch on the interactions taking place in this part of the world, but their descriptions are cursory (Buzan and Wæver 2003, 219ff.). Their focus on “powers” – characterised by economic, political or security resources – as main security actors (2003, chapter 2) necessarily loses sight of transnational non-state security actors on the African subcontinent. This also brings with it the problem that alternative security actors beyond the state and the related self-regulating mechanisms of non-governmental violence or security actors are considered only peripherally. Therefore, findings are limited on violent conflicts with regional dynamics not explicitly referring to nation states.

Another constructivist approach to security dynamics at the regional level comes from Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett. They analyse pluralistic security communities,<sup>4</sup>

4 The concept of security communities was first developed by Karl W. Deutsch (1968) and later elaborated by Adler and Barnett.



which they define as a “transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change” (1998a, 30). Adler and Barnett assume that the security community is based on shared values, knowledge and meanings (1998a, 31). Its members share many direct and indirect relations and interactions and are interconnected through these. Recurrent and predictable processes foster a kind of reciprocity, developing a long-term mutual interest between the members. This approach is very useful for analysing amicable and integrative security relations that rest on shared values and ideas, as can be found in the European Union. At the same time, the problem of disintegrative security dynamics remains unanswered. Although Adler and Barnett mention the possibility of hostile relations between different security actors leading to increased violence, they do not elaborate on the causes and dynamics thereof (1998a, 57f.). Furthermore, they too are stuck in a state-oriented perspective and ignore alternative security actors beyond the nation state and the international community.

Other studies on regional security dynamics that appeared after the end of the Cold War share the shortcomings of Buzan and Wæver and Adler and Barnett. Positively, authors like David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (1997), Mohammad Ayoob (1995), Roger E. Kanet (1998), or Rodrigo Tavares (2006) point out the necessity of a regional perspective and develop different approaches that focus on the regional dimension while analysing different security and conflict developments. The essays in *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, for example, examine different regional orders of peace and conflict on the basis of Buzan’s concept of regional security complexes, and trace security dynamics in different parts of the world (Lake and Morgan 1997). They confirm the existence of regional conflicts and include them in their analyses. But their approach lacks a workable theoretical background for the question of development and dynamics of regional conflicts.

Ayoob’s book and Kanet’s anthology also recognise the existence of regional conflicts (Ayoob 1995; Kanet 1998), but both still lack a systematic analytical approach to explaining causes and dynamics of regional conflicts. Possible factors that can cause regional conflicts are listed randomly

without a proper theoretical basis. Regions and regional conflicts are seen as unique phenomena; statements are made on individual cases but general conclusions are absent.

Tavares researches peace and conflict at a regional level through his concept of “regional peace and security clusters” (Tavares 2006), which he defines as “a set of peace and security relations that occur in a broad territory (region), driven by agents, operating at various levels of regional integration, who use various instruments to change the patterns of security, conflict, and positive peace” (Tavares 2006, 170). Tavares adopts a broad approach to analyse peace and conflict at the regional level. This allows him to include regional security dynamics on a wider level than the aforementioned approaches but makes his analysis very complex and unclear. Moreover, his selection of case studies focuses on regions of peace and security, limiting the applicability of his empirical explanations to violent and insecure regions.

Another approach to analysing regional conflict systems sits at the interface between international relations, systems theory and conflict studies, as laid out in Stephan Stetter’s collection *Territorial Conflicts in World Society* (2007c). The starting point of analysis here is not actors and their interactions, but the communications of world society (Stetter 2007a, 3). As today’s communication is (potentially or actually) global in its reach, there can be no communication – and thus no society – outside world society (2007b, 37). Such communication can always be accepted or rejected; these processes produce a kind of connectivity. At the same time world society is not internally integrated, but characterised by manifold forms of differentiation. System theory argues that differentiation happens mainly on a functional level, i.e. between different functional systems such as politics, religion, economics, etc. When a communication is rejected a conflict arises, so conflict is omnipresent in world society too (2007a, 9). One advantage of modern system theory is the possibility to observe debordering processes beyond dominant national borders (2007a, 10), while negating neither the relevance of states in the international system nor the role of non-state structures and actors in world society. Moving on to regional conflict systems, it is argued that especially the interrelationship between func-

tional borders (of different functional systems) and patterns of inclusion and exclusion provides the background for the emergence of particular regions of violence (2007b, 43).<sup>5</sup> This is a very interesting approach as it focuses on communications in different systems of world society (political, social, economic, etc.) instead of on actors and their interests. This branch of research is still in its infancy, and points towards a new research perspective of understanding regional conflict dynamics by studying communication.

In one way or another, these recent developments in international studies are all interesting approaches moving towards a more regional perspective on conflict and security processes. Even if they do not directly use the expression “regional conflict systems”, they all deal – under different theoretical or methodological assumptions – with the features described by this term. However, by taking a top-down perspective and focusing on nation states as the main security actors in international relations these analyses often neglect the conflict and security dynamics in regional conflict systems, where as well as state instances private transnational actors are also interconnected at the regional level. Furthermore, the causal mechanisms behind regional conflict systems still remain unclear. One outstanding and exceptional theoretical approach to the analysis of regional dynamics of violent conflict is the combination of modern systems theory and conflict studies. However, this approach still needs to be tested empirically.

## 2. Regional Conflict Systems in Peace and Conflict Studies

In the peace and conflict studies the problem of methodological nationalism is to some extent avoided. In this discipline, changes in the structures and characteristics of warfare are accepted and a more regional perspective towards militant conflicts is taken. Therefore, the latest studies in this area are open to regional developments and dynamics of violence and security. But even here there are shortcomings regarding the analysis of regional conflict systems and their dynamics.

In quantitative peace and conflict studies, several studies confirm the existence of regional conflict systems and a clustering of wars in particular areas of the world. In their quantitative study, Peter Wallensteen and Margarete Soltenberg confirm the existence of fifteen regional conflict complexes in the period 1989 to 1997 (1998, 625). These are defined as “situations where neighbouring countries experience internal or interstate conflicts, and with significant links between the conflicts. These links may be so substantial that changes in conflict dynamics or the resolution of one conflict will have an effect on a neighbouring conflict” (623). Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward also confirm the existence of regional conflict systems, but only assume the causes and dynamics of regional conflict systems (2000, 4). A systematic analysis of the dynamics and causal mechanisms is missing in these studies.

Later statistical works on regional violence by Halvard Buhaug and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, Clionadh Raleigh and Erika Forsberg identify correlations between the diffusion of militant violence and possible causal factors. In *Contagion or Confusion? Why Conflicts Cluster in Space*, Buhaug and Gleditsch analyse internal wars in sovereign states in a timeframe from 1950 to 2000 (2008). They find that a war is more likely when there is already a war in a neighbouring country. The risk of regional diffusion of internal wars increases in poor countries with large populations, in cases where there is transborder kinship of ethnic groups and where there are separatist conflicts. They find that distance to the neighbouring conflict zone and refugee flows are not significant.

The transnational character of civil wars is emphasised by another study by Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (2007). Using an autologistic model he finds that countries in autocratic regions face a higher risk of civil war spillover (304), while the risk of civil war is much lower in regions with many democracies and much interregional trade.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It should be mentioned at this point that Stetter is not focusing on regional conflict systems with interdependent militant conflicts. He is interested in wider regions like the whole Arab Middle East or

sub-Saharan Africa, where the existing militant conflicts are not all interdependent.

<sup>6</sup> Please note the update where Gleditsch points out a coding mistake that slightly changes the results (2010).

In *Civil War Risk in Democratic and Non-Democratic Neighborhoods* Clionadh Raleigh also addresses trans-border diffusion of civil war in relation to different regime types (2007). He confirms the hypothesis of a regional concentration of wars, war in a neighbouring country increases the risk of civil war by 39 per cent (19). Regime type is also of significance in his findings: Countries with autocratic or anocratic regimes in the neighbourhood are at higher risk of civil war than those with democratic neighbours. This effect is stronger in poorer states (21).

In her dissertation *Neighbors at Risk* Erika Forsberg analyses the diffusion of civil wars to neighbouring states (2009). She finds that especially ethnic polarisation, ethnic demonstration effects and refugee flows lead to a regional diffusion of civil war.

In a standard work on the main findings of quantitative war studies in recent years, renowned researchers Paul Collier, V. L. Elliot, Håvard Hegre, Anke Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis examine the spillover effects of violent conflicts (Collier et al. 2003, chapter 2). Wars in neighbouring countries not only lead to economic and social destabilisation, but also to the diffusion of violence across borders (40). With the aid of case studies from all over the world they trace this finding back to ethnic and historic causes, to the economic interests of rebel groups and neighbouring countries, to transnational civil war economies, to transnational terror networks, and to massive refugee flows. The book provides an overview of possible factors, but does not make any general theoretically grounded statements on the dynamics and causes of regional conflict systems.

The problem with the different statistical approaches is that they cannot say anything about the inherent spatial or temporal dynamics of regional conflict complexes (Chojnacki and Reisch 2008, 240). When a war is coded in a dataset, there is often no information about whether violence occurs continuously and over the whole territory of a nation state (240). So few conclusions can be drawn about causal dynamics and the mechanisms operating between different causal factors. For this reason, it is important to take a process perspective that can trace the individual dynamics of

conflicts (240). Another important point is that for quantitative research, which seeks to analyse linear causality and causal homogeneity via statistical analysis, the complex conflict structures of regional conflict systems are hard to grasp. The coding of a war in the particular data set used in such a statistical study says nothing about processes of violence and security or about the causal correlations between single factors that are important for the development and diffusion of regional conflict systems. Furthermore, some statistical studies use explicitly state-related data to the problem of methodological nationalism is present again here. Using only such data is to ignore important knowledge on regional and sub-regional actors and causal dynamics, especially when a proper state is only marginally existent. Possibly, only the effects of diffusion on state dyads will be considered and complex conflict systems with more than two state actors will not be fully grasped.

In recent years there have been efforts to overcome the problem of state-related data by disaggregated studies of civil wars (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009). Instead of focusing on the nation state as the main unit of analysis in statistical studies, these works analyse civil wars using conflict- and actor-level data (Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009), single-event-level data (Chojnacki and Metternich 2008) or a group level of analysis (Cederman, Buhaug, and Rød 2009; Weidmann 2009). Spatial variation within countries is highlighted, for example in the study of poverty levels at the sub-national level in Liberia by Hegre, Østby, and Raleigh (2009). One next research step could be to apply disaggregated data to the phenomenon of regional conflict systems.

Apart from these quantitative studies on regional clusters of war there are few qualitative approaches in peace and conflict studies that deal with the existence and dynamics of regional conflict systems. One outstanding analysis of a regional conflict system is the study by Barnett R. Rubin, Andrea Armstrong, and Gloria Ntegeye (2001), who research the causes of what they call “regional conflict formations” in the regional conflict system in the Great Lakes region. They define regional conflict formations as “sets of violent conflicts – each originating in a particular state or sub-region – that form mutually reinforcing link-

ages with each other throughout a broader region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts” (2). These formations are historically and structurally linked to the international system. In this approach wars are seen as networks, where interlinked transnational actors constitute the regional conflict formation (3). These wars are characterised by a multiplicity of structural and escalatory factors that are not addressed by current conflict management or prevention strategies (2). Structural factors may be transnational social and economic problems and the associated networks, or related to the global demand for valuable resources or drugs. Weak state structures and the establishment of illegal or parallel economic structures, transnational identity groups and transnational economic networks are also cited (4ff.). Escalating factors are the influence of charismatic personalities, difficult democratisation processes, refugee flows, transnational alliances between state and non-state actors, and specific war economies. The absence of theoretical structure is a problem with this approach: they list a range of factors that can be responsible for the appearance and diffusion of regional violence without any apparent underlying theoretical concept. The transferability to other cases and the distinction between the individual factors are also disputable.

Another approach comes from Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper, and Jonathan Goodhand, who build on Rubin, Armstrong and Ntegeye’s aforementioned concept but focus on transnational political, economic, military and social networks as characteristic of regional conflict (Pugh, Cooper, and Goodhand 2003). Here, economic networks are characterised by the illegal trade in and smuggling of valuable goods like diamonds, coltan and timber, and by illegal tax systems. Military networks may be regional networks of arms trading and mercenary migration as well as regional military alliances. Political networks are transborder alliances between different political groups (30ff.). Social networks are characterised by transborder ethnic kinship or diasporas. In a situation of the absence of government control and the creation of alternative socio-economic sys-

tems of jobs and trade, these different networks create the conditions for the shadow economies that perpetuate wars (35). Although Pugh, Cooper, and Goodhand try to include many factors from different areas to put together a holistic analytical picture, their empirical analyses still focus on the economic aspect of transnational networks (as shown by the title of their book, *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation*). So the integration of social or ethnic aspects that might also account for the emergence and diffusion of regional violence is limited.

Beyond these more holistic approaches there are also studies that focus on particular aspects of regional conflict systems, examining regional support for rebel groups, massive refugee flows, weak or failing states, or transborder ethnic kinship as possible causes of the regional diffusion of violence.

The issue of regional support for rebel groups is analysed thoroughly by Idean Salehyan (Salehyan 2007; Salehyan, 2010; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006), who finds that rebel groups often use external bases to hide and recover from fighting. Very often, neighbouring governments even actively support rebel groups in order to weaken their rivals in the conflict country (Salehyan 2007, 225). There are countless examples for such behaviour: Albania and Kosovo, Pakistan and India, Lebanon and Palestine to name but three.

In peace and conflict studies we also find numerous works on the regional trade in valuable goods like gems and drugs as a cause of regional conflict networks. Mark Duffield examines the establishment of complex regional economic conflict formations that supersede conventional conflicts between sovereign nation states (2000, 2002). Participants in civil wars and private violent actors fund themselves through these transnational economic networks. Georg Elwert describes these networks as “markets of violence” that live from the rational economic behaviour of their participants and perpetuate violent conflicts through the economic motives of violent actors like warlords or violence entrepreneurs (1999).<sup>7</sup> These markets of violence very often

7 The similar theoretical concept of security markets describes the structure and composition of supply and demand in security production in areas

of limited statehood, where the government no longer holds the monopoly of violence (Branović and Chojnacki 2009, 11).

have a low intensity of battle deaths, as the cost-intensity of high numbers of deaths would endanger the continuation of the markets (98). The actors in these markets mostly start as politically motivated liberation movements, before acquiring economic interests initially to secure their long-term survival (96). Civilians in these areas are often forced to participate in the complex networks of trade in valuable commodities, theft and slavery, as there is no alternative source of income after those long periods of civil wars and instability. These developments are connected to disintegration of state structures, loss of the state's monopoly of violence and increasing privatisation of violence.<sup>8</sup>

Many peace and conflict researchers agree that regional failure of statehood and region-wide loss of the state monopoly on the use of force are important factors for the development of a regional conflict system (for example Pugh, Cooper, and Goodhand 2003, 37 and Salehyan 2007, 225; Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000 and Hegre et al. 2001 for a more general, state-centred view). If a state is no longer able to maintain its monopoly of violence, it is also unable to protect its territory against rebel groups based in neighbouring countries or military interventions by neighbours. Recurring invasions steadily undermine the sovereignty of the nation state (Jackson 1990). This way, a violent conflict in one country slowly diffuses into neighbouring territory. Where there are valuable resources, warlords and government armies help themselves unabashedly. Complex transnational networks evolve where the actors pursue only their own economic and political interests (Callaghy, Kassimir, and Latham 2001). The situation in the Great Lakes region and especially in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo gained notoriety in this regard, where various state and non-state actors plundered the rich coltan, zinc, iron and diamond deposits (Montague 2002).

Regional political instability can also be a product of weak economic structures and region-wide poverty. The economists Alberto Ades and Hak B. Chua (1997), William

Easterly and Ross Levine (1998), and James C. Murdoch and Todd Sandler (2002) explain the negative region-wide effect of civil wars in terms of insecurity in the economic environment: investment is lacking, experts and professionals emigrate, trade and whole economic sectors collapse and the infrastructure degrades. Military spending increases but there is no money for education or the health sector. These developments affect not only the conflict country; the instability spills over to the whole region and weakens it. In global terms sub-Saharan Africa is most affected by such economic spillover effects (Easterly and Levine 1998, 121f.).

If there is a large inflow of refugees from neighbouring countries instability increases further (Collier et al. 2003, 33ff.; Fearon 1998, 111f.). The arrival of several hundred thousand refugees is a huge logistical and economic challenge for a country. Furthermore, refugee communities alter the ethnic and social structure and economic rivalries can increase (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006, 335). These can lead to heavy tensions between the local population and the refugee community (Loescher 1993, 24; Weiner 1992a, 321). These can lead to chain reactions that trigger regional conflicts (Fearon 1998, 111). Myron Weiner and Michael Brown describe this situation as “bad neighborhoods” in the sense of geographical clusters of countries affected by violent conflict, ongoing refugee movements and regional instability (Brown 1997, 16; Weiner 1996, 26). Although there is no doubt that massive refugee flows lead to regional instability, it is unclear if and how refugees also encourage the emergence of regional conflict systems.

One of the most pertinent questions in this context is the importance of the militarization of refugees and the abuse of humanitarian aid for the purposes of rebellion. Aristide Zolberg, Astri Suhrke, and Sergio Aguayo were the first to identify the problem of “refugee warriors” (1989). But also Stephen Stedman and Fred Tanner (2003) and Robert Muggah (2006) highlight the problem of militarized refu-

<sup>8</sup> The privatisation of violence and security was encouraged by the trade in cheap small arms and light weapons released after the breakdown of the Soviet

Union and again after the end of the conflicts in the Balkans and sold to conflict regions worldwide.



gees in their collections. Although studies presume that refugees may participate in a war under specific circumstances, and there are plenty of studies on the causes of mass flight (primarily violence by state and non-state actors; Loescher 1993; Schmeidl 1997; Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003; Moore and Shellman 2004), it is still quite unclear what general impact refugees have on the diffusion of violence, or why refugee flows can be dangerous for security (Jacobsen 2000; Weiner 1992b). The few useful studies in this regard are by Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (Salehyan 2007; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006), François Jean (1999), and Sarah Kenyon Lischer (1999, 2000, 2003, 2005).

Salehyan and Gleditsch find a statistical correlation between refugee flows and the start of civil war (2006, 335). Refugees extend the networks of rebel groups and enable transnational diffusion of combatants, weapons and ideologies. Howard Adelman (1998), Jean-Christophe Rufin (1999), Idean Salehyan (2007) and Boaz Atzili (2006) all argue in the same direction.

