

# Prevention or repression?

## *The false dilemma of*

# citizen security

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There is a marked contrast between the growing sense of insecurity among the population and the absence of consolidated statistics that would allow the phenomenon to be measured more objectively. This article seeks to make a contribution to the knowledge of the situation of citizen insecurity affecting the region, taking a comparative view based on the limited and not always reliable information available and looking at the problem from various standpoints, both social and economic. The authors begin by examining some manifestations of criminal violence in the 1990s, especially in urban areas, after which they review the most important theories on the study of violence, the profiles of victims and attackers, traditional and emerging forms of delinquency, the frequent relation between violence and unemployment, the economic cost of violence and delinquency, and the main policies adopted to deal with them. They then go on to examine the measures taken in the region with regard to citizen security, which have shown the need to use more integral forms of prevention (primary and secondary) and control for dealing with criminal violence and to consolidate the systems of crime statistics of the region in order to be able to identify the factors with the greatest incidence on criminal violence and the less visible forms taken by the latter.

# I

## A diagnosis of citizen security and violence in Latin America

### 1. The relations between delinquency and violence. Concepts of citizen and public security

In social science there are two basic theories on the study of violence and criminal conduct, which are used in various combinations: the theory of forms of socialization and the theory of rupture or anomy. The first of these emphasizes socialization, as it holds that violence has organizational, institutional and cultural dimensions which can lead to the selection of violent strategies by certain social actors. Thus, the theory put forward by Sutherland claims that the primary causes of delinquency lie in the existence of subcultural groups of criminals (friends, family, prison acquaintances) which pass on criminal know-how (ILPES, 1997).

The second theory places more emphasis on the structural and social dimensions as explanatory factors: violence stems from the breakdown or maladjustment of the social order, that is to say, from rapid social changes due to industrialization and urbanization which dissolve the traditional social control mechanisms and generate a gap between aspirations and the socially and culturally accepted means of making them come true (Martínez, 1990). Thus, for example, Malton's theory holds that criminal conduct depends on the capacity of individuals to attain their goals in line with their social environment and the importance attached to economic success (ILPES, 1997). From this standpoint, then, there is an important correlation between poverty and delinquency and social exclusion.

Against a background of rapid changes in the economic field and the appearance of new economic needs, the deterioration in the quality of life of broad sectors of the population and the failure to solve long-standing problems (civil wars, inequality of income distribution and access to land), delinquency seems a self-defence mechanism for unlucky losers (traditional forms of delinquency such as burglary, theft or armed robbery) or as a new way of making

easy money through corruption or through new methods such as laundering hot money, electronic fraud, etc. (Moulian, 1997).

With regard to the definition of violence, there is some degree of consensus that it should be understood as the use or threat of physical or psychological force with harmful intent on a recurrent basis and as a way of settling conflicts (Guerrero, 1997; McAlister, 1998; Tironi and Weinstein, 1990). Violence is related to aggressiveness but is more than just an aggressive action, because it is recurrent and forms part of a process; it may also be noted that there are aggressive actions which are not violent. Aggressiveness has a psychological basis in frustration, but in order for frustration to give rise to aggressive actions it must be combined with other elements: for example, obstacles to the attainment of an anticipated objective, rage over arbitrary treatment, or a habit of responding aggressively to problem situations (Tironi and Weinstein, 1990). In other words, violence and related aspects such as aggression or frustration depend on a complex set of psychological, social and cultural elements.

In defining citizen security, emphasis has been placed on various dimensions and levels, especially its intangible and subjective nature. Broadly, it may be defined as concern for quality of life and human dignity in terms of freedom, access to the market and social opportunities. Poverty and lack of opportunities, unemployment, hunger, deterioration of the environment, political repression, violence, delinquency and drug addiction can all be threats to citizen security (ILPES, 1997, p. 5). From another standpoint, it is held that citizen security mainly means not living in fear of suffering a violent attack, knowing that one's physical integrity will be respected, and, above all, being able to enjoy the privacy of one's home without the fear of assault and moving freely around the streets without the fear of being robbed or attacked. Security would thus be a cultural construct involving an equalitarian form of sociability, an environment freely shared by all (UNDP, 1998, p. 128).

At a more limited level, public security has been defined as the set of coherent and interlinked policies and actions which serve to guarantee the public peace by the prevention and repression of delinquency and offences against public order through a system of penal and administrative control (González Ruiz, López and Núñez, 1994).

## 2. Factors associated with violence

The complexity of violence is reflected in the great variety of different types and levels it displays. By its nature, violence may be classified as physical, psychological or sexual; by its victims, as violence against children, women, or old people; by its motive, as political, racial, etc., and by its place of occurrence, as domestic, workplace, street violence, etc. (Guerrero, 1998; Larrain, Vega and Delgado, 1997). Violence can also be defined according to the effects it causes in its victims and may be cross-referenced as personal or institutional and physical or psychological violence.

In view of the nature of the phenomenon of violence, it is necessary to adopt a multi-causal approach –like the epidemiological approach used in public health– in which the aim is not to establish the cause of violence but to identify the factors that produce it or are most frequently associated with it (Guerrero, 1998; PAHO, 1996) and those that usually operate together, with emphasis on the work of prevention. In this approach, the causality is always interpreted as probability, so that the more factors of risk are present at the same time, the greater the probability that the phenomenon will occur (Fedesarrollo, 1996).

The factors of risk may be classified in three main groups:

i) factors related with the position and family and social status of the persons in question: sex, age, education, socialization in an atmosphere of violence, consumption of alcohol and drugs;

ii) social, economic and cultural factors: unemployment, poverty, overcrowding, social inequality, violence in the mass media, culture of violence, and

iii) contextual and institutional factors: war, drug trafficking, corruption, availability of firearms, parties and other festive occasions.

Quantitative information is available for some Latin American countries on some of the social and economic shortcomings usually associated with ur-

ban violence<sup>1</sup> (table 1). The interaction of these quantifiable factors of risk with others of a more qualitative nature on which information is not available can give rise to a climate of violence. The factors set forth in the table should also undoubtedly be related with others of a historical and cultural nature in order to understand the phenomena of urban violence and the differences between one country and another. Nevertheless, the quantification which has been made of some social and economic factors does indicate situations of risk that should be tackled with effective public policies.

## 3. Poverty, delinquency and urban violence

The growth of urban poverty in the last decade is usually seen as being associated with the increase in violence, delinquency and insecurity in the cities. Violence and insecurity do not depend only on poverty, however (box 1). Experience shows that, rather than poverty, it is inequality –together with other social, cultural and psychological factors– that generates more violence. This allows us to gain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon of delinquency, in both its traditional and emergent forms. Various studies carried out in Peru and Colombia have found no relation between poverty and violence: the poorest regions are not the most violent ones, nor is there a correlation between poverty and the number of murders (Fedesarrollo, 1996; Reyna and Toche, 1999).

The existence of networks of mutual relations and confidence in a community fosters much smoother and less violent forms of interaction, even in conditions of poverty. This “social capital” (Putnam, 1993) can make the difference between a poor community with low levels of violence and a community with a similar level of poverty but higher levels of violence. However, it has been pointed out that there is also a “perverse” form of social capital in which the networks, contacts and associations serve illegal activities (Rubio, 1998a).

A fairly widespread interpretation on the generation of violence is that poverty generates frustration, and this leads to radical or aggressive forms of conduct which, in turn, give rise to violent situations. Taking this point of view, the idea is that the crises

<sup>1</sup> This information is taken from the *Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998* (ECLAC, 1999).