Sarah Kenyon Lischer analyses the conditions under which refugees can cause a regional diffusion of violence (1999, 2000, 2003, 2005). Militarization of refugees is characterised by increasing arms smuggling, military recruitment and training inside refugee camps and military activities by refugees outside their camps (1999, 3). Lischer believes that the diffusion of international conflict cannot be explained simply by socio-economic factors like the size of the refugee camps, absence of control, presence of many young men or poor living conditions (2005, 34ff.). Instead, these conflicts must be understood in a political context, in relation to the origin of conflict, the refugee policies of the target country and the impact of external state and non-state actors (1999, 20f.; 2005, 10, 18f.). With the last point Lischer addresses a very important factor that can have a huge influence on conflicts in general and regional conflict systems in particular: the impact of humanitarian and development aid (2003; 2005, 6ff.). Very often, humanitarian aid provides food not only to helpless refugees, but also to combatants. It protects the families and relatives of militants, supports the war economy by providing resources to conflict parties (voluntarily to gain access to refugees or in-

voluntarily by the robbery of aid supplies by the rebel groups or by the establishment by rebel groups of a taxation system in the refugee camps), and it lends legitimacy to combatants, where conflicts are described in simplified terms in the international media in order to acquire donations or bargain with refugees (see also Jean 1999, 468f.). Lischer's study is an outstanding analysis of the conditions that can worsen the humanitarian situation of refugee flows in violent conflicts. Nevertheless, it suffers a number of shortcomings regarding the theoretical background behind the empirical examples; the study supplies few conclusions on a theoretical level that permit general statements on the processes and dynamics of regional conflict systems.

The role of regional identity and ethnic factors for diffusion of militant violence should not be underestimated. The collection put together by David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild with an excellent chapter by James D. Fearon deals with the question of how ethnic groups can account for a regional diffusion of violence (Fearon 1998; Lake and Rothchild 1998b). The diffusion of violence through ethnopolitical factors happens in different ways (Lake and Rothchild 1998b, 8; Fearon 1998; see also Posen 1993; Beissinger 2002; Kuran 1998). There can be a *security dilemma*, where an ethnic group feels insecure because of violent conditions in a neighbouring country and is prompted to start a preemptive rebellion. An ethnic group can also start fighting out of solidarity with their ethnic brethren in a neighbouring country (Fearon 1998, 112f.; Weiner 1992a, 321; Moore and Davis 1998; Davis and Moore 1997; Saideman 2001; Woodwell 2004; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006; Atzili 2006). An intervention by a neighbouring government to protect their ethnic brethren is also conceivable (Fearon 1998, 112). *Commitment problems* arise when an ethnic majority fails to credibly promise not to exploit its advantage over an ethnic minority in the future (Fearon 1998, 108f.). Fighting now in the hope of winning secession may then be the preferable alternative for the ethnic minority. Missing or wrong information can lead to a higher risk of violence (*information failure*). The mobilisation of ethnic or identity groups by charismatic leaders is problematic in these constellations (Brown 1997; Lake and Rothchild 1998a, 8). Despite all these findings it is

still quite unclear exactly how ethno-political factors lead to a diffusion of violence in regions. Some studies (of course disputable) state that the discrimination of minorities does not necessarily lead to a diffusion of violence (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Sambanis 2004).

In peace and conflict studies, there are also studies that deal with the regional dynamics of militant violence and the emergence of regional conflict systems. Here, alternative security actors beyond the nation state are admitted and included in the analyses. On the one hand, there are few qualitative approaches that deal with the causal factors and dynamics of regional conflict systems. The problem here lies in the restriction to economic factors or a lack of theoretical concept. On the other hand, there are plenty of statistical studies on different factors that can lead to a regional diffusion of violence. But they often highlight only a small part of the complex phenomenon of regional conflict systems. Furthermore, the process dynamic is missing in many of these statistical studies, with no examination of the spatial and sequential diffusion of violence. None of the studies so far meets the complex theoretical challenges that come with the phenomenon of regional conflict systems.

### 3. Conclusion

As we have seen, regions and regional conflicts are nothing new in international relations and peace and conflict studies. Especially since the end of the Cold War, methodological nationalism has been left behind, with several published works in international studies that include the regional level as an analytical dimension to explain security and conflict dynamics in regions. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver produced outstanding pieces on regional security dynamics (Buzan 1991; Buzan and Wæver 2003). Their theory is very useful for describing security dynamics from a global perspective, with the focus on powerful states characterised by economic, political or security resources. Works by Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998b), David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (1997), Mohammed Ayoob (1995), and Roger E. Kanet (1998) add useful points to the overall discussion in international studies. But these studies are still, more or less, stuck in a top-down perspective. So even if they are aware of the security and violence dynamics at the regional and transregional level, they

often neglect the dynamics that are produced by transnational non-state actors. One exception is the combined theoretical approach of modern systems theory with international relations and conflict studies (Stetter 2007c). Focusing on communication in different functional systems instead of on actors and their interactions makes it possible to grasp the complex dynamics inherent to regional conflict systems. However, this approach still needs to be tested empirically.

In peace and conflict studies there are some contributions that take a more bottom-up approach, i.e. looking at security and violence dynamics at the transnational level. This makes them better able to grasp the conflict dynamics that lead to a diffusion of violence and the emergence of a regional conflict system. Some qualitative studies have a holistic approach and seek factors that lead to regional violence without having a comprehensive theoretical concept (e.g. Rubin, Armstrong, and Ntegeye 2001; Lischer 2003, 2005). There are also quantitative studies that deal with the influence of single factors on the regional diffusion of violence (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1998; Gleditsch and Ward 2000; Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008; Raleigh 2007; Forsberg 2009; Salehyan, 2010; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006; Ades and Chua 1997; Easterly and Levine 1998; Murdoch and Sandler 2002). Here, the process dynamic is missing: It is still unclear how violence diffuses in space and time, as the dynamics are only assumed. These studies represent individual pieces of the puzzle that need to be put together to gain a more general picture of how militant violence diffuses regionally, how different causal mechanisms interact and what patterns of dynamics lead to the emergence of regional conflict systems.

As the general dynamics of violence in regional conflict systems remain unclear, a possible new research direction would be a general approach that detects the causes, structures and dynamics that lead to the emergence and diffusion of regional conflict systems. New studies could try to bridge the research desideratum between the theoretical presumptions about regional conflict systems on the one hand, and the specific conclusions drawn on the basis of single case studies or the study of single factors on the other.

A promising approach for addressing the research desideratum is an actor- and process-oriented one – e.g. from the metatheoretical background of social constructivism – that produces general conclusions on the dynamics of regional violence and the interaction between structural and triggering factors by comparing different case studies. The additional benefit of such a theoretical approach would be the detection of the structural framing conditions and underlying causes – the “why” of a phenomenon and what philosophy calls the area of “understanding” – combined with the disclosure of violence and actor dynamics in space and time – what can be subsumed under the “how” of a phenomenon and what philosophy and social science call “explaining” – in a combined two-step approach.<sup>9</sup> The results gained so far would be given wider applicability by compar-

ing multiple cases and thus producing generalised conclusions. Single factors for the formation and spillover of regional conflict systems such as the diffusion of violence by militarized refugees need to be highlighted and would receive a new significance. This should not be restricted to only one factor at a time, as that would fail to address the complex conflict structures of regional conflict systems. Such a two-step approach could establish a more comprehensive analysis of the causes, structural conditions, their interactions, and dynamics of militant conflicts within regions that allows a greater understanding of regional conflict systems and possible practical policy implications to curtail the regional diffusion of militant violence. The question of how militant violence diffuses and a regional conflict system emerges remains open, and needs to be answered.

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the controversy between *Explanation and Understanding* in social science see Wright (1971). On the combination of these two scientific

traditions in a social constructivist approach see Fearon and Wendt (2002).

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# Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

► **Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro

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Official crime data is generally limited by restrictions of quality and access. Rio de Janeiro in Brazil provides an example of the problems involved in measuring the homicide rate in a developing country, including the lack of proper crime reporting and the use of separate categories to reduce the number of homicides in official crime reports. Using longitudinal data, we can explain differences between the official homicide rate and alternative calculations that consider otherwise neglected categories. The interests of politicians, police, business, and citizens contribute to the difficulties in measuring and controlling homicides in the city.

Like other developing countries, Brazil not only suffers high crime rates, but also great difficulties in measuring them. The primary crime data is inadequate for various reasons. On the one hand, there are problems in registering crime properly; on the other, state officials are in the difficult situation of having to show improvements in public security while also demonstrating increasing state repression against perpetrators (which in Brazil usually means more lethal). Little information is made publicly available, aggregated data is often inaccessible even for scientific purposes, and many homicides are omitted from the official homicide rate through registration in separate categories. Finally, many homicides are never registered at all due to structural deficits in the police system and the ease with which criminal gangs can permanently hide bodies from the authorities. All of this contributes to a rather unclear picture of the situation and crime trends in the city (Ramos 2006).

These problems exist even though homicide is the offense for which most data is accessible in Brazil, and the crime that is most widely discussed in public. Data on other crimes are even less satisfactory, while the media rarely cover incidents of rape, aggravated assault, or robbery unless they occur under spectacular circumstances (Cano and

Iotty 2008). Only kidnappings of middle- and upper-class individuals and foreigners are reported as intensively as homicides, but they are much rarer – about 400 reported cases of kidnapping in Brazil each year, compared to 46,660 recorded homicides in 2006. Public demands for significant reductions in crime focus on homicide, in particular calling for tough police action against the drug gangs.

Regional policies and intervention programs must also be considered in relation to the difficulties controlling and measuring the homicide rate in Brazil, which differs significantly between cities. In recent years there have been efforts to reduce homicide in the big cities throughout Brazil and indeed throughout the whole of Latin America. While Sao Paulo in Brazil and Bogota and Medellin in Colombia have recently been quite successful, Rio de Janeiro has lost ground to its traditional rival, the Brazilian industrial and business powerhouse of Sao Paulo. The official crime data for Rio de Janeiro indicate only a slight reduction in the homicide rate from 45.7 (per 100,000 inhabitants) in 2002 to 40.2 in 2006, whereas it fell from 55.7 to 23.7 in Sao Paulo during the same period. Nevertheless, Rio de Janeiro can be considered an example illustrating the difficulties of measuring and controlling homicide in a developing country.

### 1. Data and Methods

Brazil has no publicly accessible central reporting of primary crime data. Data is collected by the Secretary for Security of each federal state, who is responsible for making it available to the public. The information originates from the police, which for historical reasons are divided into military and civil forces. The military police are responsible for patrols and public order, and also operate task forces in the favelas. The civil police primarily investigate crime. The two forces work independently and individual units collect crime data on their own. This in itself causes several problems, which are discussed further below.

Another problem is inconsistency of reporting. The Secretary for Security decides which data to publish, and how to categorize and format it, which makes it difficult to compare specific offenses between states. For instance, Rio de Janeiro's Secretary for Security decided to stop recording suspected deaths (*morte suspeita*) in 2001. Such cases, where the police believe that a person is dead but lack sufficient evidence, are frequent in Brazil.<sup>1</sup>

To fill some of the gaps in the reports of Rio de Janeiro's Secretary for Security, other reports and studies were analyzed: data from the national Ministry of Justice, the annual UNESCO crime report *Mapa da Violencia* by Julio

Waiselfisz (2008), *Neither War nor Peace* by Luke Dowdney (2005), and reports by the Nucleo de Estudos da Cidadania, Conflito e Violencia Urbana in Rio de Janeiro. These provide, for example, comparative data from other federal states and certain information that is neglected in official crime reports, such as the number of firearms-related deaths. My analysis is restricted to the period from 1991 to 2007 because the reliability of the country's earlier crime data is questionable. Brazil had a military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985 and it took the government some years to establish the current crime reporting system.

### 2. Results

With its very high homicide rate caused particularly by gang warfare and shootouts with the police, Rio de Janeiro can be said to be in a state of *undeclared war* (Caravana Comunidade Segura 2007; Dowdney 2003, 2005). About 90 percent of the registered homicides in the city have been firearms-related since the early 1990s, and no other city in Brazil has a higher rate of firearms-related mortality in the 15–24 age group (Waiselfisz 2008). Although the total number of firearms-related deaths has decreased, most homicides are still caused by guns. Table 1 shows that Rio de Janeiro currently has the highest number of homicides by firearms in the country, after a significant reduction in Sao Paulo in recent years.

**Table 1: Firearms-related deaths 2002–2006**

	City	Population		Number of firearms-related deaths				Rate 2006
		2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
1	Rio de Janeiro	6,024,061	3,126	3,002	2,848	2,412	2,235	37.1
2	Sao Paulo	10,761,191	3,824	4,009	2,947	2,345	2,151	20.0
3	Recife	1,512,810	1,181	1,177	1,167	1,154	1,198	79.2
4	Belo Horizonte	2,375,969	866	1,170	1,377	1,142	1,038	43.7
5	Salvador	2,812,480	947	974	876	884	960	34.1
6	Maceio	864,322	396	411	445	514	776	89.8
7	Curitiba	1,771,818	418	520	562	645	724	40.9
8	Fortaleza	2,389,695	399	430	427	572	622	26.0
9	Brasilia	2,393,131	569	655	599	536	518	21.6
10	Duque de Caxias(*)	830,408	494	512	512	621	460	55.4

\* = This city is located at the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and is closer to the city center than many western and northern suburbs. Source: Waiselfisz (2008)

<sup>1</sup> Another example for the inconsistency of the Brazilian data are the slight differences between po-

lice figures and Ministry of Health data (DATASUS), for instance regarding "death by aggression." The

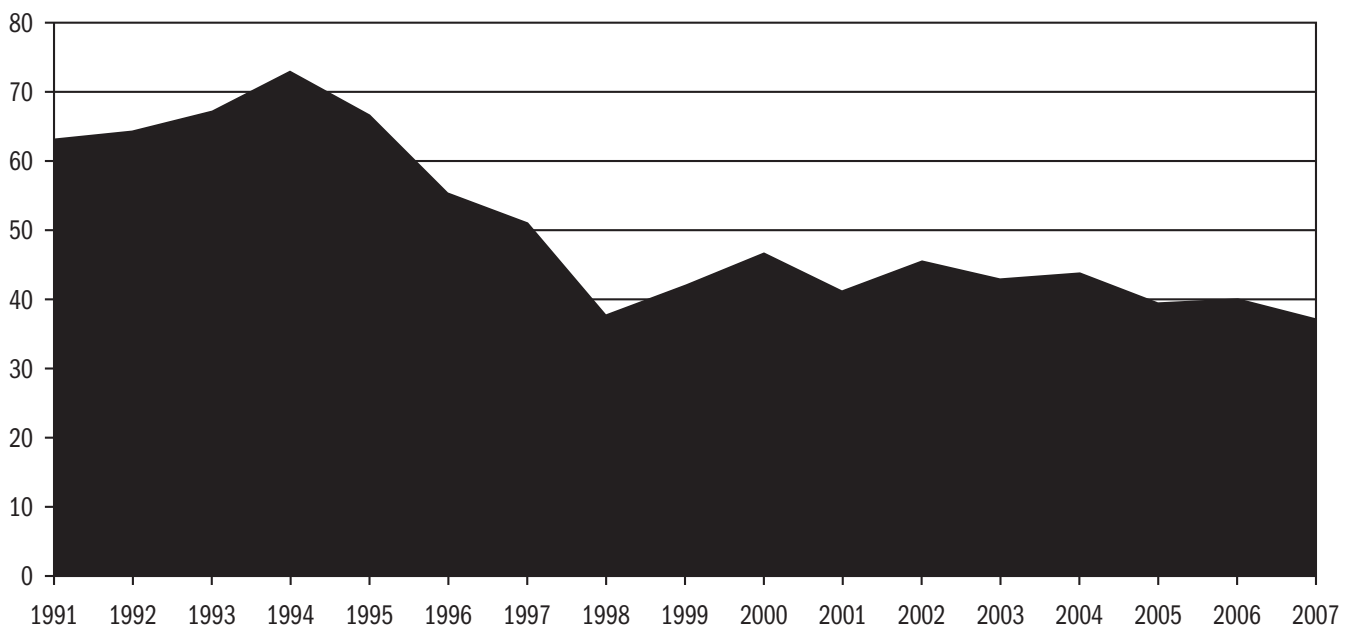
reasons for these discrepancies are not discussed here, but should be investigated in further research.

### 2.1. General Problems of Measuring Homicides in Rio de Janeiro

For various reasons the number of homicides in Rio de Janeiro is significantly higher than official data suggest. Here it is useful first of all to take a look at the longitudinal data published by the Secretary for Security, which show the

homicide rate decreasing by 41 percent from 1991 to 2007, although with a spike from 1991 to 1994 to reach the highest rate in the city's history. The biggest drop occurred from 1994 to 1998, since when the rate has remained relatively stable at about 40 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Figure 1: Official homicide rate in Rio de Janeiro 1991-2007



Source: Annual Crime Reports.

One problem in measuring the homicide rate is that certain cases are registered in separate categories, for example when it is not immediately certain whether a person was actually killed or died in some other way. Where no body is found it may not even be certain that someone has died. The procedure for separating out provisional cases is not incorrect, but it fails to account for the results of subsequent investigations. The problem is that the data are not updated in the crime statistics after the case has been clarified. Moreover, no data is published on how many provisional cases are solved and what the results of the investigations are. Although these separate categories are publicly accessible in the crime reports, they are neglected by the media and the public. This causes the homicide rate in Rio de Janeiro to be heavily underestimated.

*Provisional cases* include discovered corpses, bones, missing persons, and suspected deaths. Cases where a *corpse* or *bones* are found are counted in two separate categories, although autopsies and subsequent investigations usually prove that they belong to homicide victims (Cano 1997a). In other words, the data stays permanently in two different categories but they appear in the official crime reports so officials cannot be criticized for hiding them. They just label them in a way that reduces the official homicide rate. Every year up to 1,000 cases are omitted from homicide calculations due to this procedure.

The third provisional category is *missing persons*. Unlike the other separate categories, this one is updated regularly to remove those who turn up alive before publication in



the annual crime reports. However, those who are found to have been killed are not added to the homicide category. The main reasons why people disappear in big Brazilian cities are a) kidnappings for human trafficking, forced prostitution, or organ harvesting; b) gang killings where the body is not found; and c) police killings where the body is disposed of by the police themselves (Machado da Silva and Pereira Leite 2007). Runaways who become street children are often omitted because they are not reported missing in the first place.<sup>2</sup> Altogether, there is little reliable data on how many of the people who disappear every year (up to 2,000) are actually killed, and no information on this matter is supplied in official reports.

Another largely neglected category where many cases might be homicides is the *morte suspeita*. Unlike the category of missing persons, a suspected death is recorded only where a person is missing and the police have reason to assume that they are actually dead, for instance if someone involved in illegal business dealings suddenly disappears completely without taking any personal belongings (Dowdney 2003). Here it is almost certain at the moment of registration that the person has been killed, but there is no body. Nonetheless, these cases are registered separately and do appear in the homicide statistics even when they have been solved. Nor is information available on how many cases are solved. None of the state secretaries for security in Brazil provide any data on this subject. This adds another thousand killings per year to the total omitted from the official homicide statistics in Rio de Janeiro.

One explanation for the lack of transparency on this category is the difficulty of investigating in dangerous favelas (Dowdney 2003; Fiocruz 2005). Ordinary police units avoid going there because of the risk of getting attacked, kidnapped, or killed. Usually only special task forces enter these areas to conduct combat actions, so corpses and bones are only found incidentally. This makes it rather easy for the drug gangs to get rid of members of rival gangs and

people who do not pay their debts. It is possible that the outcome of cases of suspected death is obscured in order to conceal the enormous deficits of police investigations.

All cases where individuals are shot by the police are also registered separately, as “resisting arrest” (*auto de resistencia*) rather than homicide. Although this interpretation suggests that the person was shot by a police officer acting in self-defense, an unknown number of cases actually appear to be homicides, especially when paramilitary task forces invade favelas (Lemgruber 2004; Ramos 2006; Soares, Batista, and Pimentel 2007). Shootouts with gangs regularly cause casualties, in particular among members of the drug factions. Some researchers go so far as to claim that many interventions in the favelas are explicitly designed to kill gang members without any intention of arresting them (Ramos 2006). The idea that these killings are intentional would be supported by the military demeanor of the special units: they enter an area with combat groups (e.g. BOPE, CORE), fight their way through to the target, shoot the person, and carry the dead body out in a plastic bag visible for all to see (Bottari 2008; Soares, Batista, and Pimentel 2007). In a study using data from 1993 to 1995 when the number of “resisting arrest” cases was still fairly low, Ignacio Cano shows that out of 1,340 cases only 247 targets were arrested uninjured, 360 were arrested injured, while 733 were killed during combat operations (Cano 1997b). An analysis of autopsy data for these cases shows that 65 percent of the victims were shot in the back, suggesting that they were running away or were executed.

This category appears also to serve as a means of guaranteeing impunity to the police, and to be an ideological issue relating to policy governing police operations in Rio de Janeiro. The relatively high level of acceptance of deliberate killings by the police among the middle and upper classes is discussed below, but we can already note that the city would be unlikely to have experienced such a significant

2 Many street children leave home because of parental neglect or domestic violence, or are thrown out by their parents due to lack of money and space. In general, reporting a child to be missing causes

trouble with the authorities and is therefore avoided (Rizzini and Lusk 1995). Reporting a relative missing can, however, also be beneficial in cases where their presence could endanger the whole family, for

instance, if he or she is on the run from a drug gang (De Oliveira 2010).

increase in these incidents without public acceptance. Moreover, structural deficits in the training and equipment of ordinary police units have to be considered. In contrast to the task forces they are rarely provided with adequate psychological training, even where their lives are in danger on the streets every day (Cano 1997b; Fiocruz 2005). These structural shortcomings primarily explain accidental killings.

Data on “resisting arrest” cases has been available only since 1993, when 138 cases were recorded in Rio de Janeiro. Since then they have increased steadily to reach 902 in 2007. National comparison shows that this development is specific to Rio. Sao Paulo has double the number of inhabitants and many more favelados but annually only about three hundred deaths “resisting arrest”. According to Silvia Ramos (2006), this difference is due to the efforts of the government of Sao Paulo, which actively pursued policies to reduce lethal police violence. She criticizes the “license to kill” given to police operating in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Longitudinal crime mapping studies (Cano 1997b; Waiselfisz 2008) and the official statistics of the Secretary for Security indicate that most killings classified as “resisting arrest” occur in disadvantaged neighborhoods or involve muggers and robbers shot dead by the police when caught in flagrante delicto in privileged neighborhoods. Lemgruber (2004) points out that the only difference between

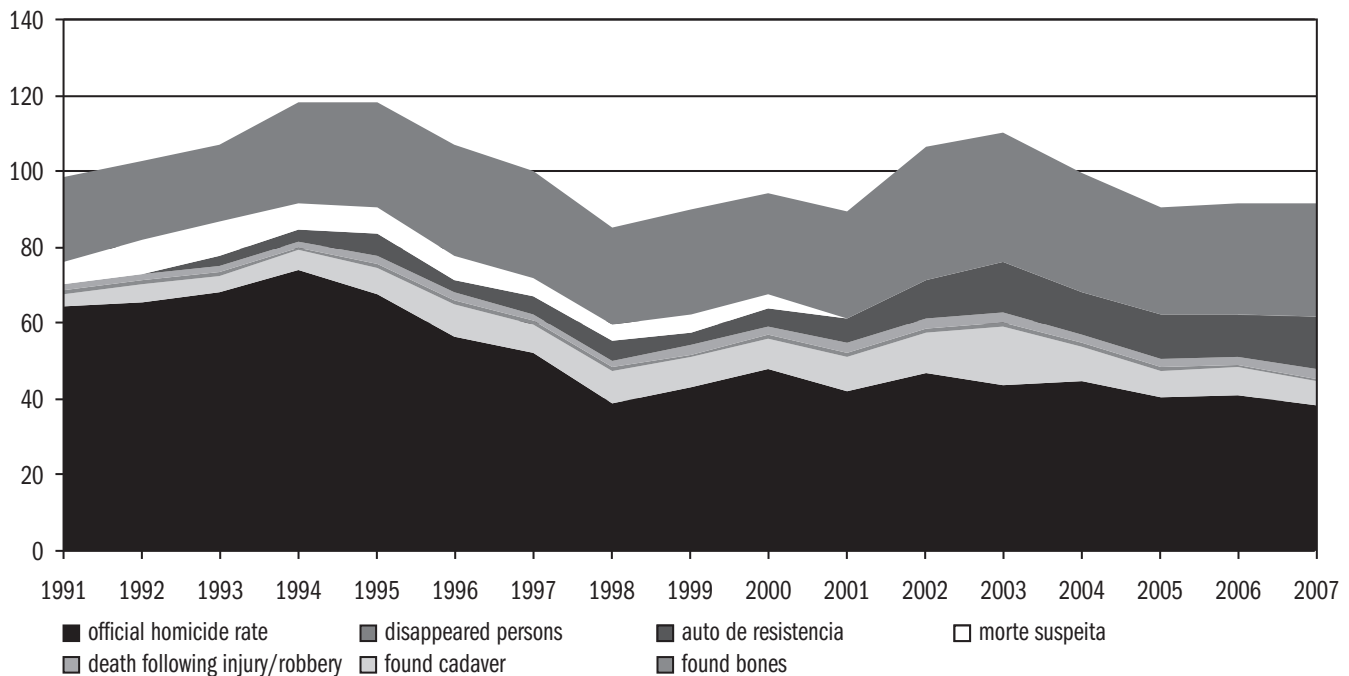
many police killings and gang shootouts and executions is that the former are institutionally and publicly accepted.

The number of policemen killed is relatively small in comparison to the number of “resisting arrest” cases. Between twenty and forty police officers were killed on duty each year since 2000. This number is much lower than the number of people shot by the police, and has not increased in recent years; in fact, it has decreased since 2004. In 2007 the ratio of killed police to citizens killed by the police was 1:28. So while the number of “resisting arrest” cases has grown steadily, the number of police killed has not increased. This suggests firstly that the combat police units operate without many casualties on their side. Secondly, the increasing number of “resisting arrest” cases cannot be interpreted or “justified” as retaliation by the police, even though official statements on the prevalence of “resisting arrest” cases usually refer to danger and losses on the police side.

Finally, deaths resulting from assault or robbery are reported in two separate categories. About one hundred cases that obviously should be considered homicides are excluded from the official homicide rate every year this way.

Given the omission of the aforementioned categories from the official homicide statistics, it is worth calculating alternative homicide rates. These are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Alternative homicide rates for Rio de Janeiro 1991-2007



Source: Secretary for Security of Rio de Janeiro, Annual Crime Reports.

When we consider all cases, the alternative homicide rate was 98.7 in 1991, peaked at 118.3 in 1994, and decreased to 91.6 in 2007. The reduction in the homicide rate over the past seventeen years was not 41 percent, as the official homicide rate suggests, but only 7 percent. This alternative homicide rate is likely to be an overestimate because it includes the category of missing persons, where it is especially unclear how many victims are actually dead. If we recalculate the alternative homicide rate excluding this category, the rate is still 76.2 in 1991, reached a peak of 91.6 in 1994, and decreasing to 62.0 in 2007, producing an overall reduction of only 20 percent. Note that the numbers would be higher if the category of suspected death was still included in the crime reports.

Although the soaring number of “resisting arrest” cases is occasionally mentioned by the media, the public is largely unaware of the additional categories and therefore has the incorrect impression that the homicide rate has remained rather stable since 1998, nor noticed the peak in 2003. The

alternative homicide rate was 76.0 in 2003 (excluding missing persons; including this category it was 110.1). Either way, this was the highest rate since 1995.

Rio de Janeiro also has an undefined number of homicides that are not registered at all because they are not reported to the police, for instance, when drug gangs execute rivals (Dowdney 2003). Even relatives and friends might be afraid to do so, especially if they know the perpetrators, while fellow gang members are more interested in revenge than in going to the police. If the body is well hidden, it may never be found and friends and relatives get no chance to bury it. Sometimes no-one even notices the absence of a victim, or it is noticed but no-one feels responsible.

Other homicides are missed by official reports due to structural deficits in the police system. Both military and civil police are divided into different units with specific responsibilities and districts (Fiocruz 2005). Lack of cooperation and communication is a major problem for Rio de

Janeiro's police. In many respects individual units act as rivals. Each unit is particularly concerned about crime rates in its own district because these have to be justified to the Secretary for Security. This causes paradoxical behavior that reduces the quality of the crime data (Lemgruber 2004). One of the most extreme examples is where officers transfer corpses they find in their district or victims they have shot themselves to other neighborhoods in order to reduce the number of homicides and "resisting arrest" cases in their own area. Officers have repeatedly admitted this practice in anonymous interviews with researchers and journalists and in autobiographies (e.g., Ludemir 2007; Soares, Batista, and Pimentel 2007). This enormously reduces the quality of crime data because homicides are attributed to areas of the city in which the offense did not happen. It also reduces the chances of successful police investigations and increases the likelihood of homicides being registered in one of the separate categories.

Tensions between police units are also responsible for some cases not being registered at all. As Ignacio Cano (1997b) documented in the 1990s, where two different units get involved in a case it is not unusual for neither of them to write an incident report, because each considers this the responsibility of the other. Simple miscommunication is one reason for this problem, but the everyday reality of relatively low salaries, inadequate training and equipment, and lack of support from higher-ranking officers also contribute to a general lack of motivation (Fiocruz 2005; Lemgruber 2004; Ramos 2006).

Finally, another development has to be considered in this context. Since the early 1990s, the number of attempted homicides has increased in Rio de Janeiro – from 652 cases in 1992 to 1,693 cases in 2007. Like in other countries (Nieuwbeerta and Leistra 2007), this trend has much to do with major improvements in health care infrastructure. Many deaths are prevented thanks to better ambulance services, better medical equipment, and growing access to hospitals. This is a positive trend in the sense that many

victims are saved, but it also suggests that a large part of the decline in the official homicide rate may have been caused by improvements in health care for victims rather than better crime prevention.

## 2.2. Public Demands for Repression and Economic Interests in Decreasing Crime Rates

Permanent exposure to violence in Rio de Janeiro has manifold effects on everyday life and the attitudes and behavior patterns of the citizens. Although most inhabitants reject violence and live in fear, there is a *normalization of violence* (Grossi Porto 2004; Ramos 2006). Nancy Cardia writes: "Peace does not prevail and people do not have the opportunity to recover from the conflict" (2002, 163). Although middle- and upper-class people do not live in the crime hot-spots where most homicides and other offenses occur, they are often more afraid of crime than the favelados.<sup>3</sup> Typical reactions are isolating themselves from collective life, mistrusting other people, moving to gated communities, and rejecting social support for the poor. This state of permanent fear fuels support for punitive attitudes among many privileged people, who come to accept and at times even welcome violence against the young male favelados with whom they associate the rise in crime (Cardia 2002; Dowdney 2003; Machado da Silva and Pereira Leite 2007; Paes Machado and Vilar Noronha 2002).

Most privileged citizens demand repression and discriminates the poor rather than acknowledging the societal root causes of crime and their own responsibility (for instance, by participating in the exploitation of the marginalized population and as customers for drugs and other illegal goods) (Zaluar 2004). Prevention measures that might address the societal causes of crime are largely rejected as a waste of money. Such developments have been comprehensively studied in many countries (Baumer, Messner, and Rosenfeld 2003; Brown 2007; Garland 2000; King 2008; Shaftoe 2000; Zdun 2008). However, the level of *punitiveness* seems to be significantly higher in Brazil with its high homicide rate and great social inequality than in

<sup>3</sup> No group is more severely affected by firearm-related mortality than 15- to 24-year-old male favelados (Caravana Comunidade Segua 2007).

developed countries (Cardia 2002; Cano and Iotty 2008; Soares, Batista, and Pimentel 2007; Zaluar and Ribeiro 1995). Research also suggests a relationship between proximity and punitiveness. The closer frightened privileged citizens live to their discriminated counterparts, the more they demand repression and invest in private security (e.g., security guards, electric fences, gated communities) (Dowdney 2005; Zaluar 2004). This might even explain why punitiveness is stronger in Rio de Janeiro (where more than seven hundred favelas are spread throughout the city and not restricted to remote areas) than in Sao Paulo (where the favelas are mainly located in the suburbs and the wealthy inner-city neighborhoods are relatively secure). The privileged of Rio de Janeiro hence seem to live in a constant state of tension and fear because they have less possibility to escape violence and crime (Cardia 2002; Zdun 2008).

Silvia Ramos (2006) shows that *lack of democratization* contributes to this situation, and also hinders the institutional development of the police (see also Grossi Porto 2004). According to Ramos (2006), mainstream society does not question the way the police still operate under directives dating from the military dictatorship. Politicians and senior police officers therefore see no need for a transition from protecting the state to protecting the citizen (see also Goncalves Guimaraes, Torres, and de Faria 2005). At the national level there is no single document that could be called a national public safety policy. NGOs try to improve local conditions in individual favelas but their efforts have no significant impact on the punitive attitudes of mainstream society and the behavior patterns of the police.

Overall, the middle and upper classes tend to demand security by any means (Goncalves Guimaraes, Torres, and de Faria 2005; Machado da Silva and Pereira Leite 2007). Even abuses up to and including torture are largely tolerated if they are intended to force a police suspect to provide information. Citizens also have an ambivalent attitude toward “resisting arrest” cases. While there is disapproval of bystanders getting wounded or killed by the police, a “one less to worry about” attitude seems to prevail when it is announced that the police have killed a gang member. It even seems to become common to prefer killings over arrests in order to avoid the possibility that a perpetrator may be re-

leased and commit further crimes or break out of prison (Goncalves Guimaraes, Torres, and de Faria 2005; Paes Machado and Vilar Noronha 2002). People even react increasingly indifferently to news that unarmed favelados have been shot (Machado da Silva and Pereira Leite 2007). Research suggests that this mainly reflects a habit of not differentiating between delinquent and non-delinquent favelados (Cano 1997b; Dowdney 2003). Alba Zaluar (2004) argues that this is due to growing individualism among citizens and the prioritization of personal needs in the post-dictatorship era. Middle-class citizens especially seem to be preoccupied with meeting a backlog of needs and react with disinterest, anger, and fear to those who disturb this routine. This may even explain why “resisting arrest” cases often go uncriticized.

Like in many other countries, the opinion of the middle and upper class counts most in Brazilian society. The favelados that are mainly affected by police killings have no lobby and their rejection of police violence is ignored (Ramos 2006). The police can therefore openly demonstrate power (Goncalves Guimaraes, Torres, and de Faria 2005). This is only occasionally challenged by the media, leading to symbolic sanctions against individual police, while the media in general rarely report critically on police methods (Machado da Silva and Pereira Leite 2007). So it fits with the general situation in the city that the biggest scandals are when the police accidentally shoot a privileged citizen. These cases usually have more severe consequences for the police than the unintended killing of a favelado. Consequently, firearms seem to be used more carefully by police patrolling in the city center and in privileged neighborhoods (Paes Machado and Vilar Noronha 2002).

Despite the rivalry between different police units, internal investigations are the exception. This is largely because of the code of silence that serves to protect the state and the image of the institution (another relict of the military dictatorship). Before they have even finished their training police recruits internalize that colleagues must be protected by all means. The lack of support from superiors fosters a sense of community among ordinary officers that includes avoidance of investigations and refusal to report misbehavior by colleagues (Fiocruz 2005; Soares, Batista, and Pimentel 2007).



This mutual support is also based on an interpretation of police work in black-and-white terms. The favelados are seen collectively as a permanent threat, due to routine life-threatening experiences with drug gangs and a perceived relationship between non-delinquent favelados and the gangs. Unlawful police practices seem to be more common when it is ignored that the same law counts in the favelas, even though the gangs establish their own laws (Dowdney 2003). Thus norm violations by colleagues are justified as an acceptable reaction and the best way to control violence. This leads to a situation where officers distinguish between official police work (that conforms to the public image and serves to make privileged people feel more secure) and the unofficial “real” police work in the favelas that the majority cannot understand because “they do not see what the police see” (see also Soares, Batista, and Pimentel 2007).<sup>4</sup>

The public’s demand for security and acceptance of killings of favelados appears to be crucial for this development and its persistence. People want decreasing crime rates but demand repressive actions that maintain the status quo. Preventive measures that might address the root causes of crime are largely rejected.

The issue of public security affects the economy of Rio de Janeiro too. A recent study by the Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada (IPEA) estimates the annual cost of violence in Brazil (support for victims and spending on public and private security) to be R\$ 92 billion, of which R\$ 5 billion are spent in Rio de Janeiro (Carvalho 2007). The study also estimates that losses in the commercial and industrial sector caused by violence and insecurity cost the city an additional R\$ 800 million. Losses in the property sector (residential, commercial, and industrial rentals) cost a further R\$ 9 billion. Losses in tourism are estimated at R\$ 2 billion. Violence-related insurance contracts for citizens, businesses, and the state cost R\$ 1.5 billion. Human losses (death and injury) amount to R\$ 700 million. Finally, additional expenses for security measures are estimated to cost R\$ 2 billion. These add up to a total of R\$ 21 billion (about 21 billion) in direct and indirect costs in Rio de Janeiro every year.

Various political initiatives seek to reduce crime or at least improve the city’s image among residents, international investors, and tourists. In terms of public approval and economic goals it is important to be competitive in comparison to other cities in the country. Rio de Janeiro has to respond to the reduction in the homicide rate that Sao Paulo has achieved while its own stagnated at a high level since 1998. The separate categories may be useful for concealing the real number of homicides and reducing the reported rate, but even this can only create the impression of a slightly decreasing homicide rate. The challenge will be to conduct changes at the institutional and social level in order to better measure and control crime, in particular homicide.