TABLE 1

## Latin America: Presence of urban violence risk factors, 1997

Quantifiable risk factors	Countries with a high presence	Countries with a medium presence	Countries with a low presence
1. Urban income inequality (ratio of 10% richest to 40% poorest)	Ratio of over 11: Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Panama	Ratio of 8 to 11: Argentina, Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Venezuela	Ratio of up to 8: Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay
2. Poverty of urban households	40% or more of households: Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Venezuela	Between 20% and 39% of households: Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic	Less than 20% of households: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay
3. Rate of open urban unemployment	Over 10%: Argentina, Colombia, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela	Between 6% and 10%: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru	Less than 6%: Bolivia, Mexico
4. Percentage of urban young people between 13 and 17 who neither study nor work	Over 15%: Honduras, Uruguay	Between 8% and 15%: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Venezuela	Less than 8%: Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Dominican Republic
5. Educational deficit (percentage of urban young people aged 14 or 15 who have not completed 6 years' schooling)	Over 20%: Brazil, Honduras	Between 10% and 20%: Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Venezuela	Less than 10%: Argentina, Chile, Panama, Uruguay
6. Percentage of urban young people between 13 and 17 who work	Over 15%: Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay	Between 5% and 15%: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Uruguay	Up to 5%: Chile, Panama

Source: Prepared by the authors on the basis of ECLAC (1999).

## Box 1

## POVERTY IS NOT THE ONLY CAUSE OF DELINQUENCY

*If it were:*

- There would be more delinquency in the least developed countries, while the richest and most highly developed countries would necessarily be the safest.
- The worst security crises should occur during the most devastating economic crises, but this has not necessarily been the case.
- The areas of a country with the highest crime rates would be the most economically depressed areas, but this is not always so.
- Among delinquents detected, there should be many workers earning the minimum wage, unemployed, or people who have been looking for work for a long time.
- Crime rates should go down as the economy grows.
- The solution to delinquency would depend on economic policy and on the wealth distribution pattern.
- All poor people would be potential delinquents.

Source: Prepared on the basis of data from the Mexican Institute for the Study of Organized Crime, A.C. (IMECO, 1998).

in the economies of the region mean that large numbers of persons remain outside the formal labour market and the resulting frustration drives them to aggressive forms of behaviour, which would explain the waves of violence breaking over the big cities of the region. However, this form of analysis (poverty-frustration-aggression) may be too superficial to account for the varied and changing situations of violence observed. Indeed, there is evidence both for and against this approach. A study made in Santiago, Chile, estimated that an increase of one percentage point in unemployment leads to 4% more offences against property, thefts and robberies (García, 1997). In the same country, however, it was found that there was a greater propensity to violence among those waiting to enter the labour force (jobless) or those already incorporated in it as wage earners than among those most marginalized from the labour market (Tironi, 1989). Attitudes of adaptation and resignation were observed among informal workers. It would seem, then, that aggression is not the only response to frustration, and that individuals who do react aggressively do so because they have learned to respond in this manner.

Even though poverty may not be the sole cause of delinquency, it is nevertheless associated with it, as are other factors such as inequality and social injustice. Many of those who blame poverty for delinquency base their views on the profile of delinquents arrested and punished, who are mostly males of a low socio-economic level. It must be borne in mind, however, that the percentage of arrests is only small compared with the total number of offences committed. There are a large number of unpunished offences, such as economic offences or cases of corruption, which are often difficult to prove, involve economically powerful groups, and are likely to be committed by persons of higher educational and economic status.

#### 4. The measurement of offences and their economic cost

The measurement of violent offences is a difficult matter because of the variety of definitions and classifications used to record them in different countries, due to the differences in the levels and types of violence in Latin America. The concept of violence is usually limited to physical violence, in order to facilitate the use of traditional forms of data collection, such as records of injuries or deaths. Although it is

more difficult to assess the psychological or emotional damage caused, however, this may nevertheless have disabling and permanent consequences (Larraín, Vega and Delgado, 1997).

Most of the countries of the region do not have a nationwide institution responsible for collecting, processing and consolidating this type of statistics, which makes it more difficult to determine the size of the problem and to construct series which show the evolution of violence and citizen security. With regard to the recording of offences, there are three types of sources of information: i) police records, which register the complaints made and reflect the response of civil society to the offences in question (De Rementería, 1998); ii) judicial records, which register court cases, and iii) health records, which register deaths and injuries. No country of the region carries out ongoing public opinion surveys to assess the level and evolution of citizen security.

Moreover, the reliability of the statistics is affected by the under-recording of some offences, such as common violence and, above all, sexual and intra-family violence. This latter type of violence is on the increase in almost all the countries, assuredly because more official complaints are lodged now that this type of conduct is considered a criminal offence rather than a private matter.

Some countries –Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Peru and Brazil– have made improvements in the typification and definition of levels of violence, in the measurement of its economic cost, and in other forms of assessment of the phenomenon such as surveys among victims which make it possible to analyse the true rate of occurrence of violence.

Generally speaking, analyses of violence are based on the statistics of violent crimes, especially homicides, because of their serious nature and the fact that they tend to be recorded more carefully and reliably, thus permitting their comparison over time and between countries (Rubio, 1998b). For the purpose of comparisons in the region, the rate of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants was used, which shows that between the 1980s and the mid-1990s there was an increase in violence in the region. International comparisons made in the early 1990s put Latin America and the Caribbean among the most violent regions of the world, with average rates close to 20 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Guerrero, 1998). More recently, in 1995, a case study in six countries of the region (Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador,

Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) calculates the rate at 30 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Londoño, 1998).

Between the 1980s and the mid-1990s, homicide rates rose in all the subregions, as well as in Brazil and Mexico. The highest rates were registered in the Andean area, and the biggest increases were in Colombia, where violence is now the main cause of death. The lowest rates were in the Southern Cone countries and the English-speaking Caribbean. The tendency for homicide rates to affect men much more than women continued (Arriagada and Godoy, 1999).

The rates have not only increased but also display great differences between subregions, countries, and even between cities in the same country. Around 1995, there was a great contrast between El Salvador, which had the highest murder rate in the region (117 per 100,000 inhabitants), and Chile, which registered only 1.8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants<sup>2</sup> (table 2). The situation in El Salvador is striking on account of its seriousness, although the figures must be viewed with some caution because in that country there is no governmental or non-governmental institution which systematically assembles the information on violence. The data obtained are from the Fiscalía General de la República and are the figures with the greatest coverage, but they do not agree with those from other sources.

In Colombia the relative figures for homicides around 1995 are lower than those for 1990 (table 2), but the number of offences has not gone down in absolute terms and the perception of insecurity among the population has been increasing (Trujillo and Badel, 1998). Homicidal violence in Colombia has become established as a routine and generalized form of violence among the population and reflects a country at war, since no present-day society displays such levels of violence in times of peace (Rubio, 1998b).

<sup>2</sup> In Chile, the figures of 3.0 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 1990 and 1.8 per 100,000 in 1996 correspond to the complaints in respect of homicides officially lodged with Carabineros; in 1990 the number of cases of homicide brought before the courts amounted to 9.1 per 100,000 inhabitants, and in 1996 to 8.2 per 100,000, while the number of arrests for this crime came to 6.7 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1990 and 4.9 per 100,000 in 1996 (Fundación Paz Ciudadana, 1998a). Whichever of these indicators is considered, however, the rates did go down between 1990 and 1996.

<sup>3</sup> In Colombia in 1996 the rates were 208 in Medellín, 108 in Cali, 60 in Bogotá and 35 in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia, Centro de Referencia Nacional sobre Violencia, 1996).

TABLE 2

**Latin America (13 countries): Homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants, 1980, 1990 and 1995**

Country	Around 1980	Around 1990	Around 1995 (last available figures)
El Salvador	...	138.2	117.0
Colombia	20.5	89.5	65.0
Honduras	...	...	40.0
Brazil	11.5	19.7	30.1
Mexico	18.2	17.8	19.5
Venezuela	11.7	15.2	22.0
Peru	2.4	11.5	10.3
Panama	2.1	10.9	...
Ecuador	6.4	10.3	...
Argentina	3.9	4.8	...
Costa Rica	5.7	4.1	...
Uruguay	2.6	4.4	...
Paraguay	5.1	4.0	...
Chile	2.6	3.0	1.8

Source: Ayres (1998); PAHO (1998); for Peru, INEI (1998); for Chile, Fundación Paz Ciudadana (1998a), IDB (1998).

Although there are differences between and within countries,<sup>3</sup> most of them register an increase in homicides. Between 1980 and 1990 the homicide rate went up in 9 out of 12 countries in region, and in three of them it went up by a factor of between four and six (Panama, Peru and Colombia). In the first half of the 1990s, this rate had gone down in El Salvador, Colombia, Chile and Peru but had gone up in Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela (table 2).