### 3. Discussion

Statistical and structural shortcomings contribute to a situation where the quality of homicide data in Rio de Janeiro is relatively poor and there are real difficulties in controlling lethal violence. Some problems are of a methodological nature; others relate to structural deficits in the police system. Even killings of gang members during police raids are ordered from above and tolerated, due to tense class relations, by a mainstream majority in society that fears being robbed, wounded, or killed in the streets. As long as they mainly affect favelados, arbitrary and brutal behavior patterns are not questioned. Politicians and police leaders even seem to feel that economic interests encourage them to maintain authoritarian policies and policing methods. Repression is still the main strategy for addressing violence and crime in Rio de Janeiro.

The complex dynamics of organized crime, punitive public attitudes, and the political and policing difficulties of controlling violence are exacerbated by the huge number of unreported homicides (and other crimes). On the one hand, up to four thousand killings per year are registered in separate categories (i.e. other than homicide). The problem is that even though they are defined as provisional cases, the homicide data are not updated to reflect the results of police investigations. Moreover, several hundred cases of “resisting arrest” every year are not considered homicides, even if they

<sup>4</sup> Police research in developed countries shows similar patterns that protect colleagues from institu-

tional sanctions, which are interpreted as attacks on their everyday work (Schweer and Zdun 2005).

partly appear to be intended killings of gang members by the police. There is also an unknown number of homicides that are not registered at all by the police, largely as a result of the low level of institutional organization in the favelas. The crime hot-spots in Rio de Janeiro are mainly controlled by the drug factions, so bodies can easily be hidden. False recording and non-registration of homicides due to structural and motivational deficits and rivalry between police units further reduces the quality of the crime data.

Despite the local peculiarities of Rio de Janeiro and its high homicide rate, several general patterns and problems of crime – and its registration and reporting – appear to be shared by many big cities in developing countries and reduce the respective quality of life (UNODC 2007). Even if the complexity of the overall situation makes it difficult to elucidate the specific problems and shortcomings, other South American cities such as Sao Paulo have been quite successful in reducing their homicide rates in recent years. In other words, the situation and measurement of homicides can be improved. What this seems to require is an integrated sustainable approach involving all the different parties. Comparative studies are required in order to obtain a broader picture of the similarities and differences in approaches and outcomes.

Rio de Janeiro appears to need a police reform to improve working conditions, salaries, training, and equipment, and

correct inappropriate methods. This should improve motivation, reduce misbehavior (including corruption), and cut the number of “resisting arrest” cases. However, these changes would also require broad action to improve the social climate: integrated approaches addressing the punitive attitudes of mainstream society and tackling the root causes of crime among the favelados. This would include strengthening the social engagement of the middle and upper class and investing in the education, prospects, and living conditions of the marginalized population. Such developments can be moderated and supported by state institutions, but what they require most is motivation and mutual trust among citizens. Indeed, lack of social control and awareness of the problems and needs of fellow citizens seems to exacerbate the difficulties in controlling homicides and other crimes in Rio de Janeiro.

Finally, the measurement and control of homicide belong together. In this pursuit non-repressive crime reduction is one of the most ambitious but also promising goals in efforts to fight crime in Rio de Janeiro and comparable cities. But control and measurement also require structural developments and improvements in relations between all involved parties. With respect to the measurement of homicides, more transparency and a more appropriate use of the separate categories in the crime reports are recommended, even if this would temporarily lead to higher total numbers of recorded homicide.

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# Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

► **Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children

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Two studies of children aged between five and ten years old investigate the impact of affirmative action programmes on the ethnic identity of black and indigenous children in Brazil. The participants in the first study were children supported by affirmative action programmes: black *Quilombola* (n= 33) and indigenous (n= 32). Study two was carried out on black children (n= 77) not supported by affirmative action programmes. In the first study the children used nine different categories of skin colour to define themselves. The majority of the indigenous children defined themselves as “morena”, while black *Quilombolas* defined themselves as “preto” (dark). In the second study the children used six different colours, and dark colours were rarely used. Although the children in both studies liked belonging to their group, most, particularly the *Quilombola* children, would like to be whiter.

In many countries and many periods, ethnic identity can be shown to have a strong influence on personal physical safety, political status, and economic prospects (Caselli and Coleman 2006). The roots of many conflicts can be explained by ethnic tensions, since ethnic identity is above all a collective identity (Westin 2010), as was the case for example in the Balkans, Rwanda, Burundi, Indonesia, and the Middle East.

Ethnic identity has been studied in diverse disciplines. In social psychology in particular, understanding how ethnic and racial minorities build up their identities is a central concern, especially in Brazilian society, which is so diverse.

As Tajfel shows (1982), belonging to a minority can have an impact on social identity, since the group is a provider of positive social identity for its members via a process of social comparison. Identity is not built in a social vacuum.

It is marked by the group’s access to power structures, as a vector of the political and economic conditions to which the group is subjected.

To investigate the impact of affirmative action policies on the ethnic identity of black and indigenous children in Sergipe, north-east Brazil, we studied three groups. Two were composed of black children (*Quilombolas* and residents of the city of Aracaju) and one of indigenous children belonging to the *Xokó* tribe.<sup>1</sup>

Blacks and indigenous people are at a disadvantage in Brazilian society. Ample statistical evidence shows that discrimination against them exists in relation to employment, income, and education (IBGE 2009; INSPPIR 1999). Although blacks (*pretos* and *pardos*) represent 45.3 percent of the total Brazilian population of 170 million according to the 2000 census, their marginal position in Brazilian society continues and is unlikely to improve.<sup>2</sup>

This study received financial support from the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Federal University of Sergipe.

<sup>1</sup> A quilombo was a gathering of runaway slaves who lived together in hiding, which reaffirmed their African culture (Carneiro 1964). The black people who lived in such groupings came to be called *quilombolas*.

<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics classifies skin colours in five categories: white (*brancos*), brown (*pardos*), black (*pretos*), yellow (*amarelos*), and indigenous.



In 2003 the monthly income of blacks in Brazil was approximately \$390, as compared to the \$ 816 earned by whites (2.09 times greater). Even though the average income of Brazilians had increased by 2009, there was practically no change in social disparities. White citizens earned an average of \$941 dollars per month while black citizens earned only \$479 dollars (the income of whites was 1.94 times greater) (IBGE 2009).

The situation for those 572,000 Brazilians who declare themselves to be indigenous (0.2 percent of the population) is even worse. Over half of this group (51 percent) have no fixed income and 32.5 percent have a monthly income of less than \$ 576 (IBGE 2000).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, an advanced and continuous process of demonization (Schwarcz 1996) and extermination (Alvim 1998) is under way against the indigenous people of Brazil.

Since the differential distribution of power lies at the heart of identity dynamics in society (Westin 2010), our main assumption is that identity is associated with real (Sherif 1967) and symbolic (Tajfel 1974) group conflict. Specifically we are interested in the psychological or affective elements involved in these intergroup conflicts. We therefore sought to understand the implications of belonging to a minority protected by affirmative action policy for the ethnic identification of Brazilian children. We expected involvement in such programmes to have a positive impact on ethnic identity.

### 1. Social Identity of Minorities

Identity is “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership” (Tajfel 1981, 255). Identity is formed in (and by) social relations among individuals and groups. Identity is thus very important in understanding and explaining interactions and relations among groups (Murrell 1998).

The determining criterion of belonging is that individuals define themselves and are defined by others as being part of a certain group (Tajfel and Turner 1986). The individual’s membership of a group is only meaningful when compared with the similarities and differences between the in-group and the out-group. According to this theory, each individual has as many social identities significant groups or associations to which he/she belongs. The perception of differences in relation to other groups can result in a positive evaluation of identity and a subsequent favouritism for his/her own group or in a negative evaluation of his/her identity (Tajfel 1981). In this sense, the process of social comparison may produce conflicts between identities which may lead to violence and discrimination between groups (Tajfel 1974). The establishment of a negative social identity can result in a series of psychological and social processes which aim to re-establish a more positive social identity.

Turner and Brown (1978) highlight some of the main strategies used by individuals to re-establish a positive identity. One of these is individual mobility, by which it is possible to dissociate from a group; another strategy is social creativity, in which members of the group redefine the patterns of comparison, either by comparing the groups in a new light or by changing the values related to the status of the groups (“Black is beautiful”); the comparison remains but the system of values associated with it is inverted. In the social competition strategy members of the low-status group try to attain a positive identity by competing with the members of the higher status groups, thus altering the social structure.

Basing their work on Tajfel’s Social Identity Theory, Blantz et al. (1998) broaden these strategies and propose ways of managing negative social identity. From this point of view members can a) redefine their group in terms of a common identity within the group; b) define themselves as unique individuals, as opposed to members of a group; c) try to compensate or reverse the existing relationship between ingroup and outgroup through collective action; d)

<sup>3</sup> Conversions from the national currency to U.S. dollars were carried out using exchange rates of April 2, 2010.

choose a new comparison dimension; e) pursue individual mobility; or f) attempt to make the ingroup as similar as possible to the outgroup.

Children's identity and attitudes are the precursors of adult forms, fulfilling the same functions despite having a simpler structure (Aboud 1987). In this sense, childhood is a privileged development stage in the study of the influence of the social on the formation and expression of ethnic identity.

## 2. Prejudice and Ethnic Identity in Childhood

The social group is a provider of positive social identity to its members through comparisons with other groups regarding salient and valuable dimensions (Tajfel 1982). The outcome of social comparison is therefore crucial because it contributes to self-esteem. In this sense, bias is related to identity in two ways: Firstly, because in the search for positive distinctiveness the individual tends to favour the ingroup and depreciate the outgroup, and secondly because the members of stigmatized groups may undervalue their membership.

The ethnic identity of children and their attitudes towards their own and other groups depend on two overlapping development sequences. The first sequence involves the processes that dominate their experiences: from affective states to perceptions and finally cognitions. The second involves the focussing of attention, which can be directed at himself, another member of the group, or a completely different group (Aboud 1988). According to the logic of the first development sequence, children are dominated by their emotions and preferences, which determine their attitudes towards ethnicity. They look for important information about a person from an emotional point of view; whether they are good or bad, for example.

Little by little, children start noticing the similarities and differences that exist between certain other people and themselves. From that moment, these perceptions will determine their ethnic attitudes. Aspects such as skin colour, language, clothes, and hair texture become evident to children, who use them as the bases for their ethnic identification and intergroup preferences.

When their ethnic attitudes become dominated by cognitive processes, their perceptions structure themselves around the classification of people in categories. Children start to understand that skin colour is based more on objective and permanent criteria, like inherited features, and not on superficial ones, like clothes.

A consensus seems to exist among those who study the development of ethnic identity that children become conscious of racial differences between the ages of three and six and become particularly active in their attempts to understand social groups in terms of ethnicity and gender, since these are the significant categories into which people are classified in our society. During this stage all children are capable of identifying themselves in relation to these categories.

As we have seen, Tajfel's definition of social identity involves three elements: categorization, self-categorization, and the positive or negative values associated with the social group. Racial categorization relates to the capacity to distinguish people in terms of physical features of a racial nature, such as skin colour, hair type and facial structure (Aboud 1988). It has been confirmed that at around six years of age children's ability to categorize themselves is as high as eighty per cent. Children's acquisition of the ability to categorize people along racial lines is accompanied by a still rudimentary perception of social status related to different groups (Clark and Cook 1988). This perception has an enormous social impact, since the process of racial categorization is the first step in the formation of racial attitudes, whether positive or negative (Katz 1987; Tajfel 1981). Ethnic socialization thus differs in important ways depending on the groups to which the child belongs. Children from minority groups are more aware of their ethnicity, and their ethnicity is more obvious to other children (Phinney 1991).

Studies show that the ability to self-categorize and notice the status of their own social group leads children to experience conflicting and ambivalent emotions about their racial group (Clark and Cook 1988). Children from low-status groups experience a discrepancy between positive feelings relating to the development of attitudes towards their own group and negative feelings associated with the

perception of an unfavourable social evaluation of their group (Corenblum, Annis, and Tanaka 1997). Other studies confirm that children belonging to high-status groups experience a consistency between the positive feelings associated with belonging to their own group and the value attributed to it by society, causing them to identify with their groups.

Hutnik (1991) emphasizes the complexity of ethnic identity in a scenario of unequal power relations of . In such situations, an individual can have a black phenotype (dark skin and negroid physical features) but define himself/herself as indigenous or even white. Nesdale and Flesser (2001) observe that children as young as five already show sensitivity to the status differences between their own group and others, and show that these differences condition their group attitudes. When children believe that it is possible to change group, those belonging to low-status groups more frequently desire to change than those belonging to high-status groups. Nesdale and Flesser show that recognition of the impossibility of social mobility, the acquisition of racial constancy, and the recent emphasis on ethnic pride contribute to growing acceptance of racial identity as ethnic minority children grow older. Killen and Stangor (2001), investigating judgements about exclusion and acknowledgement of stereotypes pertaining to race and gender in European-American children, show that children of all ages are aware of racial stereotypes.

In modern societies, it is the dominant groups that attribute ethnicity to minorities that are in subordinate socio-economic positions. In this sense, social exclusion and racism are directly linked to ethnic categorizations and identifications (Rex 1986; Westin 2010).

### 3. Racism and Ethnic Identity in Brazil

In a representative national survey, Turra and Venturi (1995) found that Brazilians used 135 different colours to define their own skin colour, in a kaleidoscopic spectrum from “sulphur” to “olive redhead”, “white spotted” and “white”. In a quick break-down of their findings, we see that many more terms are associated with the colour white than with the colour black as a result of the ideological pressure in Brazil to become white (see Lima and Vala, 2004a).

The impact of an ideology that favours becoming white and its immediate correlation, “the cult of racial mixing”, is a form of identity abandonment whereby a racist society can implant a type of social upward mobility. As Tajfel argues in his analysis of the psychosocial aspects involved in processes of identification (1981), in many cases an individual’s decision to remain in or leave a group will depend on what the group contributes to the positive aspects of his/her identity that give him/her satisfaction. Social mobility or (dis)identification of minorities maintain the racist social structure and practices. Pressure in the system is released through “valves”, and the pressure cooker boils without exploding. (Lima, 2007; Telles 2006). In this sense, the racial category “mulatto” is a kind of “escape hatch” in Brazilian racial ideology (Degler 1971).

This tendency has already been confirmed in children (França and Monteiro 2002). In their study of black, mulatto and white children aged between five and ten in Brazil, França and Monteiro confirm that white children perceive themselves as white in almost 80 percent of cases. The mulatto children see themselves as belonging to their group in 54 percent of cases, while the figure falls to 40 percent for the self-categorization of black children. White children evaluate their belonging in a positive fashion and black children evaluate their belonging in a negative fashion.

A set of compensatory policies is currently being proposed by public bodies in Brazil, with the aim of offering a solution to the problem of social disadvantage suffered by blacks and indigenous people. One type of affirmative action is intended to protect and guarantee property rights and means of subsistence for the remaining indigenous and *Quilombola* communities.

The question we pose is therefore: What impact do land rights policies aimed at *Quilombolas* and indigenous people have on the identity of children belonging to these groups?

Studies carried out in the United States examine the relationship between ethnic identity and affirmative action programmes. Schmermund and colleagues (2001) observe in African American college students a relationship between racial identity and attitudes toward affirmative ac-

tion. Elizondo and Hu (1999) find the same results with Latino students (see Crosby et al. 2003). In Brazil, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have previously been conducted on this issue. Our main hypothesis is that there is greater awareness of belonging and more positive ethnic identity among children covered by public affirmative action policy. In order to test this hypothesis, we conducted two studies.

#### 4. Study 1: Affirmative Action Beneficiaries

##### 4.1. Method

The participants were children receiving support from government affirmative action programmes. There were sixty-five children aged between five and ten, thirty-two of whom were indigenous and thirty-three of whom were black *Quilombolas*. Thirty-three were boys and thirty-two were girls.

The interviews were individual and took place in classrooms at their schools. The interviewer started by introducing him/herself to the child before explaining the instructions: “I want to write a story about children and their friends. So I decided to talk to a few children from this school to get ideas on how to write the story. I would like you to help me by answering some questions that I ask you. You should think about yourself and your friends. Can we begin?”

The stimulus material was a set of six photographs representing indigenous, black, and white children of both genders. A photograph of a male child was shown to boys and a photograph of a female child was shown to girls. The photographs were pre-tested in relation to the skin colour attributed to the child, ethnicity (indigenous or non-indigenous), physical appearance, and graphical quality.

The independent variable was the group to which the children belonged (black or indigenous). The dependent variable analysed in the study was ethnic identity in terms of the group that the child chose to belong to, the feeling related to the group, the value attributed to the group, and the desire to be different from others. In order to evaluate the group to which they belonged, the children were initially asked what skin colour they thought they had. Next,

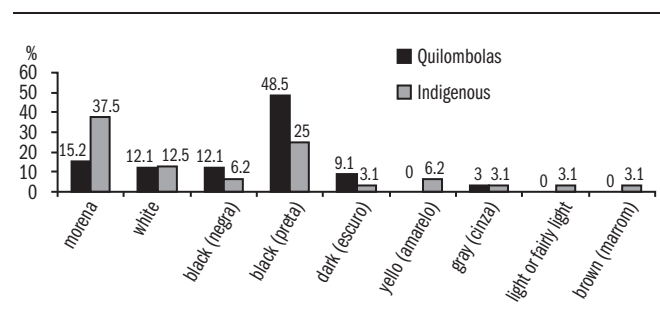
the children were asked to identify which children they thought they resembled in the photographs. To evaluate the feeling associated with identity, we asked whether the child liked belonging to the social category of the chosen photograph on a four-point scale (“not at all”, “a little”, “more or less”, “a lot”). To discover the value attributed to the group to which they belonged, we asked whether the child would like to look like another child belonging to another ethnic group (using the same four-point scale) and if so, which.

##### 4.2. Results

A frequency analysis of self-perceived skin colour was carried out on the responses to the question: “What is your skin colour?” As Figure 1 shows, the children used nine different categories of skin colour to define themselves. The majority, thirty-four, defined themselves as black (“black”, “dark” or “*preto*”). Even the indigenous children used this label most.

Black skin colour was more strongly affirmed in *Quilombola* children than in other children. Twenty-three *Quilombola* children (69.7 percent) used dark colours to define themselves in comparison with eleven indigenous children (34.3 percent), who see themselves above all as “*morena*” or brown (37.5 percent). It should be noted that the indigenous children were no different to the black children in terms of phenotype, since both groups have dark skin and other features in common. A desire to be white was also revealed by the eight children who defined themselves as white. Overall, however, strong recognition was found for being black.