With regard to robbery and theft, the statistical information collected also displays great diversity between countries, especially in the case of different forms of robbery, where the rates per 100,000 inhabitants display extreme variability because of the different definitions of robbery and its various forms and the differing coverage of the statistical records.

Other forms of crime have also increased. It is estimated that annual kidnapping rates increased in the early 1990s by over one point per 100,000 inhabitants in three countries: Colombia, Mexico and Guatemala. In Colombia they came to 9.7 per 100,000 inhabitants (*Latin American Newsletter*, 1997), while in Guatemala, in spite of the obvious under-recording of statistics on violence, cases of kidnapping also increased, with 74.6% of the official complaints of this crime being concentrated in the department of Guatemala (Castellanos and Corrales (eds.), 1998).

Attempts were made in the 1990s to measure the economic costs of violence, although the varying definitions of "economic costs" and the fragility of

**Box 2****TYPOLGY AND DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COSTS CAUSED BY VIOLENCE**

*The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) distinguishes between:*

- Direct costs: through the health system, the police, the criminal justice system, housing and social services.
- Indirect costs: higher morbidity, higher mortality due to homicides and suicides, abuse of alcohol and drugs, depressive disorders.
- Economic multiplier effects: macroeconomic impacts and impacts on the labour market and inter-generational productivity.
- Social multiplier effects: impact on inter-person relations and on the quality of life.

*Trujillo and Badel also distinguish between direct and indirect costs:*

- However, they define the indirect costs as the negative secondary effects produced by violence, including: losses of productivity; reduction or diversion of investment; faulty resource allocation and increased transaction costs (that is to say, what the IDB would classify under economic multiplier effects).

*In macroeconomic terms, a distinction is drawn between:*

- Gross costs: these correspond to the costs borne by the victim of an offence (for example, the ransom in kidnapping).
- Net costs: these are the macroeconomic costs. Thus, a robbery or kidnapping does not give rise to costs in macroeconomic terms: it is considered a transfer, since it neither adds value nor takes it away.

*Source:* IDB, 1998; Trujillo and Badel, 1998.

the statistical base make international comparisons difficult (box 2). A comparative study made by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), using a common methodology, found that these costs were considerable: in 1995 they came to 24.9 percentage points of GDP in El Salvador, 24.7 points in Colombia, 11.8 in Venezuela, 10.5 in Brazil, 12.3 in Mexico and 5.1 in Peru (Londoño, 1998).

Violence causes heavy costs, affects the economic and social development of a country in many ways, and has negative effects on its physical capital (Guerrero, 1998). In Peru, it is estimated that the public infrastructure has suffered cumulative losses of US\$ 25 billion due to terrorism (Reyna and Toche, 1999). Case studies made in Chile and Nicaragua have estimated the cost of domestic violence to the economy at 2% of GDP in Santiago, Chile, and 1.6% of GDP in Managua, not counting the judicial and police costs (Morrison and Orlando, 1997). In Rio de Janeiro, the direct cost for attention to victims and the economic costs for premature death and incapacity in 1995 were estimated at some US\$ 916 million. Male victims accounted for 67.9% of the direct cost of attention, 82.6% of the cost for incapacity,

and 94.9% of the economic cost for premature death (ISER, Rede de Centros de Pesquisa, 1998).

Furthermore, violence depletes human capital, causes a deterioration in people's health, and leads to absenteeism and labour incapacity of its victims, among other effects. In the same study on Chile and Nicaragua it is estimated that domestic violence has severe repercussions on women's income. In Santiago, Chile, woman who suffer severe physical violence earn only 39% as much as women who do not suffer this type of abuse, and in Managua they earn only 57% as much (Morrison and Orlando, 1997).

It has been shown that violence destroys social capital. A study in Jamaica concluded that one of the clearest impacts of violence was the social fragmentation of communities, which makes it hard for any community organization to work if it is not based on fear and coercion (Moser and Holland, 1997).

Violence also affects the capacity of governments to combat it. The increase in violent acts makes it necessary to spend resources on the fight against violence which could otherwise be used for development, and it also fosters corruption. Further-

more, the population begin to have resort to private security systems when they perceive that the State is not effective in this respect, so that it gradually loses legitimacy and importance. Finally, there is general agreement on the negative effects of violence on growth and on efforts to reduce poverty in the region (Ayres, 1998).

To sum up, then, although the calculation of the economic and social effects of violence is often only partial, because of the lack of basic information to put it on a proper footing, the economic impact of the various forms of violence is only too clear, and this is a useful point with regard to policies and programmes aimed at reducing it.

### 5. The profile of victims and aggressors

Another aspect which needs to be taken into account is the gender element in violence (not only in domestic violence). Gender is seen to be a cultural factor which puts certain people at risk and gives others a predisposition to use violence. The main persons involved in homicides are men, especially young men, both as aggressors and as victims. In Latin America external causes account for 20.5% of the total number of years of life lost through death or disability due to all types of reasons in the case of men, and 8.1% in the case of women (PAHO/WHO, 1994). The differences by sex are considerable in the 15 to 44 age group, since external causes are responsible for 51.7% of the deaths of men but only 24.5% of those of women. Among men, the main external cause of death is homicide (PAHO, 1998).

Along with sex, age is also a very important factor in the profile of victims and aggressors. Of all the homicides reported in Latin America, 28.7% affect young people between 10 and 19 years of age (Guerrero, 1997). In Colombia, homicides mostly affect young men between 15 and 34 –in 1996 65.2% of the total number of homicides corresponded to men in this age group– with 13 men being killed for every woman (Colombia, Centro de Referencia Nacional sobre Violencia, 1996). In Guatemala, juvenile gangs known as *maras* have appeared, which are organizations made up of young people of both sexes, including both minors and adults, which establish links of solidarity and identity among their members. The *maras* fight for control of territories which they consider to belong to them; it has been estimated that in 1997 they operated in twelve zones of Guatemala City, where they have been blamed for

committing hold-ups on buses and other offences (Castellanos and Corrales, eds., 1998). In Chile, an increase has been observed in the participation of young people under 18 in cases of robbery with violence, where their participation has risen from 21% in 1995 to 32% in 1997 (Fundación Paz Ciudadana, 1998a);<sup>4</sup> similar features are displayed by the majority of those arrested for offences, who tend to be unmarried young men of a low economic and social level.

A study of crime statistics on drug offences between 1985 and 1994 concludes that young people represent a disproportionately high share of arrests but a disproportionately low share of prisoners held in jail for all types of serious offences (homicide, rape, robbery, theft and drugs). Between 1986 and 1993, for this set of offences, 35% of those arrested were under 19 but only 12% of those actually sent to prison were young people. This is held to show “the high vulnerability of young people just for being young, and the predisposition of the police to put the blame on them” (De Rementería, 1998, p. 114).

Along with the greater participation of young people in offences, there have also been changes in the profile of delinquents and their *modus operandi*. Police authorities in Chile note that in recent years there has been an increase in the percentage of offenders carrying arms (nearly 99%) and in the consumption of drugs among them (70% of all young offenders use drugs).<sup>5</sup> Some studies note that there has been a change in the patterns of conduct of those found guilty of offences, as most of them are now addicted to alcohol and drugs and are therefore more likely to display violent attitudes than in the past (Cooper, 1994).

### 6. Domestic and intra-family violence

<sup>4</sup> The last report of the Fundación Paz Ciudadana indicates that between 1995 and 1998 the participation of young people between 14 and 18 in cases of robbery with violence increased by 207% (*La Tercera*, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Interview with police captain Marcelo Cáceres and study by Fundación Paz Ciudadana, Adimark and Gendarmería referred to in the article “Por qué gana la delincuencia” (*Las Últimas Noticias*, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> All the countries of the region have ratified the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eliminate Violence Against Women (Belén do Pará, 1994). Most of the countries have therefore modified their national legislation to include punishment for cases of intra-family violence (Arriagada, 1998).