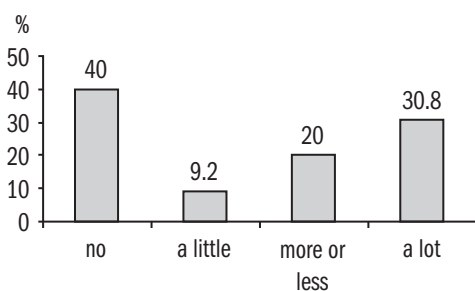
Figure 1: Self-perception of skin colour



In order to become established, social identification with a group also requires an emotional or affective commitment. To analyse this aspect, we asked the children if they liked having the ethnicity of the photograph they chose (“I like being black”, “I like being indigenous”, or “I like being white”). The scale ranged from 1 (I don’t like it) to 4 (I like it a lot). A univariate analysis of variance indicates that, independently of the ethnic group chosen  $F(1, 64) < 1, n.s.$ , the *Quilombola* ( $M = 3.0, S.D. = 1.0$ ) and indigenous children ( $M = 2.97, S.D. = 1.1$ ) like belonging to their groups. The mean results for both groups are close to 3 (“I more or less like it”).

When the children were asked if they would like to be different or look like another group, almost half expressed a slight desire to be different or did not want to be different at all (49.2 percent). The others answered that they would “quite” or “very much” like to be different in order to belong to a different social category (see Figure 2). There were no differences between Quilombola and indigenous children in this respect,  $X^2(3, n = 65) = 4.31, p = .23$  ( $eta = .12$ ).

**Figure 2: Desire to look like someone else (“Would you like to look like someone else?”)**



As Table 1 shows, the data does not imply a strong affirmation of identity. A Chi-square test  $X^2(2, n = 50) = 1.19, n.s.$  ( $eta = .15$ ), indicates that, independently of their ethnic group, the children would like to change phenotype or look more like another group. More than 60 percent of the *Quilombolas* indigenous children chose “white” as their goal of identification. Only five *Quilombola* children wanted to be “black” and six indigenous children “indigenous”. The im-

pact on both groups of children of an ideology that favours being white is notable. Over half of the children would like to be white.

**Table 1: Desire for ethnic mobility (“Who would you like to look like?”)**

Choice	Group		
	Black Quilombola	Indigenous	Total
Black	5 18.5%	2 8.7%	7 14%
Indigenous	5 18.5%	6 26.1%	11 22%
White	17 63%	15 65.2%	32 64%
Total	27 54%	23 46%	50 100%

**5. Study 2: Without Affirmative Action**

In study 1 we saw that the ethnic identification of children supported by government affirmative action programmes is ambivalent. They recognize themselves as belonging but at the same time would like to change their group in order to become whiter. What happens with other black children who are not protected by affirmative action programmes? Do they have a more negative ethnic identity? Would they show the same ambivalence between wanting to belong and being different? To answer these questions we conducted a second study involving urban black children.

**5.1. Method**

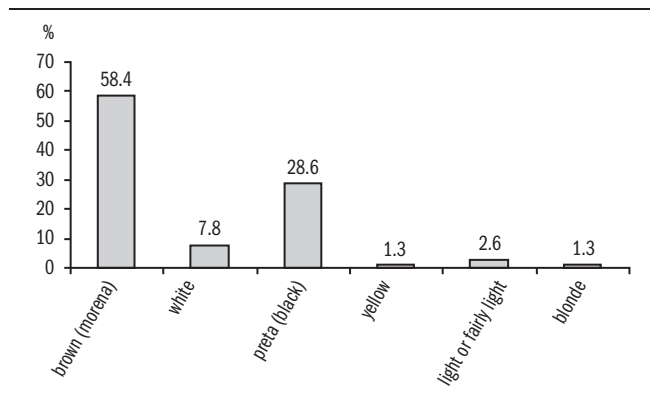
The second study was carried out four months after the first one. The participants were seventy-seven black children aged between five and ten, thirty-eight boys and thirty-nine girls. All were black children residing in an urban part of Aracaju, the capital of Sergipe, and none were supported by affirmative action programmes. Once again, the study was carried out in state schools, and all of the procedures and materials were identical to those used in the first study with just two small differences. The first was that three interviewers defined the skin colour of the children in Aracaju. Only those considered to be black by at least two of the interviewers were selected for the study. The second difference was that the photos showed one black child, one white child, and one mixed-race child (*mulatto*).



**5.2. Results**

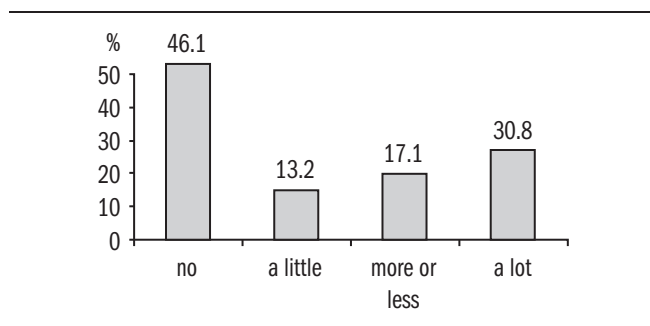
As Figure 3 shows, the majority of these children, 58.4 percent, defined themselves as “morena” or brown (forty-five children); only 28.6 percent defined themselves as black.

**Figure 3: Self-image of skin colour**



With regard to the emotional or affective commitment to their group, the results indicate, in common with those of study one,<sup>4</sup> that children like belonging to their group ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $S.D. = 1.14$ , a mean value reflecting the position “I quite like it”) (see Figure 4). However, it should be pointed out that while children like being what they chose in terms of ethnic identification, this is not necessarily the group they belong to objectively.

**Figure 4: Desire to look like someone else (“Would you like to look like someone else?”)**

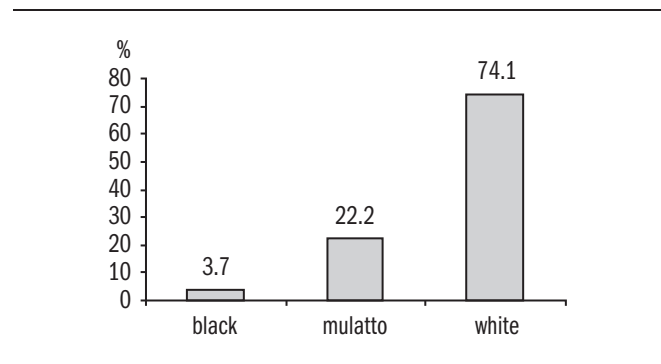


4 The results of an ANOVA test comparing the averages found in study 1 with those found in this study

indicated no differences between children from the two studies  $F(2, 141) < 1$ , n.s.

In fact, when these children were asked if they would like to resemble another group, the vast majority said “yes”. Only two children wished to remain black; 96.3 percent would prefer to be whiter, and 74.1 percent really intend to become white (see Figure 5). This desire for social mobility is greater among these children than among the *Quilombola* and indigenous children in study 1.

**Figure 5: Ethnic mobility (“Who would you like to look like?”)**



**6. Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to analyse the impact of affirmative action policies on the ethnic identities of black and indigenous children in Brazil. Our principal hypothesis was that the ethnic identities of children belonging to groups benefiting from affirmative action would be more positive than the identities of children who did not benefit from these types of programme. Our results partially confirm this hypothesis.

The acceptance of their own skin color in *Quilombola* children is greater than among black urban children. Even indigenous children protected by affirmative action policies were more likely to define themselves as black than black children who were not protected by such policies.

We also found that the children would like to be different, although this desire does not imply total abandonment of their identity. The *Quilombola* and indigenous children

who wanted to change sometimes wish to belong to the group of black and indigenous children. We believe that this result is due to widespread intermarriage between groups. Some *Quilombola* children did not exhibit the black phenotype, and many of the indigenous children did not exhibit the phenotype usually associated with the indigenous group, since they were mostly mulatto or black.

In general, the results show that children supported by affirmative action policies used identity strategies (Blantz et al. 1998) or play identity games differently from those who are not supported. The *Quilombola* and indigenous children have a more defined “identity policy” in a scenario of social competition in which they seek a more collective solution to alter the social structure. Black children not supported by affirmative action policies used social mobility strategies to change the subjective perception of their skin colour more frequently than other groups. These results indicate that identity is processed in a relational context defined by the power and position of the groups in their material and symbolic structure (Turner and Brown 1978; Tajfel 1981; Lima and Vala, 2004b).

Another way of reading the results is in the light of Kelman’s approach to social norms (1958). To Kelman, the relationship between the individual and the social norm is configured by three processes: compliance, identification and internalization. We can surmise the reference groups of children protected by affirmative action policies (indigenous and *Quilombola*) press them to accept and identify with the norm of ethnic recognition. Nevertheless, they do not internalize this social norm and still try to change their phenotypes to become whiter. So their ethnic identification is still expressed in a superficial way, driven by material interests. But for the black children not protected by these policies, ethnic (dis)identification is stronger.

This scenario of ambivalent identities is typical of the modern era. On the one hand, the force of public policy is felt on identity affirmation, and on the other hand, the pressures of the racist world in which we live impose a hierarchical logic of difference and black inferiority. Children are aware of the negative perception of blacks in

society, and the “escape route” chosen by some of them seems to be to choose a label that is closer to white, a phenomenon that was particularly apparent in the children from Aracaju. This pattern of results could be interpreted in accordance with the ideas laid out by Katz (1987) and Aboud (1988) about the impact of racism on ethnic identity.

However, there is not a complete separation between the black children belonging to the two groups in terms of the impact of racist stigmatization on their ethnic identification. The results show that the whitening ideology exerts a powerful force on all of the children in the study. Our results reflect the permanent ideological collision between the “world of the group” and the “outside world”.

We conclude by affirming the positive impact of public policy on the construction of ethnic group identity, at least in heightening the awareness of belonging to an ethnic group, even if there is no desire to remain a member of that group. This fact is important because, on the one hand, it prevents identity abandonment in the guise of a desire to become white and, on the other hand, it allows opportunities for social cohesion to be constructed around group projects that produce social pressures aimed at redefining the social spaces occupied by groups within the power structure.

However, the initial impact of the affirmative action policies is not capable of combating racism and forming positive perceptions of ethnic minorities on its own. Two other strategies are necessary: one is more internal aiming to reduce group racism in itself; the other, which is more external, aims to enhance the political and economic power of minority groups in order to produce more positive social representations of groups and change the symbolic and material world of group relations. Future research investigating identity valorization strategies in this group of children could be highly illuminating.

Our research has limitations. The first is that the black children protected by affirmative action programmes live in a rural area, while the unprotected blacks live in an urban area. However, in terms of their economic status, age

and schooling, the two groups are very similar. Moreover, *Quilombola* children experience urban cultural contexts every weekend, when their families go to the city to shop and sell their produce. A second limitation concerns the use of different stimulus materials in the studies. Study 2 used the category “mulatto” while “indigenous” was adopted in study 1. We believe that this had little impact on the comparability of the data. The categories of membership (similarity) and contrast were preserved. Finally, study 2 took place four months after the first. Again, we do not think that this is a problem for comparison because race relations in Brazil are fairly stable and there were no “new

racial facts” during the period. One important positive aspect of this study is that the question was studied in a natural and real setting without manipulation of any kind.

There are many important reasons to implement affirmative action programmes and, of course, they incur many costs (Crosby, Iyer, and Sincharoen, 2006). Our data demonstrate the critical importance of ensuring that members of historically excluded minorities in Brazil realise who they are as a group. These data demonstrate that affirmative action policies help to shape and strengthen the identities of ethnic minorities in Brazil

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# Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts: The Estonian Example

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:**  
**Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

► **Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:  
The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

**Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)





# Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts: The Estonian Example

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An examination of the relationship between cultural values, value stereotypes and social identities in Estonia, where intergroup conflicts triggered riots in the capital Tallinn in April 2007, using data from the European Social Survey on cultural differences and value trends as the background to a survey exploring perceived group values and assessed social identities among ethnic Estonians and members of the Russian-speaking minority. The study, conducted in summer 2008, found agreement across both ethnic groups about the values of a typical group member, but no accuracy in their attribution. The Estonian students ( $n = 152$ ) avoided Eastern-European identification, while the Russian-speaking students ( $n = 54$ ) did not want to give up Estonia's Soviet past. We found that attributed rather than self-rated value differences between groups caused the conflicts, whilst diverging identities were found to make value stereotypes more extreme.

“In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians” (Huntington 1993, 26). This statement by political scientist Samuel P. Huntington shortly after Estonia regained its independence in 1991 offers a gloomy forecast for the integration of its sizable minority. People with Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian as mother tongue (hereafter the Russian-speaking minority), who have lived in Estonia since the time of the Soviet occupation, represent 28.9 per cent of the total population (Statistics Estonia 2008).

In April 2007, when a Soviet-era war memorial (a bronze statue of a soldier) was removed from the centre of Estonia's capital city Tallinn to a remote cemetery, an angry crowd of over one thousand, largely Russian-speakers, “started to attack property in the surrounding streets, breaking shop windows and smashing the interiors, looting, and turning over cars” (Ehala 2009, 142). Hundreds were detained in two nights of rioting; most were released shortly afterwards, but more than sixty individuals were charged with criminal offences. A foreign policy crisis between Russia and Estonia ensued as the issue of the “bronze soldier” became highly politicised (see Brüggemann and Kasekamp

2008 for details and diplomatic ramifications). For many members of the Russian-speaking minority, the statue commemorates liberation from the Nazis by the Red Army and over the years had become a valuable part of their social identity. From the perspective of a number of ethnic Estonians, the statue is a symbol of the occupation and oppression of their country by the Soviet Union (Ehala 2009).

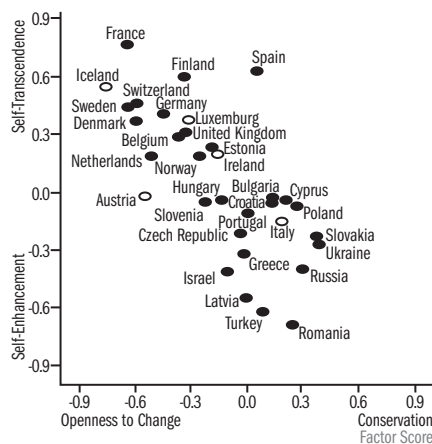
In times of conflict self-rated, as well as attributed, cultural differences between groups become more accentuated. We therefore set out to relate both real and attributed cultural differences in value preferences to the inter-group relationship in Estonia. Researchers repeatedly use values to describe cultures and many definitions for cultural values have been proposed (for example Hofstede 2001; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Schwartz 2006). Cultural values “evolve as preferences for resolving basic issues in managing life in society” (Schwartz 2006, 178), telling people what is appropriate in their social environment.

Our general thesis is that attributed rather than real value differences between groups caused the conflicts described above. Further, we propose that national character stereotypes are not independent of social identities (created by

accession to the European Union or pre-existing) and are therefore linked to them.

There is a body of research on cultural differences in value priorities in Estonia covering the period from 1991 (still under Soviet-era) to the present (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997; Vihalemm and Kalmus 2009). However, these results have never been placed in a wider European context and therefore probably overestimate cultural value differences within the country. The appearance of representative, cross-cultural surveys like the European Social Survey (ESS) (Jowell and the Central Co-ordinating Team 2007) allows the development of values among the two major ethnic groups within Estonia to be analysed in the context of cultural values across Europe. Estonia participated in the second, third, and fourth rounds of the ESS ([www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)). To be able to test whether value stereotypes are accurate, we next present representative average value preferences among ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia. Europe's map of cultural values is shown in Figure 1. It displays the means of thirty-three European countries for the two value dimensions Self-Transcendence–Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change–Conservation.

**Figure 1: Cultural map of value means from the European Social Survey 2004–2008**

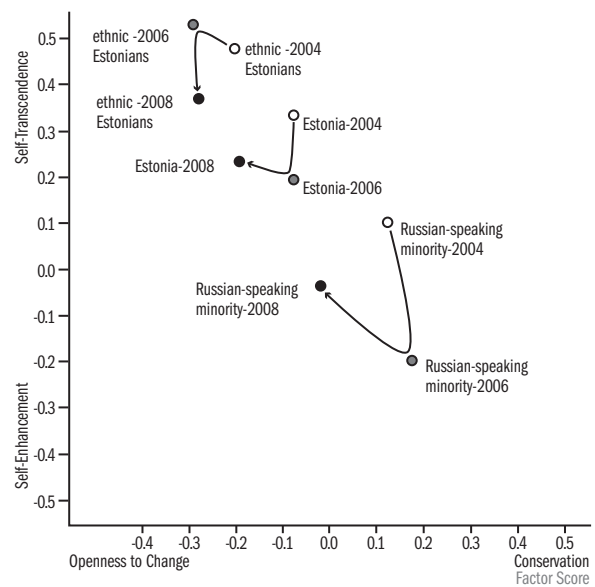


Note: Thirty-three countries (average per country  $n = 1839$ ,  $SD = 446$ ) participated in at least one of the four ESS rounds (2008; filled markers). The estimated European average is 0/0 (as overall  $SD = 1.00$ , effect sizes are visually derivable). Source: Norwegian Social Science Data Services. 2009. Data Archive and Distributor of the ESS Data. Round 4: third edition, production date Oct. 12, 2009.

The wealthy European countries were located close to the Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change poles, whilst the majority of countries in transition were near the Conservation and Self-Enhancement poles (Schwartz and Bardi 1997). Estonia was located at the centre (+0.23 for Self-Transcendence and -0.19 for Conservation).

Figure 2 presents trends for the two main ethnic groups in Estonia separately. The overall values for Estonia as a country changed only slightly. The observation that the values preferred by ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority were located in different quadrants suggests cultural differences between the groups.

**Figure 2: Value development in Estonia from 2004 to 2008**



Note: For sample sizes see text. The sample was categorised according to the languages spoken most often at home. Respondents who reported Estonian as the language most often spoken at home were categorised as ethnic Estonians. All respondents who marked Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian as either their first or second language at home were categorised as belonging to the Russian-speaking minority. In cases where a clear categorisation was not possible, the country of birth was used.

In the European context the differences between the ethnic groups were relatively small. In 2004 and 2008 the values for ethnic Estonians ( $n = 1102$ ,  $0.48/-0.20$ ;  $n = 829$ ,  $0.37/-0.28$ ) and the Russian-speaking minority ( $n = 690$ ,

0.10/0.12;  $n = 639$ ,  $-0.04/-0.02$ ) were located at the same areas (as overall  $SD = 1.0$ , effect sizes of change:  $d < .20$ ). By 2006 members of the Russian-speaking minority ( $n = 621$ ,  $-0.18/0.21$ ) were closer to the values of the Russians ( $-0.38/0.31$ ), whilst ethnic Estonians ( $n = 1314$ ,  $0.53/-0.29$ ) were very close to the values of their Nordic neighbour Finland ( $0.54/-0.33$ ). This inter-group polarisation may be the result of the dashing of hopes evoked by the accession to Western institutions for the ethnic minority, or may be caused by increased conflict between the two cultural groups, which made them describe themselves as more different than they normally would do. However, the values of the two ethnic groups have shifted before, during the period of rapid political and socioeconomic change after Estonia regained its independence (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997, 257). Because culture is by definition relatively stable, these findings reveal values to be self-presentations of the ideal or desirable, rather than objective self-reports. To answer as to why the average reported values re-converge between the ethnic groups in 2008, although inter-group conflicts peaked in riots in 2007, is a subject for future work when more rounds of the ESS are available. For the purpose of our study it is most important to note that the increase in cultural differences between the major ethnic groups in Estonia was temporally linked to its accession to the European Union (see below). The relative small differences in mean value preferences between Estonia's ethnic groups provide evidence that attributed not self-rated cultural values cause the intergroup conflicts of the country in transition.

Why did the intergroup conflicts peak after accession to the European Union? Recently, Masso (2009) found Estonia to have the greatest differences in life satisfaction between the majority and minority groups in comparison to twenty-five other European countries, which was significantly related to the perception of discrimination. Furthermore, Estonia's ethnic minorities perceived discrimination more often than the minorities in European countries. Green and colleagues show that attitudes towards the presence of

immigrants vary depending on whether immigrants are seen as "culturally similar" or "culturally distant" (2010).

Perceived (or objective) discrimination and the perceived dissimilarity of immigrants or minorities may have been affected by Estonia's accession to the European Union in 2004. Superordinate categories that unite several social identities influence relationships at the group level (Turner et al. 1987). Joining Western institutions allows the creation of a shared identity at a superordinate European level and people can judge behaviour in relation to this higher level of norms. In their Ingroup Projection Model Mummendey and colleagues show that dual identification with national and superordinate categories (Europe) is not always beneficial for inter-group relationships (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004)<sup>1</sup>. We expect that the model will also apply to ethnic groups within a country, if members of one group also identify with a superordinate category.

Vihalemm and Kalmus (2009) recently conducted a closer investigation of mental structures in Estonia. They conclude that an inclusive mental structure including both main ethnic groups has not yet formed. Earlier studies found that the Russian-speaking minority adhered to Soviet as well as Baltic identities (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997; Vihalemm and Masso 2007). On the other hand, the academic and political discourse emphasised Estonia's cultural and historical ties with its Nordic neighbours (Berg 2002; Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997). As we do not know the exact content of these possible projected European identities, we focus in the following on attributed value preferences and on identification with geographical and historical categories derived from the literature.

### 1. Assessing Value Stereotypes

Studying national character stereotypes has gained a lot of popularity since the groundbreaking studies of personality traits by Terracciano and colleagues (2005; Realo et al. 2009). Intergroup relations based on attributions of values have

<sup>1</sup> The belief of jointly belonging to the inclusive category can lead to discrimination, if attributes of a prototypical European, for example, are projected from the in-group to this super-ordinate category:

As a consequence the behaviour of the other included group automatically matches these attributes to a lesser extent. "If the out-group's difference is judged to be non-normative and inferior, devalu-

ation, discrimination, and hostility are likely responses toward the out-group" (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999, 158).

rarely been empirically tested (Austers 2002; Eicher and Wilhelm 2008; Lönnqvist et al. forthcoming). Thus little is known about the accuracy of attributions of value preferences and how these stereotypes are socially shared among different cultures. Additionally, only a handful of studies have used standardised, cross-culturally valid questionnaires to test stereotypes. Human values are a well-researched psychometric concept (Schwartz 1992, 2006), and we propose that it would be ideal for exploring national character stereotypes, which of course consist of more than just values.

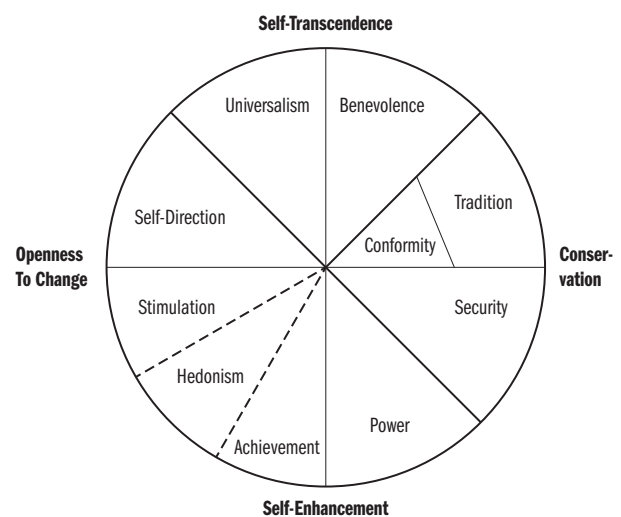
Now, we can move on to ask whether self-rated cultural differences in value preferences have anything in common with attributed value stereotypes. It is possible, but very unlikely, that the real and attributed cultural values are almost identical, which would mean that value differences between ethnic groups can be perceived accurately by individuals and therefore explain intergroup relationships or conflicts. It is also possible that stereotypes about value preferences are very similar on one value dimension but very different on the other, which could lead to the conclusion that stereotypes about a typical group member might share common elements independent of the target of these judgements, while the other dimension is used to differentiate between the groups. We expect contrast effects in attributed stereotypes, accentuating real differences in an accurate but exaggerated direction. However, there is also the possibility that value preferences are not perceived at all by the participants or that respondents are simply not able to make accurate judgements. In this case the attributed cultural values should be located in a different quadrant of the value circle than the respective ESS standard. If there is no accuracy in value stereotypes but they are shared by the two ethnic groups we can conclude that national character stereotypes fulfil the function of maintaining a national identity (Terracciano et al. 2005). Thus, whether values can predict conflicts can be better understood by an examination of similarities and differences in values attributed to the in-group and the out-group(s). Furthermore, we believe that national character stereotypes are not independent of social identities and therefore linked to them.

### 1.1. Schwartz Value Circle

Values are relatively stable, internal standards used to evaluate behaviours and events (Rokeach 1973). Schwartz and

Bardi define human values as “desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives” (2001, 269). The theory of human values (Schwartz 1992) describes values as a universal quasi-circular structure divided into ten value segments (see Figure 3). The two axes are Self-Transcendence–Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change–Conservation. The vertical dimension opposes universalism and benevolence values with achievement and power values. The horizontal dimension opposes hedonism, stimulation and self-direction values with conformity, tradition and security values. The value circle discloses compatibilities and conflicts while adjacent values are jointly preferred, values in the respective opposite quadrant of the circle are disliked. To give an example, self-direction values can serve to permit excitement (stimulation) or to discover and understand people who are different from oneself (universalism). On the contrary, it causes cognitive and sometimes social conflicts to desire individualism (self-direction) and at the same time give family the first priority (tradition). Thus, the structure of the universal value circle will help us to interpret attributions of the values of the in-group and the out-group.

Figure 3: The universal value structure



Source: Shalom H. Schwartz, “Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries”, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25 (1992): 45. Copyright 1992 by Elsevier, adapted with permission.

## 1.2. National Character Stereotypes

Stereotypes comprise beliefs about attributes of a group of people that are attributed to all group members (Ashmore and DelBoca 1981). The term auto-stereotype (i.e. a self-attributed characteristic) is used for stereotypes about a person's own (ethnic) group and the term hetero-stereotype for stereotypes about other (ethnic) groups (that the subject does not feel he or she belongs to). Social psychological theories suggest that (positive) distinctiveness of the in-group can be achieved by social comparison between a person's own group and other groups (Tajfel 1981). Stereotypes create differentiation between in-groups and out-groups (Operario and Fiske 2001). The compatibilities and conflicts within the structure of values (Figure 3) may help to predict how groups achieve the necessary contrast for this differentiation.

We expect beliefs about value preferences to be part of the "national character" attributed to the group. But stereotypes are exaggerated descriptions, generalised conceptions or beliefs about a cultural group, and are not necessarily accurately attributed. Some studies find agreement on national character stereotypes across different samples (Realo et al. 2009; Lönnqvist et al. forthcoming). Eicher and Wilhelm (2008) find accurate attributions of value preferences on the Conservation dimension for three countries independently rated by students from two different ethnic groups. Lönnqvist and colleagues (forthcoming) show that their bi-cultural experts – who were immigrants – were partially accurate in their descriptions of the destination country, but their descriptions of their country of origin did not correspond to the inhabitants' self-ratings.

Stereotypes, like all judgments, compare a target (group) to a standard (group). The judgment about the target depends on the chosen comparison standard (Strack 2004; Operario and Fiske 2001). In their concept of collective identities, Ashmore and colleagues (2004) shift the focus from the situation (on which Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al. 1987) concentrate) to the context, which is "the general and continuing multilayered and interwoven set of material realities, social structures, patterns of social relations, and

shared belief systems that surround any given situation" (Ashmore et al. 2004, 103). In the Estonian case, it would make a difference if we asked our respondents to attribute typical characteristics to an in-group member and at the same time a typical Russian or for example a typical American instead. Especially for the Russian-speaking minority, presetting a comparison standard is expected to change the attributions to (i.e. stereotypes about) their own group. If members of the minority identify as Russians, it makes a difference if they are being asked to rate this particular, personally meaningful group or an unrelated group instead. In countries that have a powerful neighbour like Russia, according to Realo and colleagues (2009), it is likely that the in-group member will be described as a mirror image of that comparison standard; thus the judgments of the ethnic Estonians are also expected to be affected.

The differences in value preferences between the majority group and the Russian-speaking minority described by the ESS data will serve as the background to our study on stereotypes.

## 2. Stereotypes and Social Identities among Estonian Students

Are cultural values accurately attributed, exaggerated or not noticed at all by members of the involved groups? First, we assess the content of auto- and hetero-stereotypes of students in Estonia. Then, we relate the stereotypes about value preferences to social identities.

### 2.1. Sample

The subjects were recruited at the University of Tartu. Participants were e-mailed through the faculty mailing list; 203 subjects answered the questionnaire online, 46 on paper. Age criteria (between 18 and 30), incorrect responses, or other nationality led to the exclusion of 43 respondents. A sample of 152 ethnic Estonian students and 54 Russian-speaking students remained. The survey was conducted between 23 May and 2 October 2008. According to official statistics, only about 11 percent of the students enrolled at the University of Tartu are Russian-speaking, whereas in our sample there were 26 percent Russian-speaking students, or more than double the proportion. The participants' average age was 22.0 ( $SD = 2.6$ ); 78.3 per-



cent were female. Ethnic categorisation was specified by the respondent's own native language and their parents' native language using three questions: Respondents who reported that their own, their mother's, or their father's mother tongue is Russian or bilingual were categorised as Russian-speakers.

## 2.2. Value Measures

The Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) has been routinely used in the ESS, assessing values using twenty-one portrait items (Schwartz 2003). Each portrait describes the goals, hopes or desires of a person and thus implicitly expresses the importance of a specific value type. Respondents were asked to indicate the similarity between each portrait and themselves on a six-point scale (very much like me, like me, somewhat like me, not like me, or not at all like me). The wording of one achievement portrait serves as an example: *It's important to him (her) to show his (her) abilities. He (she) wants people to admire what he (she) does.* Stereotypes about three groups were measured with an enlarged version of the PVQ21. The respondents stated for each portrait whether this person *was like me / like typical Estonians / like typical Russian-speakers / like typical Russians.*<sup>2</sup> The subjects were instructed to rate the descriptions first for themselves, then for the group to which they felt they belonged to most and thereafter for the remaining two groups. For respondents who rated at least fifteen PVQ portraits we replaced missing values with the mean across all respondents.

The twenty-one value ratings were collapsed into the two main value dimensions using a factor analytic approach developed independently by Strack (2004; Strack, Gennrich and Hopf 2008) and Verkasalo (1996, Verkasalo et al. 2008). In this paper we use the former approach. See the appendix for the weights for the ipsatized items used to compute these dimensions and to plot group means in the value circle in Figure 3.

To assess the diverging identities reviewed above, we asked about Estonia's place in Europe. On a five-point scale form

“not at all connected” to “extremely connected”, respondents rated how they identified with the categories of *Central, Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Western Europe*. Respondents also rated their personal connection with five regional and historical categories: their *home town, home region, Estonia, Baltic States, and the former Soviet Union*. The questionnaire was provided in three languages (Estonian/Russian/English) and the language could be selected freely by the subject.

## 2.3. Hypotheses

To possess accuracy, national character stereotypes need to match the average value preferences found in the ESS data. Hypothesis 1a states that auto- and hetero-stereotypes about typical Estonians should be located in the Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence quadrant of the values circle, whereas stereotypes about typical Russians should be located in the Conservation and Self Enhancement quadrant. Stereotypes about typical Russian-speakers in Estonia should be located at an intermediate position. The participant's agreement about the same target across ethnic groups forms Hypothesis 1b, which will be accepted if the stereotypes can be grouped without them overlapping. As groups in conflict are expected to increasingly distinguish themselves on the value dimensions, Hypothesis 1c predicts contrast effects for the auto- and hetero-stereotypes.

Because Estonia's accession to the European Union had a strong impact on the value preferences discussed above, the strength of identification with complementary geographical and historical identities should enhance the accentuation of the in-group and out-groups (Hypothesis 2).

## 3. Results

The results of our study are split into three parts. First we examine the value stereotypes in the student sample, testing hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c. Then we investigate whether geographical and historical identities diverge. In the final step, we relate them and test hypothesis 2.

2 The self-ratings (“like me”) were not used as a comparison standard in this study, because students were found to differ more strongly by their field of

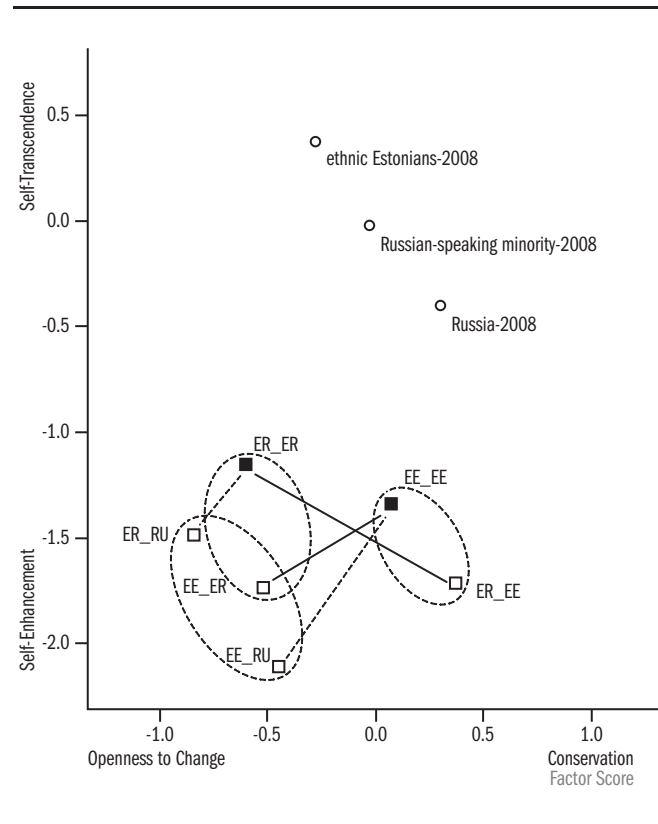
study than by their ethnic background (Verkasalo 1996).

### 3.1. Stereotypes about Value Preferences

Agreement and accuracy of the value stereotypes were tested by comparing average locations of auto- and hetero-stereotypes in the value circle with the representative means from the ESS 2008. The results are presented in Figure 4. Value stereotypes about “the Russian-speakers” and “the Russians” are located in the Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change quadrant. Ethnic Estonians rated “the Russians” (EE\_RU, -2.12/-0.44) similarly to “the Russian-speakers” (EE\_ER, -1.74/-0.52). The ethnic minority also perceived itself (ER\_ER, -1.16/-0.60) as being in the same quadrant as “the Russians” (ER\_RU, -1.49/-0.84), but differentiated between these two groups on the Conservation dimension. However, respondents more or less agreed in their stereotypes about “the Russians” and “the Russian-speakers”. Both ethnic Estonians and members of the Russian-speaking minority placed “the Estonians” in the quadrant with high Self-Enhancement and Conservation values (EE\_EE, -1.34/0.07; ER\_EE, -1.72/0.38). Therefore we accept Hypothesis 1b for all three targets. The auto-stereotypes as well as the hetero-stereotypes stand out because of the strongly emphasised Self-Enhancement values compared to the representative means from the ESS. Still, in both cases the average in-group member was perceived as higher in Self-Transcendence values than all other groups. It means that all targets had in common, that they were perceived as being extremely motivated in promoting their own personal interests even at the expense of others (Verkasalo et al. 2008, 789).

Both groups saw “the Estonians” as opposing change and emphasising self-restraint and order, while “the Russian-speakers” or “the Russians” were perceived as being open to new experiences and valuing independent action and thought. Compared to the representative means of the ESS, these attributions are inaccurate, so hypothesis 1a is incorrect. Neither the quadrant nor the relative positions of the three ethnic groups match the representative survey results. However, contrast effects between the groups of ethnic Estonians and Russian-speakers (hypothesis 1c) are clearly visible and indicated by the continuous lines in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Value stereotypes compared with the respective group means from European Social Survey 2008



ESS (2008) (circles): ethnic Estonians,  $n = 928$ ; Russian-speaking minority,  $n = 639$ ; Russians,  $n = 2109$  (ESS 2008).

Auto-stereotypes (filled squares): EE\_EE for ethnic Estonians on “the Estonians”; ER\_ER for Russian-speaking minority on “the Russian-speakers”.

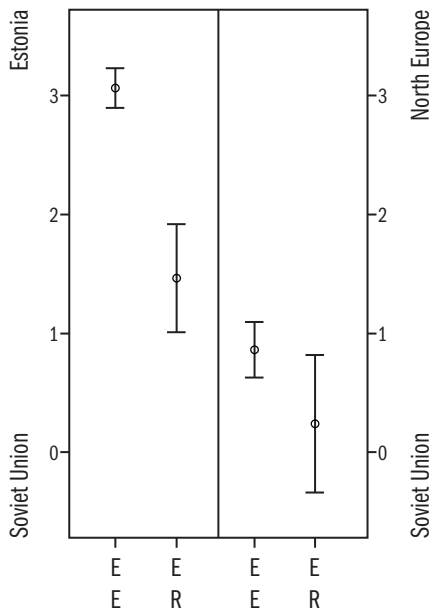
Hetero-stereotypes (unfilled squares): EE\_ER for ethnic Estonians on “the Russian-speakers”; EE\_RU for ethnic Estonians on “the Russians”; ER\_EE for Russian-speaking minority on “the Estonians”; ER\_RU for Russian-speaking minority on “the Russians”.