In the case of intra-family violence, which has gained greater recognition in the law in recent years,<sup>6</sup> the main victims are women. A transcultural study covering 90 societies showed that those with high levels of violence were also those that had authoritarian rules in the household, where the man was the dominant actor and there was social acceptance of physical or psychological violence as a way of settling conflicts (Levinson, cited in IDB, 1998).

It is estimated that over half of Latin American women have been victims of aggression in their homes at some moment in their lives, 33% have been victims of sexual abuse between the age of 16 and 49, and 45% have suffered threats, insults or the destruction of personal possessions (United Nations, 1999).

As already noted, intra-family violence can be physical, psychological or sexual. Some studies also include indirect violence, such as forbidding the spouse to study or work, isolation or confinement in the home, or other forms of restriction of freedom.

Case studies and surveys carried out all over the region bear witness to the magnitude of the problem (table 3). The incidence of violence against women varies from 40% to 80%, depending on the city where the survey was carried out. It is hard to determine whether the upward trends in cases of domestic violence are due to greater frequency of this type of offence, to fuller recording of cases when the offence is made subject to punishment under the law, or to increases in the propensity to lodge official complaints. In view of the seriousness of this phenomenon, it is essential that surveys and studies should be carried out to provide fuller and more detailed country information that will give a better idea of its magnitude and tendencies.

Another form of intra-family violence which has become more visible and frequent is violence against children. It has been maintained that adolescents who have been the victims of violence in their childhood are more likely to become perpetrators of violence themselves in later life. In Brazil, abandoned children are at once the main victims and the main culprits of urban violence (McAlister, 1998). Ayres (1998) estimates that there are 6 million minors suffering ill-treatment in the region, and 80,000 die each year as a result of damage done to them by their parents, relatives or other persons. A study made by UNICEF in 1996 reveals that in São Paulo over 75% of all the sexual attacks against minors reported to SOS Niño were committed by family members (in the

following order: legitimate father, brother, stepfather, uncle), and 8% of the victims suffered this type of violence before they were three years old.

Children have also been affected by the interne-cine conflicts that have taken place in some countries of the region. It is calculated that in Guatemala, between 100,000 and 250,000 children lost one or both of their parents due to the war (PAHO, 1996). In that country, a study carried out by the National Commission Against Child Ill-treatment on the basis of hospital data shed light on three dimensions of the phenomenon: physical ill-treatment, sexual abuse and abandonment. Around 60% of cases of ill-treatment and 55% of cases of abandonment affected boys, while 94% of the sexual abuse was against girls (Castellanos and Corrales, eds., 1998).

## 7. Equal access to public and private security

Violence and insecurity among the inhabitants of the big cities give rise to significant social and economic costs which are shared out unequally in society and are one of the main obstacles to the development of the region. It is estimated that Latin American residents purchase more than half of the insurance policies against kidnapping sold in the world (*Newsweek*, 1998). In Guatemala, for example, it is calculated that total private expenditure on security is at least 20% greater than the public security budget (Gutiérrez, 1998): there are some 200 private security firms, some of them established by former members of the army or police force, of which only 30 are officially registered (Castellanos and Corrales, eds., 1998). In São Paulo, there are three times as many private security guards as the number of government policemen (*Newsweek*, 1998).

In Santiago, Chile, there are clear differences between the rich and poor sectors of the city. Whereas the municipalities with the most resources can organize security plans in coordination with the police, and even make contributions in order to increase the number of policemen assigned to a sector, the poorer municipalities cannot do this. It is estimated that the poorest communes of Greater Santiago are below the mean vigilance level equivalent per 100,000 inhabitants,<sup>7</sup> which introduces a factor of inequity into the way police resources are distrib-

<sup>7</sup> The vigilance level equivalent is the supply of vigilance services per commune (Silva, 1999).

TABLE 3

**Latin America: Incidence of domestic violence in the 1990s**

Country	Incidence of domestic violence
<i>Argentina</i> Buenos Aires	1997. Complaints of domestic violence: 1,820 1998. 1,700 persons were attended in the Intra-Family Violence Unit, 70.5% of whom had been attacked by their spouse (Hospital Alvear) 1998. The Argentine Association for the Prevention of Family Violence attended 5,000 persons
<i>Bolivia</i>	1994. It was estimated that out of 20,000 cases of violence reported, 75% corresponded to domestic violence. Domestic violence mainly affects women between 17 and 36, while most of the victims of sexual assaults are adolescent
<i>Brazil</i> (States of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul-Porto Alegre)	1998. Out of 98,039 cases, 61% corresponded to bodily harm, 2% to sexual offences and 37% to threats
<i>Colombia</i> Santafé de Bogotá	1996. Total number of complaints of marital violence: 10,725 women injured. Over 20% were victims of physical abuse, 10% of sexual abuse, and 34% of psychological abuse
<i>Costa Rica</i>	1994. Total number of women attended in the Women's Unit: 2,299 1995. Total number of women attended in the Women's Unit: 5,445
<i>Chile</i> Santiago	1997. 40.7% of women between 15 and 19 living with a man suffered psychological, physical and/or sexual violence 1998. Total number of complaints of attacks on women in the country: 39,394 1997. Total number of persons arrested for using violence against women in the country: 4,363 1998. Total number of complaints of intra-family violence dealt with in the country: 12,810
<i>Ecuador</i> Quito	1997. 60% of women were being or had been beaten by their husbands: 37.3% "often", 25% "sometimes" and 35.6% "rarely"
<i>Honduras</i>	1996. Number of complaints of domestic violence or sexual abuse between January and September: 3,070, i.e., 11 complaints per day
<i>Mexico</i> Mexico City and nine other cities Monterrey and Nueva León	1995. 74% of all persons ill-treated were women, of whom 68% were between 13 and 34 years of age. Only 20% of the victims made an official complaint to the authorities 1995-1996. According to a survey made in Monterrey and Nueva León, 46% of all women over 15 living with a man said they had suffered psychological, physical or sexual violence at the hands of their companion
<i>Nicaragua</i> Managua	1994. Number of female victims of violence attended in non-governmental centres: 3,138 1997: 52.6% of women between 15 and 19 who were living with a man were victims of psychological, physical and/or sexual violence; 28% of them suffered severe physical violence
<i>Peru</i> Lima	1996. Number of complaints to the Police Unit for Women: 5,512 1996. In a survey of women in the middle and low economic and social sectors, 88% reported they had suffered violence at the hands of their partner; 84% psychological violence, 31% physical violence, and 13% actual physical harm It is estimated that there are 25,000 rapes per year
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	1994. Of the police reports and cases published in the press between 1990 and 1994, 95% were for violence against women and minors, of which 67% corresponded to homicides, 25% to beatings and 12% to rape
<i>Uruguay</i> Montevideo and Canelones	1997. 47.3% of the households studied registered cases of violence: moderate psychological violence, 24.6%; purely psychological violence, 12%; purely sexual violence, 0.7%; moderate physical violence, 4.6%, and severe physical violence, 5.4%
<i>Venezuela</i>	1995. Data from the Bicameral Commission of Congress: 75,530 cases of sexual violence 1997. Data from the Policía Técnica Judicial: 7,426 sexual offences where women were the victims: rape, seduction, kidnapping or incest. Twelve women were raped every day

Source: United Nations Inter-Agency Campaign on Women's Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean; Duque (1998); Reyna and Toche (1999).

uted to combat crime throughout the city (Silva, 1999). Shortage of resources makes it necessary to establish priorities: thus, the central government opts to defend certain urban sectors –usually the city centre and commercial and financial areas– at the expense of other sectors such as working-class areas. This situation means that often public security is left to the community itself.

Although organized community participation in the fight against violence can serve to strengthen the programmes applied by the local authorities, problems arise when such participation is seen as the only alternative because of the lack of police protection, and not a complement to it.

The access to private security –i.e., the capacity to hire alarm services and private guards– is also unequal: these goods and services are shared out unequally among the different social strata, thus widening the differences between them. Insecurity in the high-income sectors has led to changes in the urban configuration of the cities and has restricted neighbourhood sociability through such developments as the establishment of closed neighbourhoods and shopping centres (malls) and the increase in condominiums and private guards.