### 3.2. Geographical and Historical Identities

Social identities are psychologically defined by personal identification with a social category. After explorative analysis of the correlations between the identification ratings, two difference scores were computed: identification with Estonia versus identification with the former Soviet Union, and perception of Estonia as part of North Europe versus Estonia as part of East Europe. The former describes historical identity, the latter geographical identity in terms of Estonia’s place in Europe. Ethnic Estonian and Russian-speaking students varied in their historical and regional

identities. Figure 5 shows means with 90 percent confidence intervals for the two components of identity in Estonia. Ethnic Estonians (EE,  $n = 149-150$ ) scored higher on the historical component (M 3.05, SD 1.07) and the geographical component (M 0.86, SD 1.60) than the Russian-speaking minority (ER,  $n = 53-54$ ) (M 1.40, SD 1.71, Levene test significant,  $t(69.3)=6.68 p<.001$ ; and M 0.24, SD 2.12, Levene test significant,  $t(71.8)=1.98 p=.05$  two-tailed).

**Figure 5: Identification with historical and geographical identities within Estonia**



**3.3. Links between Social Identities and Stereotypes**

The geographical and historical social identities of the participants may influence their perceptions of the in-group and out-groups. Among ethnic Estonians only regional identity correlates significantly with the value stereotypes. The closer Estonia was tied to Northern Europe, the more Self-Enhancement was attributed to “the Russian-speakers” ( $r = -.18 p<.05$ ), “the Russians” ( $r = -.27 p=.001$ ), and “the Estonians” ( $r = -.20, p<.05$ ). Correlations were significant for the majority group, even though they did not follow our predictions. Among the Russian-speaking minority historical identity ( $r = .36/-.36$ , both  $p<.01$ ) and Estonia’s place in Europe ( $r = .23, n.s./-.41, p<.01$ ) correlated with the hetero-stereotype about “the Estonian” (Table 1). The more a member of the Russian-speaking minority identified with North Europe and Estonia, the less extreme the description of Estonians became. But the more closely they identified with East Europe and the former Soviet Union, the more conspicuously they contrasted Estonians to their own group and described them as being more conservative and self-enhancing people. The results for the Russian-speaking minority support hypothesis 2.

**Table 1: Correlations between identities and value stereotypes**

Sender about Targets	Historical identity: Estonia vs. former Soviet Union		Estonia’s place in Europe: North vs. East	
	Self-Transcendence	Conservation	Self-Transcendence	Conservation
<b>Ethnic Estonians</b>				
Typical Estonians	.06	.02	-.20*	-.02
Typical Russian-speakers	-.09	-.14	-.27**	.03
Typical Russians	-.06	-.11	-.18*	.15
<b>Russian-speaking minority</b>				
Typical Estonians	.36**	-.36**	.23	-.40**
Typical Russian-speakers	-.06	-.04	.06	-.01
Typical Russians	-.17	.25	-.08	-.14

Note: Ethnic Estonians,  $n = 143-145$ . Russian-speaking minority,  $n = 49-50$ . \*\* $p<.01$ , \* $p<.05$ .

#### 4. Discussion

We used Schwartz's human values (1992) to analyse agreement and accuracy in stereotypes about typical group members. For the comparison we used representative value preferences from the European Social Survey.

Even though there was no accuracy in stereotypes about value preferences of ethnic Estonians, the Russian-speaking minority, and the Russians, we found them to be socially shared across the students who were ethnic Estonians or belonged to the Russian-speaking minority, as both groups agreed on their location in the value circle. When geographical and historical social identities diverged this was associated with the strength and direction of the stereotypes of the minority group.

At the time of the survey, an environment of conflict between ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority was observable in Estonia. For people in Estonia the Russian neighbours represented a constantly accessible and meaningful comparison group. Consequently, the ethnic identities of the respondents were permanently salient.

We presented a standardised method which made statistical statements about agreement and accuracy of in-group- and out-group stereotypes possible. At the level of student groups we found agreement in the attributions about typical group members: ethnic Estonians were seen as being more conservative than the Russian-speaking minority and Russians. These locations, however, did not accurately correspond to the representative self-ratings from the ESS. Still, Eicher and Wilhelm (2008) as well as Lönnqvist and colleagues (forthcoming) found some accuracy of the attribution in their studies. In our data, the Conservation versus Openness to Change dimension was used to differentiate between the groups. It seems national character stereotypes fulfil the function of maintaining a national identity of self and other (Terracciano et al. 2005). Among the ethnic minority, the expected intergroup-contrast underlying value stereotypes was found by correlating stereotypes with different social identities. The more a member of the Russian-speaking minority identified with the former Soviet Union and tied Estonia to East Europe, the more accentuated the values he or she attributed to the Estonian majority

group; values attributed to typical members of the in-group were judged as not typical for an out-group member.

It seems that Estonia's accession to the European Union changed the relevant dimensions for comparison for the ethnic groups. Belonging to Europe – the main purpose of which is to bring people of different backgrounds closer together – firstly instead had the effect of dividing people within Estonia. The risks that Europe can create are often overlooked in politics. Although Vihalemm and Kalmus (2009) find a homogenisation of mental structures among the youngest generations in Estonia, we still found a dis-sensus for historic and geographical identities. While ethnic Estonians showed a strong identification with Estonia and North vs. East Europe, the Russian-speaking students did not want to give up Estonia's Soviet past and saw Estonia as more balanced in its geographical belonging. As contrast in stereotypes relates to the identification with East Europe and the Soviet Union, identities free of conflict for both ethnic groups have not yet been formed.

Globalisation and European Union enlargement have increased interest in other cultures and strengthened bonds with people living sometimes thousands of miles away. On the other hand, ethnic groups within the same country often see what they have in common only when they are confronted with people from other nations and cultures, for example on their vacations. Guiding principles in people's lives rated for social groups were not accurately attributed or simply exaggerated descriptions, they did not correspond to the self-reported cultural values of these groups. The representative national characteristics assessed in the ESS had nothing in common with the attribution of the students, which can mean that respondents were simply not able to make accurate judgments.

We found that Estonia's accession to the European Union may have had negative effects for inter-group relations within the own country. In moral terms, the majority and the minority within a country potentially perceive themselves as being the more prototypical group in terms of the superordinate category (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004). For example, the removal of the monument by the majority in 2007 was judged as

un-European by the threatened minority. Whatever caused the April 2007 riots in Tallinn, it went hand in hand with increased self-reported cultural differences and took place after EU accession. If people belonging to different ethnic groups within a society start to describe themselves as increasingly divergent, it enables people to justify conflicts. The riots are an example for the relationship between cultural differences and inter-group behaviour.

Still, there is no proving that the described self-reported and attributed value differences lead to the riots or conflicts within the country. Nevertheless, our results suggest a positive influence on inter-group relationships, if social identities like the strong connection to North Europe among the ethnic Estonians and the maintenance of nostalgic historic identities among the Russian-speaking minority would be less emphasised.

The study shows that the social categories which unite us make us comparable and thus also can drive us further apart. Policy makers from other countries could learn from this Estonian example when they have to deal with identities designed to unite several ethnic groups.

An obvious limitation in our data is the small sample. In online surveys the participating subjects must have had ac-

cess to the internet and ability to use it. There is no control for the situational and personal conditions under which the questionnaire is filled out (Birnbbaum 2004). Additionally, voluntary response samples are always biased and the results need to be interpreted with regard to gender bias. The respondents were 78 percent females. Still, there is no reason to assume that women systematically differ from men in their value stereotypes about the in-group and out-groups.

Characteristics of stereotypes are dependent on their content and context (Operario and Fiske 2001). This study was conducted to make mechanisms of contrast visible. We presented the PVQ items together with a block of stereotype targets. The order of the targets was not randomised. It is therefore possible that the observed group attributes were partly an artefact of the order of the presented categories (Tversky and Gati 1978).

We conclude that social identities and value stereotypes rather than real cultural differences can account for current conflicts within Estonia. Although we consider the value theory (Schwartz 1992) a useful approach to the study of stereotypes, further research is needed.



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**Appendix**

Weights for the axes of the value circle, derived from the ESS (rounds 1–4).

(Ipsatized items of the Portrait Value Questionnaire PVQ21).

PVQ 21	Self-Transcendence (vs. Self-Enhancement)	Conservation (vs. Openness to Change)
Constant	-.975	-.245
ipctiv	-.056	.135
imprich	.178	-.030
ipeqopt	-.173	.026
ipshabt	.163	-.013
impsafe	.033	-.153
impdiff	-.024	.148
ipfrule	.048	-.137
ipudrst	-.216	.070
ipmodst	-.102	-.057
ipgdtim	.001	.138
impfree	-.081	.116
iphlppl	-.218	.045
ipsuces	.182	-.017
ipstrgv	.016	-.150
ipadvnt	.047	.113
ipbhprp	-.008	-.156
iprspt	.159	-.122
iplylfr	-.232	.053
impenv	-.179	-.015
imptrad	.011	-.134
impfun	.006	.132

*Note:* In social science there is an ongoing debate about the adequate level of analysis. We derived the axes of the values circle at the individual level, analysing overall correlations of the ESS multi-round multi-country sample (countries times rounds = 98). Recently Fischer, Vauclair, Fontaine, and Schwartz (2010) found a high level of equivalence in the structure of values at the individual and culture level, which may justify the use of “citizen scores” i.e., group averages on individual level constructs (Leung and Bond 2004). We merged the data files of all four rounds of the ESS and applied a multiplication of the design weights, the country weights per round, and a new round weight, which divides countries total N by the number of its round participations (e.g., Germany participated in all four rounds, so its product of design weight and country weight was multiplied by 0.25). To resolve the individual response tendency the Schwartz items were ipsatized in the following way: from each person's score on an item the average score that the person gave to all twenty-one value items was subtracted.

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# Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne

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## Vol. 5 (1) 2011

**Focus:  
Violence and Violence  
Research in the  
Global South**

**Editorial** (p. 3)

**Guest Editorial** Peter Imbusch / Alex Veit (pp. 4 – 12)

**Violence and Violence Research in Africa South of the Sahara**

Alex Veit / Vanessa Barolsky / Suren Pillay (pp. 13 – 31)

**Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and**

**Structural Overview** Boris Wilke / Jochen Hippler / Muhammad Zakria Zakar (pp. 32 – 54)

**Violence Research in Northeast and Southeast Asia:**

**Main Themes and Directions** Oliver Hensengerth (pp. 55 – 86)

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

**Review** Peter Imbusch / Michel Misse / Fernando Carrión (pp. 87 – 154)

**Scarcity and Abundance Revisited: A Literature Review on Natural Resources**

**and Conflict** Stormy-Annika Mildner / Wiebke Wodni / Gitta Lauster (pp. 155 – 172)

**How Does Militant Violence Diffuse in Regions? Regional Conflict Systems**

**in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies** Nadine Ansorg (pp. 173 – 187)

**Open Section**

**Difficulties Measuring and Controlling Homicide in Rio de Janeiro** Steffen Zdun (pp. 188 – 199)

**Affirmative Action and Ethnic Identity in Black and Indigenous Brazilian Children**

Dalila Xavier de França / Marcus Eugênio Oliveira Lima (pp. 200 – 210)

**Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts:**

**The Estonian Example** Henrik Dobewall / Micha Strack (pp. 211 – 223)

► **Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among**

**Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne** Henrik Hartmann (pp. 224 – 233)



# Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne

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This small-scale, qualitative study examines how five young male second-generation Turkish immigrants perceive racial discrimination by ethnic Germans and to what extent this perception influences their collective identities. The typology of interactional patterns the interviewees describe as racial discrimination has four elements: a perception of distrust, a distancing gaze, denial of belonging and rule enforcement by members of the German majority. The interviewees, particularly those who are highly educated and socially mobile, identify with a common *Ausländer* (foreigner) identity in response to experiences of discrimination. This identity is regarded a shared identity marker by immigrants of different backgrounds. It appears as a positive and affirmative identity of difference, which creates a unique type of social capital.

## 1. Research Objectives and Theoretical Basis

The research question that guides this study is how the interviewees, as second generation Turkish immigrants in Germany, perceive discrimination against them on the institutional, structural and interpersonal level. Additionally, the research is guided by the question of how this perception influences their social categorization and membership in collective identity groups. In order to develop a response, it is necessary to first outline the theoretical foundation that the research questions are based upon. I therefore begin by defining racial discrimination and its dimensions and briefly sketching out processes of collective identity formations of Turkish immigrants in Germany. Some theoretical perspectives are also given on how subjective experiences of discrimination may influence collective identities of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Discrimination can be defined as “otherism” on the basis of categories such as ethnicity, religion, gender or “race” and by means of “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or

preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life” (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965). Kamali (2009) divides the concept of discrimination into three categories: individual, institutional, and structural. While individual discrimination addresses individual and everyday actions based on personal prejudices, institutional discrimination is based on the formal and informal institutional routines and norms that govern human interaction in any society. Markets, government agencies, education and health systems, political parties, associations and NGOs are examples of such institutions. The norms, ideologies, category systems and stereotypes that cut across institutions of a society and restrict the opportunity structures of its “others” can be captured with the term “structural discrimination”. However, since the category of

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institutional discrimination often includes structural aspects, no clear theoretical differentiation between the terms can be made, and researchers therefore often choose to combine the two (Kamali 2009, 5–9).

Peucker (2010, 10–13) adds a further distinction between interpersonal, institutional and structural discrimination as “objective” categories on the one hand, and “subjective” experiences of discrimination on the other. He also offers mechanisms for each category. In this model, interpersonal discrimination may be motivated by resentment, projection of statistical information about a group onto an individual, avoidance of anticipated negative reactions by others, or opportunistic reasons. Structural forms of discrimination work through legal arrangements, conflicting political goals, past-in-present effects, interdependences of different forms of discrimination, or institutional arrangements. Although, according to Peucker, subjective experiences of discrimination, are not classifiable and quantifiable like objective categories, they are of central importance because the feeling of exclusion is real for the individual (Peucker 2010, 12; also Salentin 2007). Structural discrimination is inherently connected to interpersonal discrimination and perceived discrimination. This is because discriminatory structures in a society are often reflected in unconscious negative attitudes of majority members toward members of minorities (Quillian 2006, 314ff.). Discriminatory structures are then “actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices”, which members of marginalized groups regard as “part of the expected, the unquestionable, and what is seen as normal by the dominant group” (Essed 1991, 52). Qualitative research on discrimination in the school sector shows, for example, that negative attitudes of teachers toward immigrant pupils have a direct impact on their performance and may thus serve as an explanation of their lower attainment (Flam 2007, 87ff.).

In Germany, immigrants of Turkish origin form the largest ethnic minority. They are regarded by the majority population as the “typical foreigner” (Ansbrock et al. 2009: 156)

and subjected to multiple forms of discrimination as immigrants and as Muslims (Schneider 2001, 240; Schiffauer 2007, 78; Peucker 2010, 13). Given the assumption that second-generation Turkish immigrants in Germany will suffer from structural as well as interpersonal discrimination, it is useful to study how they perceive their ethnicity as a relevant collective identity category and how this category is constructed in relation to perceptions of discrimination by the German majority society. It has been noted that the collective identities of people with a family history of migration are particularly precarious and socially contested: While they can build upon multiple bases for collective identities, they also encounter “otherism” and therefore experience a tension between self- and other-identification (Mecheril 2003). Their identity construction is thus a dynamic and pluriform process, which works actively with a network of various identity criteria (Hall 1994; Bhabha 1994; Bukow et al. 2001; Riegel 2004).

The minority group’s level of self-segregation and avoidance is usually strongly influenced by their assumptions about the dominant group’s intentions: When distrust leads to a lack of communication, processes of ascription create their own dynamics of insecurity, fear, stereotyping and cautiousness, which creates the perception of a “worst-case scenario” situation (Booth 1979). Therefore, the mere perception of discrimination must be considered an important element of the identity construction of immigrants and ethnic minorities. For a long time, few studies on discrimination in Germany took into account the immigrants’ own perspective on discrimination (Bjørge 2003, 785), but recent qualitative accounts show that immigrant youth regard subtle forms of exclusion as more burdensome than the possibility to encounter overt racist violence (Keim 2003) and identify a common *Ausländer* identity that immigrants relate to in reaction to experiences of discrimination, which encloses an inner heterogeneity with a common belonging that is based on the shared experience of growing up as a marginalized immigrant in Germany (Mannitz 2006).<sup>1</sup> Several quantitative studies examine how perceived discrimination correlates with a collective iden-

<sup>1</sup> *Ausländer* literally translates as foreigner. However, the word is widely used a collective term for all

immigrants, including subsequent generations (Schneider 2001, 233–34).



tity in opposition to the German ethnic group. Döring (2007) finds a strong correlation between perceived discrimination and negative attitude towards the German majority. Skrobanek (2007) demonstrates that the relationship between perceived discrimination and ethnic dissociation works both ways, where any one aspect may aggravate the other. While he confirms that immigrant youth who feel discriminated against tend to orient toward their original ethnic group, there is also evidence that individuals who hold the social capital of a minority ethnic group tend to subjectively perceive more discrimination.

## 2. Research Design and Methodology

The data presented in this article originates from a research project carried out in August and September 2008 in Cologne. The project included ethnographic fieldwork in a neighbourhood in the Mauenheim district and interviews with five young men who grew up there. The neighbourhood is almost exclusively inhabited by former guest workers and their families. Almost all the approximately eight hundred residents are low-income Turkish immigrants of the first, second and third generations. The interviewees who took part in this study are second-generation Turkish immigrants who grew up in the neighbourhood. Aslan (25, mail courier), Faruk (17, school student) and Cemil (23, unemployed) still live in the neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup> Aslan, Cemil and to some extent also Faruk are strongly integrated in their ethnically segregated community, which offers little upward mobility. Salih (23) and Hamit (23), are university students and have both moved to a different city to study. Their families left the neighbourhood when they were children and moved elsewhere in the city. Their peers are predominantly ethnic Germans and people from other ethnic backgrounds.

The interviewees were selected as a convenience sample through a social worker at a community centre. All interviews opened with a mention of the “Kalk revolt that had taken place in Cologne a few months beforehand: two weeks of public protests in the Kalk district by immigrants against their “unjust treatment in Germany” (Stinauer

2008), following the killing of a young man of Moroccan descent (for an overview of the incident and its aftermath see Bukow and Preißling 2010, 162ff.). The introductory questions asked whether the interviewees could emphasize with the protesters’ feelings. The interviews soon moved away from the protests toward personal experiences, following a semi-structured script that included topics like school and work, friendships, and personal experiences of “unjust” treatment in everyday life. The interview made no explicit reference to the term “discrimination” as that would be likely to activate negative attitudes and a heightened awareness of discrimination among interviewees (Salentin 2007). During analysis of the interviews, the researcher attempted to identify similarities and differences in patterns of definition and interpretation of perceived discriminatory incidents, to identify patterns of discrimination as the interviewees perceive them. In its methodology, the research process loosely followed the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Cobin 1990).