The sensation of greater vulnerability and lack of protection differs markedly in the different socio-economic sectors. Whereas in the lower-class sectors insecurity takes the form of fear of attacks on one's physical integrity, in the higher-income areas it takes the form of fear for one's property.<sup>8</sup> In the more prosperous groups, the range of security services and products available to them often serves to complement the protection provided by the police; in the poorer sectors, the only option may be to organize vigilance groups and other more rudimentary systems of protection against hold-ups and other crimes (home-made alarm systems). In Guatemala, nearly 200,000 persons have formed vigilance organizations. A recent measurement of the degree of insecurity in the different communes of Santiago, Chile, found that the highest levels of fear were in the poorest communes,<sup>9</sup> which fits in with the fact that these are the communes where there is the greatest lack of protection and police vigilance. Another survey made in January 1999 on the degree of secu-

rity felt to exist in the neighbourhood found that although, overall, a large proportion (70%) of women said they felt safe in their neighbourhood, this proportion went down to 66% among women between 34 and 45 and women from the sectors of lower socio-economic level (Grupo Iniciativa Mujer, 1999). However, a study made between 1996 and 1998 on offences against property in 17 Latin American countries reveals that the percentage of those interviewed who have been victims of such offences goes up in proportion to their socio-economic level and the size of the city where they live and recent growth in the urban population (Gaviria and Pagés, 1999).

Kidnapping for economic gain mainly affects the moneyed sectors of the population, and may even cause them to leave the country. In Guatemala, for example, at least five important families, totalling some 40 persons, all of which have suffered kidnapping or extortion, have left the country because of the State's inability to give them protection.

Private security measures have also been reflected in the proliferation of arms among the civilian population, with results contrary to those expected. Rather than reducing crime rates (robberies or homicides), this ready availability of arms can increase and aggravate the consequences of acts of social or domestic violence, since attempts at self-defence increase the risk that the victims may be killed.

In the face of these developments, the capacity of the police and judicial institutions to control and judge offences has been swamped, and there has been a growing tendency to take justice into one's own hands and privatize security. Fear, the lack of effective justice, and the increased violence of offenders have increased the perception of insecurity of Latin American citizens.

## 8. Traditional and emergent forms of violence and delinquency

The appearance of new forms of violence and delinquency in various countries of the region has been observed in a number of different ambits. Some analysts have described these new forms as a heterodox and contradictory mixture of two types of violence present all over the region: political violence (guerrilla movements, torture, disappearance of persons, repression) and traditional criminal violence. The symbiosis of the two gives rise to a form of so-

<sup>8</sup> See ECLAC (1997), in the chapter entitled "Agenda social".

<sup>9</sup> *El Mercurio* (1999): article based on a survey made by the Fundación Paz Ciudadana.

cial violence which, although not exclusively political, does have political effects, so that it cannot be viewed merely as breaking the law (Castañeda, 1998).

Various authorities and specialists have declared to the mass media that the new forms of violence are attributable to a change in delinquents' *modus operandi*. In Chile, the evolution of delinquents' actions in the 1990s reflects a process of organization and planning of their offences (learning how to obtain arms and/or vehicles, studying the routines of their possible victims, etc.), and they now operate more in groups and carry arms. For other specialists, in contrast, forms of action such as the intimidation and physical and psychological ill-treatment of their victims –together with the use of arms, narcotics or paralyzing gases and masks, which have become more common in recent years– may also be due to the imitation of crime movies (*La Epoca*, 1995).

In some Central American countries, demobilized soldiers who previously served in the army or the guerrilla have become a mass of unemployed who are familiar with the use of arms and military strategy and have an abundant supply of arms at their disposal. In many cases these unemployed persons have formed armed bands which, in the view of some specialists, are one the main sources of armed crime in the region. In Guatemala it is estimated that there are some 600 organized criminal bands with a total of 20,000 members, mostly led by former army officers (Gutiérrez, 1998).

In other countries, the reform of the police forces has led to similar situations. In Argentina,

Peru and Brazil these reforms have left a considerable number of former policemen unemployed, thus helping to develop a more sophisticated form of crime carried out by quasi-military bands. "This means an increase not only in the number of criminal actions but also in their planning, their level of violence, and the importance of their targets" (*El Mercurio*, 1998a). Many of these bands are responsible for the many cases of kidnapping which have taken place in the region. Experts note that this type of crime is common in Colombia, where kidnapping has taken on the nature of a well-organized industry; in Mexico, where it is connected with small organizations and drug trafficking; in Brazil, where it is connected with organized crime and difficulties in applying the law, and in Guatemala, where it is carried out by the numerous criminal bands mentioned earlier (*Qué Pasa*, 1998).

Even more disturbing because of the magnitude of the resources they divert and their international effects, however, are the emergent forms of international crime which have arisen thanks to the existence of open, globalized market economies. Among these emergent forms are the new forms of drug trafficking, illicit activities involving electronic fraud (basically through credit cards), and the traffic in persons, human organs and blood products, and nuclear weapons and materials (IMECO, 1998). It has been asserted that international criminal organizations have taken more advantage of technical progress than the institutions responsible for watching over citizen security.

## II

### Policies for generating greater citizen security

#### 1. The limitations of conventional approaches centering on control and repression, and the emergence of more integral approaches

##### a) Conventional approaches

Many of the efforts made in the region to tackle delinquency and violence have approached the problem from a conventional standpoint based on the police-justice-prison model, which places emphasis on the adoption of policies to control and repress

crime and criminal violence. Not enough attention has been given to preventive measures, whose results are slower but are usually more efficient than those of corrective approaches in terms of cost and are more effective for securing lasting solutions.

The results of the conventional model, which is long on repression and short on prevention, have not been satisfactory. It has not been able to reduce crime –indeed, the rate of homicides has gone up in the region– or the growing sensation of insecurity

among the inhabitants of the main cities, and the judicial, police and prison systems are faced with serious problems and shortcomings. The main criticisms of this approach are that it does not view violence as a social phenomenon involving various different factors and that it only seeks to act by repressing violent individuals, without doing anything to influence the family and social environment.

*b) More integral approaches*

The unsatisfactory results obtained make it desirable to review the approach in question and the underlying conception of the phenomenon of violence and delinquency. There is evidence that this phenomenon is fundamentally something which is learned, through physical abuse or exposure to it during childhood or through the influence of the media, post-war environments and cultural values which accept or promote the solution of conflicts by violent means. This means that if indeed violence is the result of responses which have been learned rather than innate tendencies, then violent forms of conduct can be changed. This is very important for policy formulation.

Another aspect which has assumed increased importance is the interpretation of violence as a multidimensional phenomenon which must be tackled with integral strategies in order to influence the individual, family, social and cultural factors that generate it. In order to understand violence, then, we must eschew "purely symptomatic approaches and simple reactions and recognize it as a psycho-social, political and cultural phenomenon on which isolated measures can only have marginal effects" (Krauskopf, 1996).

In line with this attitude, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) have adopted an "epidemiological approach" for dealing with violence. The adoption of this approach in some Latin American cities has been reflected in the application of a group of measures:

- i) integral measures focussed on the risk factors most often observed in cases of criminal violence;
- ii) short-term police control measures to deal with specific phenomena, sometimes for a limited period of time, with reforms in the judicial, police and prison systems which call for political and social consensus;
- iii) preventive measures accompanied by police follow-ups such as controls over carrying weapons and consuming alcohol and drugs;

iv) primary preventive measures aimed at changing the attitudes, standards and forms of social behaviour of the population in general, and

v) secondary preventive measures aimed at high-risk groups such as young men who have been witnesses or victims of violence when they were children.

*c) Common criteria*

From the set of actions in the field of citizen security which are being carried out in the region and are listed in a survey made by ECLAC,<sup>10</sup> it may be gathered that there is growing recognition of the need to carry out multidimensional programmes combining both control and preventive measures. A number of these programmes share some common criteria which could help to make measures in this field more integral.

One of these criteria is inter-agency coordination, which seeks to give measures to reduce the number of offences and increase their rate of punishment the necessary simultaneity, even though they are adopted at different levels: the community, local governments, private and governmental bodies, the police, judicial and prison systems, educational and labour bodies, etc.