## 3. The Perception of Discrimination: A Typology

Although each interviewee approached the subject differently and took very distinct perspectives, several types of experiences that came up in the interviews were common to all five. These very specific types of perceptions were of striking similarity in all five accounts. While the interviewees talked about their experiences in relation to institutions such as school or workplace, the experiences they shared were exclusively on the interpersonal level. The four types of perceived discrimination that were consistently brought up were negative stereotyping and distrust, a particular “gaze”, denial of belonging to German society, and the experience of ethnic Germans tending to explain rules and laws to them because of their ethnicity.

### 3.1. The Perception of Discrimination as an Individual Matter

During the interviews, it quickly became apparent that the interviewees did not report instances where they personally experienced discrimination that was directly linked to institutions. This is not to say that they did not identify

<sup>2</sup> The names of the interviewees have been changed.

structural differences between Turkish immigrants and ethnic Germans. In fact, this was brought up by most interviewees. Yet, institutions were generally not seen as the cause of these differences. Sometimes, they attributed differences to themselves. In the interview with Aslan, this perception became the theme of a dialogue:<sup>3</sup>

*Aslan:* Did you meet Faruk's brother? He comes here to the community centre sometimes.

*Interviewer:* Yes, I met him. I helped some kids with their homework in the afternoon. I met him there and talked to him.

*Aslan:* So, what do you think of the kids?

*Interviewer:* ...It was a bit surprising to see that almost all the kids attend *Hauptschule*.<sup>4</sup>

*Aslan:* Yes, that is sad. It has to do with their parents. They don't speak German and there are many Turks here. They are all in one place, very isolated. ... And when one of the kids wants to attend *Realschule*, they say "No, *Hauptschule* is better for him." They don't care about that, about the future. ... If I had known how important education is, I would have focused more on it as well.

From Aslan's perspective, social problems are not ascribed primarily to institutions – here the education system – but to people who fail to take the chances they are given. A similar perspective comes from Hamit at the beginning of the interview, when he describes himself as foreigner (*Ausländer*) even though he is a German citizen. When I ask him whether negative experiences with state institutions have anything to do with him not feeling like a proper German citizen, he responds:

That is not a problem. I know how stuff works, I can find out about things and I know the laws and rights here. ... The legal system is great, we have a working democracy, and ... no, I can't complain about that. ... Of course there are little stumbling blocks like in job applications, but the real problem is the human, interpersonal issues.

This statement points to "human, interpersonal issues", which emerged in all five interviews as the main issue interview partners wanted to talk about. Interpersonal in-

stances of discrimination were perceived as the most frustrating by all five interviewees, much time was dedicated to this topic.

### 3.2. Types of Interpersonal Discrimination

#### 3.2.1. Negative Stereotyping and Distrust

The interviewees' perceptions of negative stereotypes based on their ethnicity and distrust from members of the German majority society are almost uniform. The immediate stereotypes they feel they include low social class, poor education and criminal intent. Cemil describes this bluntly: "Germans think that we [Turks] are loud and criminal." Some interviewees brought up concrete examples where they felt that native Germans did not consider them trustworthy on the basis of their Turkish ethnicity and the stereotypes ascribed to them. Hamit related how he was explicitly made aware of this on different occasions:

When people see me for the first time, black hair, bearded, they often think: "He's a scruff".<sup>5</sup> I've heard it a thousand times before. They haven't even spoken to me! Sometimes a person comes to me a few days after they got to know me and says: "At first I really thought you were a scruff. But I got to know you, and you are not like that." ... Then I just think: now it has happened again.

Faruk – a tall, heavy man, with dark hair and a trimmed beard like Hamit – says: "when I'm on the bus, with my headphones on, with my looks, people think I am an *Ausländer*. They wouldn't believe I go to *Gymnasium*."

Aslan brought up an experience similar to Hamit's, where an ethnic German openly states their distrust of ethnic Turks. He described an incident a few days before our interview. It had been the leaving do for a colleague he had worked with for a long time and had grown to like. On departure, the colleague compliments him for being different from the negative image he has of Turks. Aslan explained:

All my colleagues are German. That's okay; I get along well with them. But today, it was [my colleague's] last day and he said to

3 All interview sequences quoted here were translated from German into English by the author.

4 Secondary schools in Germany are organised in a three-tier system. *Gymnasium* is the most academic

(university entrance qualification), *Hauptschule* the least academic. *Realschule* is the middle tier.

5 The German word used here was *Assi*.

me: “I am going to miss you. You are the only Turkish guy I get along with.” And I went: “What’s going on?” In this moment he had just ruined everything for me. . . . That has happened to me so often, people saying: “You’re a cool Turk, you are the only one I can talk to.” Then I always think: “Have you ever even tried to talk to a Turkish person apart from me?”

The two previous quotes depict incidents where the connection of trust and discrimination were made explicit. They are the most blatant examples in the interviews of how the interviewees perceive discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity. Apart from that, all interviewees reported that they constantly felt that they were not trusted in small day-to-day interactions with ethnic Germans. Hamit described this as a “friendly distance”: “There is always a distance first. They are friendly, they are nice – that is not the problem. But it takes time for them to open up.” Aslan also noticed this form of distance with ethnic Germans in his apartment building. He told me how he often overcomes situations where people act distantly by approaching them directly. He also did this with an old lady who lives next to his apartment: “She has lived next to me for twenty years but she doesn’t know who I am – while I know who she is, of course. So one day, I said to her: ‘Good morning, Madam.’ . . . And now, whenever I see her, she greets me as well. She is really nice – probably always has been. She just didn’t want to have anything to do with me. I think maybe she was a little scared. I don’t know, these people are, well, different.”

### 3.2.2. The Distancing Gaze

Another type of perceived discrimination that Cemil, Faruk and Hamit brought up with striking similarity is connected to the perception of distance and distrust. They described how they felt a certain suspicious gaze, which they found hard to interpret. Cemil said: “They don’t look me in the eye . . . Maybe they are scared of me.” Faruk described a similar feeling, but made out different reasons for it:

People look at me strangely, I don’t know why. It’s not that they are scared, it’s more that they think I can’t behave, that I’m a scruff or something like that. You can really feel it from the looks.

Hamit expresses it this way:

When I go to an office or something like that, people always look at me weirdly. Well, it’s not really a certain look, but you

can feel it. I cannot say what the person thinks, but I see how they look at me. . . . They have this stupid look on their faces, not warm or anything. They must think: Well, he’s surely a scruff and wants to annoy me. . . . And then I see someone else coming in and they are nice right from the start. I have to earn that first.

### 3.2.3. Denial of Belonging

All the interviewees voiced a perception that ethnic Germans tell them that they do not belong. All recounted instances where they were told that they could go home to the country they “really” come from. Aslan described an argument he had with a German colleague, discussing a recent media report about a Turkish immigrant who had beaten up an elderly person:

We discussed that at work. And then we talked about the possibility of deportation and this guy says: “yeah, he deserves to be deported.” And I say: “Okay, but where?” “Well, to Turkey, where he came from.” And I replied: “So if a German person does it, should they send him to Spain because he’s been there on vacation?”

Salih uses a story of this type to explain where he believes racism starts:

There was a fight at the *Neumarkt*. And of course an *Ausländer* was involved. When the fight was broken up and people left, a woman came up and yelled after the guy: “Why don’t you go back where you came from?” and the guy stopped, turned around and shouted: “But that’s here.” When you look at that situation, [the woman] wouldn’t call herself racist, not at all. But that is the weakest level of racism.”

Cemil, talking about instances where people contest his belonging, said, “I was born here, and here in Germany is where I feel at home.” Yet, he is sure that “I don’t really belong here. I am an *Ausländer*.” He went on, describing this state of limbo and the lack of appreciation he feels:

Germans shouldn’t talk so negatively about the Turks. They’ve accomplished a lot here. My dad worked at the Ford factory for over thirty years. But still we are *Ausländer*. But we are looked at so negatively. They don’t want us here.

### 3.2.4. The Power to Define and Enforce Rules

All five interviewees mentioned frequent experiences of discrimination involving condescending behaviour where ethnic Germans would explain the formal and informal rules of social behaviour in Germany. This led Cemil to

mock ethnic Germans generally as *Justizmenschen*.<sup>6</sup> “They always call the police. Even when I just throw away litter they start yelling: ‘I’m going to call the police!’” Hamit has had similar experiences, except that they concerned more subtle and informal rules: “If I talk to a German guy, the one thing he wants the most is to appear smart. ... He may have the lowest rank in the company, but still he’s cracking wise to me.” These rules, he says, are usually quite arbitrary and seem only to serve to emphasize that Hamit is the one who needs to learn and the native German person can explain the rules to him:

It might be really simple things, and it is actually quite ridiculous. At work I sometimes have to wash cars and people come to me and say: “That’s how we do it. First we wipe the windscreen, then the back window.” You know, it doesn’t matter what I do first! But they want to tell me how things are done!

Aslan recounts a similar experience at his job as a mail courier:

I was delivering boxes, heavy boxes. And I parked on the wrong side [of the street] so that I didn’t have to carry them across the whole street. It wasn’t a problem, it was a side street and there was enough space for other cars to pass by. Then someone started yelling: “You can’t stop here!” and I said: “I just want to unload, I’ll be gone in a second.” He replied: “Always the same with you foreigners. You don’t understand, do you? Why don’t you go home where you came from. Now take away your car or I’ll call the police.”

The interactions described by Cemil, Hamit and Aslan show their perception of how ethnic Germans individually claim to represent authority over formal and informal laws and regulations in Germany. It appears that they suggest that the interviewees, due to their ethnicity, do not know the rules or how to behave. It is up to ethnic Germans to supervise the actions of minorities. To Cemil, it seems to be in the nature of “Germans” to be *Justizmenschen*. In his stereotype of Germans, it is in their nature “to be quiet, orderly and pedantic.” Hamit and Aslan interpret their experiences rather as if this was a deliberate strategy by ethnic Germans to show their dominance.

#### 4. Framing the Perceptions of Discrimination Theoretically

All interviewees were able to name different types of interpersonal discrimination. They all, independently, share a strong perception of discrimination on the interpersonal level. In fact, even the categories of discriminatory behaviour mentioned by the interviewees were comparable to a large extent: negative stereotyping and distrust, a distancing “gaze”, denial of belonging, and the assumed power to define and enforce rules. This shows that there is a strong awareness of interpersonal discrimination, creating an experience perceived as injurious. Since they could be confronted with such behaviour anywhere, they blame the German majority society as a whole. Still, the interviewees acknowledge differences: Cemil regards many but not all Germans as *Justizmenschen*, Hamit says that he also counts ethnic Germans among his friends but “they are Germans who are a bit more open than usual.” Yet, acts of interpersonal discrimination seem to be connected to an uncertainty: they can occur at any time and be carried out by anyone.

The forms of discriminatory behaviour that seem to be most frustrating and annoying are incidents which seem comparatively harmless and which might appear unproblematic or even irrelevant to an outsider. This perception is best captured with the concept of everyday racism, which argues that “otherism” is reflected in everyday interaction between individuals of majority and minority racial groups. For individuals who face everyday racism, such subtle daily discrimination represents “nagging, annoying, debilitating, seemingly small, injustices one comes to expect” (Essed 2002, 203). This is a succinct description of the experiences Aslan, Faruk, Cemil, Salin and Hamit describe in their accounts. Their frequent invocation of the term *Ausländer* to define difference to ethnic Germans reflects the complexities of the categories “race” and “citizenship” as the basis for discrimination. In the vernacular, the term *Ausländer* has ceased to be merely a legal definition for non-citizens. Instead it has become a term that native Germans use to describe all immigrant groups regarded as culturally different (Schneider 2001,

<sup>6</sup> Meaning that rules are overly important to them.

233–34). In particular, incidents of contested belonging point to the relevance of ancestry and origin as markers of “otherization”. This highlights the racial dimension of the German concept of nationality, where “being white” and “being German” are so tightly intertwined (Walgenbach 2005). In terms of how the interviewees conceptualize their perception of discrimination, this study produced very similar results to recent research by Flam and Beauzamy (2008), which conceptualized different forms of everyday racism against immigrants on a European scale. In both studies, interviewees mentioned a certain gaze of scrutiny and rejection as a central dimension of perceived discrimination, as well as conditional and contested forms of acceptance.

Incidents of everyday discrimination should be understood as a complex of interpersonal behaviour and social structures, rather than simply as isolated interactions. As these structures change, so do the forms of everyday discrimination. Today, relations between majority society and immigrants in Germany are embedded in a context where immigrants “are increasingly becoming citizens who fight for their rights and seek to establish them by democratic means” (Schiffauer 2006, 98). One explanation for the predominant focus on everyday discrimination in the interviews might be related to these changing social structures. It seems that for the interviewees, everyday discrimination appear to be less unquestionable and less “normal” than theory often suggests. The way in which the interviewees describe instances of everyday discrimination and their reaction to them might instead indicate an increasing awareness of such forms of discrimination and an emergent social process that challenge discriminatory structures and their expression in the everyday life.

##### 5. The *Ausländer* Concept as a Collective Identity

All interviewees stated that experiences of interpersonal discrimination on the basis of their Turkish ethnicity lead them to dissociate from the dominant group of ethnic Germans. However, this dissociation did not necessarily lead them to primarily seek peers with a Turkish background. The dissociation also became manifest in an *Ausländer* identity, which is not tied to any ethnic categories but consists mainly of a categorization of difference to ethnic Ger-

mans. In the interviews, the term *Ausländer* seems to be used as an identity shared by all ethnic minorities that face discrimination. Throughout the interview, Hamit explicitly emphasized being *Ausländer* as his primary source of identity (before Turkish): “While the Turks form a big group and the immigrants from other countries form smaller communities, they all face the same problems.” He explained how this is reflected in everyday life using an example from his student job at a car rental agency:

The *Ausländer* there, they formed a group. It wasn't a Turkish group, it was everything: Poles, Croats, Iranians, whatever. It wasn't as if we had actively built this group, it somehow just happened. Of course there were also some Germans in that circle but they were more open-minded. As for other Germans, well, you heard stupid comments from them about *Ausländer* and then you didn't really feel like hanging out with them.

When asked on what basis he can identify with *Ausländer* better than with ethnic Germans, Hamit mentioned a certain way of communication: “The way you speak is different with other *Ausländer* from how you speak with Germans. It is mellower.” This mellowness, he believes, stems from the shared experience of becoming the “other” vis-à-vis the German majority and reflects a mutual understanding of these experiences. Like Hamit, Salih identifies the distinction between *German* and *Ausländer* as a major fault line he experiences. He remembers being sent to a *Gymnasium* where he was mostly among Germans. He recalls the time as one of racist bullying where he was “picked on for being Turkish and tormented with references to Hitler and the Nazis”. Things changed, he said, when he switched schools in grade eleven. It was the first time he “really felt alive and well at school”, he says, “because the class was extremely mixed. One half was German, while the others were *Ausländer*. There was everything: Palestinians, Ukrainians, Indians and many Turks.”

In contrast to the multi-ethnic *Ausländer* identity that Salih and Hamit emphasize, Faruk, Aslan and Cemil, whose lives are centred in the Turkish immigrant community on Etzelstrasse, regard their peers in the neighbourhood as the group they identify most with, so being “Turkish” constitutes their primary collective identity. Yet, they also use the German/*Ausländer* dichotomy to emphasize their difference to ethnic Germans. Faruk pointed out that he him-



self – despite his German nationality – does not subscribe to this term. To him, “Germans” are the dominant majority that he does not identify with, which is why difference to ethnic Germans is actively maintained and reproduced in his peer group: “If someone acts differently, you say he acts German. Even if he is Turkish, he simply acts German.” Cemil explained how he regarded being “Turkish” as superior to other immigrant groups in Germany. At the same time, he saw an *Ausländer* identity as a commonality in opposition to ethnic Germans: “Many Turks here hate Germans. But not only Germans, also Poles, Russians, whatever. But mostly, I think, Germans hate *Ausländer*.”

As the interviews show, the *Ausländer* identity is used to construct an inclusive immigrant culture that extends beyond particular ethnic origins. It becomes a frame of reference only through the shared experience of being the “other”. As Aslan says: “A German passport or a Turkish passport, it doesn’t matter to me. . . . Even if you have a German passport, you are not really German.” Hamit makes a similar remark:

You think to yourself: OK, I have a German passport but they don’t really want me here. As an *Ausländer*, you just need to watch the news: every day they report something, *Ausländer* this *Ausländer* that.

For Aslan, Faruk and Cemil, who consider their Turkish immigrant peers in their neighbourhood their main collective group, being *Ausländer* is merely one categorization amongst many others. Their Turkish identity is more important. For Salih and Hamit, who do not attach as much value to their Turkish ethnicity and do not live in such a tightly knit community, *Ausländer* is a more important collective identity, one which enables them to form bonds with other individuals of different backgrounds. The difference to Aslan, Faruk and Hamit becomes evident when we consider how Salih and Hamit regard the *Ausländer* identity primarily as a form of social capital that allows them to bond with new people from different backgrounds. Aslan, Faruk and Cemil use the *Ausländer* identity if anything to emphasize their belonging to their peer group at Etzelstrasse and to the ethnic group of Turkish immigrants more generally, which reflects their primary social capital. The results from this study cannot confirm

the hypothesis that integrated immigrants are less sensitive to subtle discrimination than marginalized or segregated individuals (Strobl 1998). Rather, Salih and Hamit, the most integrated participants, were the most aware and reflexive of discrimination. This, too, might be an indication of a process of increasing awareness of structures of racial discrimination and their contestation by those who suffer under them. Since Salih and Hamit possess high social mobility, networks and resources, they are more likely to challenge discriminatory structures. The study does confirm previous findings that immigrants regard everyday discrimination as more problematic than overt racist violence, which results in an ambivalent relationship to the German majority society in general. The resulting categorization as *Ausländer* creates a positive and affirming element of their identity. This is congruent with the argument that immigrants create a common identity in reaction to discriminatory experiences. For Salih and Hamit especially, this takes the form of a positive alternative to a mainstream German identity.

## 6. Conclusion

The central finding emerging from the interviews is a differentiation of perceived mechanisms of everyday discrimination, which was surprisingly similar across the interviews. These may be classified as: a perception of distrust, a distancing gaze, the denial of belonging, and rule enforcement. A second key finding of this study is that the interviewees, particularly those who are highly educated and socially mobile, adopt a common *Ausländer* identity as a response to experiences of discrimination, which they regard as an identity marker shared by immigrants and minorities of all backgrounds. It appears as a positive and affirmative identity of difference and creates a unique type of social capital. Both the typology of perceived discrimination and the positive identification as *Ausländer* are congruent with findings of the earlier studies outlined above.

While the small scale of the study severely limits the possibility to generalize, the qualitative data presented here provide empirical confirmation of previous findings and may also offer points of departure for future research. In particular, the high level of awareness of everyday discrimination rather contradicts the notion that

discrimination is something that is internalised. One possible explanation is the changing socio-structural conditions in Germany, which lead to a process of increasing con-

testation of discriminatory practices and structures. Additional research is definitely merited to confirm the findings suggested by this small-scale study.

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