Another common criterion is that of citizen participation, which means involving the population more fully into the problem of security and the search for effective solutions, by promoting the creation of networks of relations and organizing the community itself (social capital) to improve the prevention and reporting of offences and even achieve some degree of control over them. It is also necessary to promote closer relations between the community and the police and State institutions, since greater confidence of the population in those institutions can be essential for improving the perception of security and heightening the legitimacy of the political, police and judicial system in the fight against crime. In order for citizen participation to make an effective contribution to the prevention of delinquency, it must not be promoted only among the poor or marginal sectors, as a way of making up for the lack of resources. Organization of the citizens

<sup>10</sup> For the preparation of the chapter on citizen security in the *Social Panorama of Latin America 1998* (ECLAC, 1999) a small survey was made among governors and mayors of Latin American cities in order to determine the main security problems in their cities and the measures, programmes and policies being adopted to deal with them.

can in no case replace the efforts that the central and local governments should make to tackle citizen insecurity, nor can it take the place of the resources that should be devoted to this task.

Finally, a third criterion found in various different programmes is the use of prevention through educational programmes which promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts by strengthening forms of conduct based on dialogue, collaboration and understanding.

The following sections describe the main measures implemented in the field of prevention and control, together with some proposals for improving the recording of offences at the national and regional levels and details of some cases where satisfactory results have been obtained by combining control and preventive measures.

## 2. Preventive measures

Particularly important measures in this respect include educational programmes, organization of the community, control of trafficking in alcohol, drugs and arms, and measures to combat poverty and inequality.

### a) Educational programmes

These programmes can help to forestall violence in various ways. Firstly, they can do so by reducing the drop-out rate in schools. A number of studies have identified a relation between low educational levels and violence,<sup>11</sup> with high rates of dropping out from school among those who have committed some kind of offence. This is so in the case of the majority of the young people who are members of the many gangs which are responsible for much of urban violence. It has been stated that dropping-out of the educational system by young people reflects a deterioration in the perception of the economic value of education, that is to say, in the economic viability of the educational system, and a failure of the type of education provided to adapt to the needs of young people and their motives for attending school. As a

<sup>11</sup> In Lima, for example, a study carried out by the IDB showed that low educational levels of the men were a key variable among the factors leading to domestic violence.

<sup>12</sup> In this connection, it is worth noting the work done by *Hommies Unidos* in El Salvador or the group "Los Especiales" in Bogotá, which seek to bring juvenile gang members into the educational system by giving them special opportunities for attending school (Guerrero, 1997).

number of studies have shown, those motives may be quite different from those assumed as the basis for the educational system, and may consist of the desire to get away from the house without causing problems (especially in the case of girls), to meet new friends, or to gain access to social and sporting activities (Krauskopf, 1996).<sup>12</sup>

Secondly, they can educate people to prefer the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Since the social learning process –especially in childhood– has a vital influence on whether or not people later take violent attitudes, formal and informal educational programmes which develop the skills to settle conflicts peacefully can give very good results. In the medium and long term, they legitimize non-violent ways of dealing with problems more effectively than other methods and protect individuals from the danger of acting violently. Some educational campaigns along these lines have helped to focus public attention on problems such as intra-family violence. This is particularly interesting because of the incidence of experiences of this type on the adoption of violent attitudes to the settlement of conflicts in adult life, which is often due to the difficulty experienced in childhood in internalizing patterns of control and self-control which allow persons to handle their aggressive feelings.<sup>13</sup>

The Anti-Violence Seminars held in Santafé de Bogotá are campaigns designed to foster more constructive conduct models in man-woman and father-child relations, along with peaceful ways of settling conflicts in the home (Alcaldía Mayor de Santafé de Bogotá, 1997).

Outside Latin America, a very interesting example is that of the work done by the Peace Education Foundation (PEF), a non-profit-making organization which has been carrying out peace education programmes since 1980 in 20,000 schools in the United States and has now extended its activities to Canada and Jamaica. Starting from the assumption that boys and/or girls are not born with innate skills in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the PEF pro-

<sup>13</sup> The IDB has prepared a video on this subject, entitled *Battered lives, shattered hopes: when a man beats a woman*, which has been distributed throughout the region as an integral element in the IDB's campaign to generate an awareness of the importance of this matter (IDB, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Evaluations made in 1991 in Dade County, Florida, showed that 86% of the conflicts where mediation was used in school were successfully settled, while an evaluation made among 163 parents who attended a workshop showed that 79% had improved the way conflicts and feelings were treated in the home (*El Mercurio*, 1998b).

**Box 3**

## ATTITUDES THAT SHOULD BE FOSTERED BY EDUCATION FOR PEACE

*Seeking to make people feel responsible for their own actions*

This helps to inhibit aggression, since when people act in a “faceless”, anonymous manner they tend to act more aggressively because they feel less responsible and are less conscious of the prohibitions against destructive and aggressive actions

*Seeking to punish unacceptable forms of conduct in a climate of affection*

Severe punishment, whether in children or adults, usually secures submission, but rarely “sinks in”. Parents who are accustomed to apply severe punishment usually have extremely aggressive children; in contrast, children who are punished by adults in the context of an affective relationship can experience a strengthening of their non-aggressive tendencies, since they usually comply with the adults’ wishes even when the latter are not present.

*Rewarding non-aggressive patterns of conduct*

Efforts should be made to strengthen and reward constructive and non-aggressive patterns of conduct which will enable children to cope with situations of frustration. Although it is neither possible nor advisable to try to prevent children from experiencing frustration altogether, because a child who is prevented from experiencing frustration will suffer even more pain and confusion when he finally is faced with it, it is perfectly possible to train children to respond to frustrating situations in a constructive and satisfactory manner.

*Offering non-aggressive models*

The presence of persons who react to difficult situations without being aggressive can be an important check on aggressive forms of conduct.

*Fostering empathy with others*

Carrying out “empathy training activities”, such as teaching children to put themselves in the other’s place, to play differing roles in different situations, or to strengthen relations with friends can be very positive. Most people find it hard to voluntarily cause pain to another person, unless they can find some way of de-humanizing the situation.

Source: Aronson (1995).

motes the development of skills which will lead children and adults to face problems in the home, school and community in a non-violent manner. For this purpose, it uses innovative action programmes which include mediation in conflicts between schoolmates or workmates (training peacemakers) and direct training of students, teachers and parents as monitors.<sup>14</sup>

Programmes of education for peace should seek to promote responsibility for one’s actions; punishment of aggressive forms of conduct in a climate of affection; rewards for constructive and non-aggressive forms of conduct; non-aggressive models, and empathy with others (box 3).

b) *Organization of the community*

Organization of the community has become an essential resource for the implementation of more integral security models, the aim being to promote the formation of networks of relations and organizations within the community itself and to foster links between the community and the police and State institutions for tackling crime.

These types of committees have been organized in most of the cities covered by the ECLAC study: Neighbourhood Preventive Councils in Buenos Aires, Local Security Fronts in Bogotá, Citizens’ Committees in Mexico City, Community Security Councils in São Paulo, Neighbourhood Committees in San José, Costa Rica, and proposals for the estab-

**Box 4****COSTA RICA: SOME LESSONS THAT CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE CAMPAIGN FOR A LAW AGAINST VIOLENT TREATMENT OF WOMEN***Actions*

- Organization of a collective initiative to promote wide support for the adoption of a law
- Preparation of a plan of work aimed at generating a process of discussion for preparing the draft, creating favourable conditions for its adoption, coordinating the efforts of different institutions, sensitizing public opinion, and strengthening the work of women and of the anti-violence movement
- Broad participation in the preparation of the draft, reflecting the views of the women affected
- Ongoing discussion of the content of the draft law and analysis of strategies for reaching political agreements
- Lobbying among members of Congress, taking due account of the procedures of the congress in question and the limited negotiating experience of women
- Establishment of a mechanism for coordination and follow-up of the fulfillment of the law once it is adopted

*Main criteria applied*

- To motivate the participation of women from different organizations and social sectors
- To foster involvement in political negotiation
- To adapt expectations in the face of adverse conditions
- To keep up collective coordination, with the will to persevere both in the negotiation and the subsequent follow-up

*Source:* Campaign for a Law Against Marital Violence, 1997.

lishment of neighbourhood citizen security committees in Santiago, Chile.

Other ways of promoting community organization include: combination of police patrols with the training of promoters to inform the community about crime and the application of various forms of prevention at the community level (public security programme in Mexico City); increased use of community alarms (Medellín, Colombia); coordination of neighbourhood councils, Mothers' Unions and youth and civic organizations (Santa Cruz, Bolivia), and coordination among the police, municipalities and neighbours (such as the door-to-door programme applied by the police in Santiago, Chile, and the VIVA community police programme in Rio de Janeiro).

Forms of organization for forestalling and punishing intra-family violence are worthy of special attention, since the mobilization of women, who are the main victims of this type of violence, has been a key element in securing the adoption of laws in this respect in various countries of the region (box 4) and the establishment of social support networks for vic-

tims, which have increased the number of official complaints lodged against cases of this type of violence (refuges for victims in Peru, and the Family Friend telephone programme in El Salvador, which alerts the relevant institutions about cases of violence). Programmes aimed at the main aggressors (predominantly men) have also been organized (Men Against Violence, in Nicaragua, and the Men's Collective for Equal Relations, A.C. in Mexico (Red de Salud de las Mujeres Lationamericanas y del Caribe, 1996).

*c) Control of the sale of alcohol, drug trafficking and carrying weapons*

Alcohol and drugs are increasingly associated with acts of violence and crime. In Medellín, for example, many of the juvenile gangs were formed by drug traffickers for the transport of drugs and protection of transactions. The drug trade is also linked with the internationalization of criminal activities, through the increasingly frequent connections between local organizations and groups in other parts of the region and Europe. It is therefore urgently nec-



essary to go beyond the eminently police-oriented treatment often given to the drug problem and strengthen preventive and rehabilitation activities at the same time that measures are taken to improve the institutional capability of the police and judicial system to control such traffic.

There are various preventive programmes against the consumption of alcohol and drugs, among them the Programme to Educate and Foster Rejection of Drugs in Schools (PROERD) in São Paulo and the DESEPAZ programme in Colombia, which has given strategic support to the restrictions imposed by municipalities on the sale of alcohol after a certain time of night (for example, the so-called "carrot time" in Santafé de Bogotá).<sup>15</sup>

The incidence of the carrying of arms on the increase in the seriousness of acts of violence calls for action to avoid the proliferation of arms in society as a supposed means of self-defence, especially in countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Colombia. Measures such as restrictions on the right to carry arms and programmes for exchanging arms for useful goods have secured reductions in homicide rates. In Santafé de Bogotá the restrictions on the carrying of arms applied in September and October 1997 reduced common homicides by 30% in September and 23.3% in October, compared with the same months in 1996 (Alcaldía Mayor de Santafé de Bogotá, 1997), while in Panama the "Guns for Food" programme has also had satisfactory results: the population gives up arms, without having to explain their origin or being investigated, and receives food vouchers in exchange.

#### *d) Combating poverty and inequality*

If violence is seen as the result of anomy or social breakdown, then in order for there to be citizen security it will be necessary to create the economic, political and social conditions that favour the development and social cohesion of a country (Piñeyro and Barajas, 1995). From this point of view, poverty—and especially relative poverty—becomes a problem of security, not because being poor automatically turns people into delinquents, but because poverty can produce social fragmentation and become an obstacle to development. This is how the problem has

been understood by the authorities of a number of cities which have incorporated efforts to improve the living conditions of the poorest sectors among the measures to cope with the citizens' feeling of insecurity. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, there is the Favela/Barrio Popular programme, which seeks to improve the urbanization of the favelas as a way of integrating them into the city (De Cerqueira, 1995); in Managua measures have been taken to regularize land ownership titles; in Santa Cruz (Bolivia) efforts are being made to improve the quality of education and health services, as well as access to them, and in Lima the authorities are carrying out a programme for the recovery of abandoned children (Jardineros) and a programme for bringing children to the Municipal Child Aid Complex (ECLAC, 1999).

The generation of employment is another measure worthy of consideration, especially for young people mixed up in violent actions. The rate of unemployment among young people accounts for over half of all unemployment in the urban areas of Latin America (ECLAC, 1999). In view of the importance of work as a means of social integration and as a life project for many young people,<sup>16</sup> policies aimed at forestalling violence should seek to increase employment opportunities for large numbers of young people as a way of overcoming the hiatus between the provision of skills and capabilities by the State and the ability of young people to take advantage of them.

An interesting example in this respect is that of Cali (Colombia), where a Social Coexistence Pact was concluded, under the DESEPAZ programme, between army officers and young gang leaders. In this Pact the authorities undertook to provide supplies and technical training for the young people, as well as job opportunities and legal aid, while the young people undertook to give up the armed conflict, stop their illegal activities, and make dialogue a key strategy for settling conflicts.

Employment also has important effects for the victims of violence, as it can help to change the balance of power in relations, as in the case of domestic violence. A study made by the IDB in Nicaragua in 1997 revealed that 41% of women who were not in paid employment were victims of serious physical violence, whereas among those who worked outside

<sup>15</sup> It is important to bear in mind that measures of this type must be in keeping with the particular situation in each country and not represent restrictions on civil liberties.

<sup>16</sup> Krauskopf (1996) has suggested that for some young people work may be a more constructive and equalitarian means of establishing social relations than attending school.

the home and received an income the corresponding percentage was only 10% (IDB, 1997). Other studies have revealed that being a victim of this type of violence can reduce women's possibilities of obtaining paid employment and also reduce the income they receive (Morrison and Orlando, 1997). These data show the positive effect that incorporation in the labour force can have in reducing both domestic and non-domestic violence.

### 3. Control measures

The main control measures applied in the region are in three fields: the police system, the judicial system and the prison system. The shortcomings observed in all these fields highlight the need to make reforms that will enable them to fulfill their purpose properly.

#### a) Reforms in the police system

The inefficiency of the police system in combating delinquency has clearly revealed the problems from which it suffers, such as its reactive and bureaucratic nature, the lack of professional excellence and equipment of its personnel, low wages, the multiplicity of functions that the police have to fulfill, and cases of corruption. A number of proposals have been put forward for dealing with these problems:

i) formulating strategic plans to overcome the reactive nature of the system, so that it can be one jump ahead of events and can foresee possible situations;

ii) raising the professional level of the police through general training programmes and training in specific techniques against such offences as kidnapping, drug trafficking and mugging;

iii) reducing the many and varied functions of the police, giving priority to law enforcement functions rather than those of an administrative nature;

iv) increasing the number of policemen;

v) increasing the pay of the police in order to improve their professional level and remove the temptation to moonlight as private security guards, and

vi) strengthening the work of police control bodies, bringing to judgment members of the police who engage in illicit activities and thoroughly investigating accusations of torture or unnecessary violence.

Among the measures which have been applied in the region are: strengthening of the police through programmes of education in human rights, in Colombia; programmes to increase efficiency and honesty

in the Department of Public Prosecutions in Mexico City; requirement of full secondary education for entering the police force, and an increase in activities to check police corruption, in São Paulo (ECLAC, 1999), and the plan applied by the Chilean police force involving the retraining of administrative personnel to carry out normal police duties, investment in logistical support, preparation of management indicators, and incorporation of new techniques such as computerized maps of crime locations.

#### b) Reforms in the judicial system

A number of countries in the region have embarked on programmes to reform the judicial system in order to strengthen its capacity to control and punish offences, reduce the level of impunity, and give the population a feeling of greater security and more confidence in the existing institutions. Some of these reforms are aimed at:

i) improving coordination between the judicial and police systems;

ii) allocation of greater resources to make it possible to investigate more offences, introduce new information systems, and raise the professional level of the staff;

iii) better adaptation of the sentences applied in order to overcome the problem of disproportionate punishment (for example, avoiding cases where offences of different levels of gravity are given the same punishment) and to ensure that the sentences are actually carried out;

iv) improving the treatment of victims: a more professional approach in dealing with reports of offences can help to shed light on the motives behind offences and to improve the way the information is recorded.

Latterly, alternative ways of applying justice have been developed which can provide a more expedite and timely way of settling cases of minor offences. Examples of such new methods are programmes to bring justice closer to the population, based on the peaceful settlement of conflicts, such as the Conciliation and Mediation Centres and the Family Precincts, both introduced in Colombia.<sup>17</sup>

#### c) Reforms in the prison system

<sup>17</sup> Around 1997, Santafé de Bogotá had 33 Conciliation and Mediation Centres (IPC, 1997; Alcaldía Mayor de Santafé de Bogotá, 1997).

There are some serious shortcomings in the region's prison system which have given rise to serious problems. They include the extreme overcrowding in prisons, which prevents the necessary segregation of prisoners accused of minor offences from those guilty of serious crimes, the high percentage of prisoners who have not yet been sentenced –70%, according to International Prison Watch (1995)– and the serious shortcomings in the work of rehabilitation. These situations tend to distort the functions that prisons should play, which should be to punish according to the crime committed and to rehabilitate their inmates.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the measures proposed for dealing with these problems are:

i) the effective application in prison systems of the various international instruments on detainees which the countries have signed or ratified;

ii) the effective allocation in national budgets of the resources needed to improve the material conditions of the prisons of the region;

iii) more expedite trials and the elimination of the biases in the administration of justice which unjustly favour some prisoners (such as important drug dealers) and prejudice the rights of others (such as poor people, children and young people);

iv) measures to combat corruption and impunity not only in the case of criminals but also, when necessary, of guards and gang bosses inside the prisons, in order to put an end to the trafficking of drugs and arms and the many other abuses;

v) better use of the time that prisoners are confined for their rehabilitation, with special emphasis on educational, vocational training and psychological support, which have made it possible in other parts of the world to reduce the rate of recidivation;<sup>19</sup>

vi) the promotion of alternative systems of punishment without deprivation of liberty, since the authoritarian and oppressive environment of many prisons, together with the severe and restrictive punishments, can foster aggression (Aronson, 1995): it is therefore important to offer those who have committed only minor offences some type of alterna-

tive to imprisonment, subject of course to the necessary systems of supervision and control.

#### 4. Preparation and improvement of systems of crime statistics

One of the most keenly felt needs when dealing with criminal violence and citizen security is the ability to gain a proper idea of the size and nature of the phenomenon in the region. It is therefore essential to improve the existing systems of statistics and work on the development of an integrated system which will make it possible to follow up trends and make international comparisons.

Having this type of information available is vital for making diagnoses of crime, formulating policies and programmes in line with actual conditions, and evaluating the action taken.

Some initiatives have been taken in Colombia in this respect, such as the system of recording offences using an epidemiological approach under the DESEPAZ programme<sup>20</sup> and the proposal to set up local crime watch bodies as part of the national strategy in support of Peaceful Coexistence and Citizen Security, which should provide the basic inputs for the design, execution and evaluation of anti-crime policies by the authorities (Salazar and Castro, 1998).

In Chile, a joint programme between the government and a private organization has designed a Unified System of Crime Statistics (SUED, in Spanish) which integrates the information produced and collected at the police, judicial and prison levels, applying rules to make it internationally comparable. Computerized crime occurrence maps have also begun to be prepared at the commune level in order to permit the spatial identification of the most conflictive areas (Chile, SUED, 1997).

#### 5. Combining preventive and control measures

Before looking at some examples of programmes which combine both these types of measures, we will

<sup>18</sup> Another problem which has been mentioned is that of the continued presence of some prisoners in jail even after they have completed their sentence, because of the lack of suitable institutions for receiving them. This is the case, for example, with prisoners suffering from psychiatric problems.

<sup>19</sup> The Fundación Paz Ciudadana estimates that in Chile the recidivation rate is close to 55%.

<sup>20</sup> This system registers the time and date of the offence, the identity of the victim and culprit, the level of alcohol, sex and age of victim and culprit, the causes of the offence, the place of occurrence, and the address of the victim.

## Box 5

## MEASURES FOR GENERATING GREATER CITIZEN SECURITY

## Preventive measures

*Educational programmes*

Reduction of school dropout rate  
Education for the peaceful settlement of conflicts

*Organization of the community*

*Control of the sale of alcohol, drug trafficking  
and the carrying of arms*

## Control measures

*Reforms in the police system*

Establishment of strategic plans  
Raising the professional level of the police  
Reducing the police's functions  
Increasing the number of policemen  
Raising police pay  
Strengthening the control mechanisms for the police system

*Reforms in the judicial system*

Coordination between the judicial and police systems  
Allocation of greater resources  
Ensuring punishment is proportional to the crime  
Improving treatment of victims

*Reforms in the prison system*

Application of the relevant international instruments in prison systems  
Proper and effective budgetary allocation  
Measures to expedite trials and eliminate biases in the administration of justice  
Measures to stamp out corruption and impunity  
Better use of the time during which offenders are deprived of their liberty  
Promotion of systems of alternative penalties not involving deprivation of liberty

summarize the preventive and control measures described earlier (box 5).

In order to achieve an effective combination of preventive and control actions to reduce criminal violence, three Colombian cities (Santafé de Bogotá, Medellín and Cali) have developed multidimensional citizen security programmes (DESEPAZ) which tackle the problem of civil insecurity on three fronts: enforcement of the law, education for peace, and construction of community institutions to foster peaceful coexistence.

In Santafé de Bogotá, a security programme was established in 1994 based on measures to strengthen peaceful coexistence and negotiated solutions to conflicts through, for example, "healthy policies" to tackle the problem of citizen insecurity (box 6).

In Medellín, the Mayor's office has implemented programmes to help children and young people of poor communities who are in conflict situations, through the education, recreation and resocialization of young people, community partici-

pation, and use of the influence of the mass media to prevent violence and improve relations between the police and the community.

The measures taken in these three Colombian cities have indeed helped to reduce urban violence. Homicides in the three cities have gone down steadily in recent years. Thus, for example, in 1994 Santafé de Bogotá registered 3,885 homicides, but this figure went down to 3,531 in 1996 and 2,813 in 1997: a reduction of 27%. Similar results were obtained in Cali and Medellín, with the total number of homicides (in absolute figures) going down by 27% in Cali and 35% in Medellín over the same period. This reduction contrasts sharply with the national average, which went down by only 5%, and with the average for the other large cities of the country, where the total number of homicides went up by 3% (Salazar and Castro, 1998).

In view of the results of these programmes and other specific actions, the Colombian National Planning Department and the IDB formulated a national strategy in support of Peaceful Coexistence

## Box 6

## SANTAFE DE BOGOTA: POLICIES TO FOSTER IMPROVED SECURITY AND COEXISTENCE

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Actions to deal with violence and promote improved coexistence</i>	<i>Measures to promote improved coexistence</i>
Strengthening of institutions	Restructuring of Ministry of the Interior Strengthening of the police Training of police officers Bulletin giving statistics on violence and delinquency	New integrated management of security and social coexistence A properly trained police force with adequate manpower Timely statistical information on violence and delinquency made available to the authorities and the public at large, in order to evaluate the measures taken
Establishment of mechanisms to prevent and reduce the number of homicides	Control of arms by the police Suspension of permits to carry arms Discouragement of liquor consumption Police controls	Voluntary surrender of arms Campaigns to foster disarmament Restriction on opening hours of night clubs and bars and increase in breathalyzer tests. "Hand over your car keys" campaign against drunken driving
Development of accident prevention mechanisms	New traffic police	Discouragement of liquor consumption and increased use of breathalyzer tests Restriction on opening hours of night clubs and bars "Hand over your car keys" campaign against drunken driving Restriction of use of gunpowder in festivities Use of safety helmet by motorcyclists
Development of alternative methods for settling conflicts	Conciliation centres Family Precincts Police inspections	Campaigns against violence Programme against child abuse Campaigns in favour of more courteous attitudes
Greater community participation in security	Police strategies to promote and support community participation in security	Security campaigns Security training
Improvement of the prison system	Reconstruction and adaptation of the district jail Design and implementation of training programmes Design of a new project for the construction of a new jail	Improved processes for the social rehabilitation of prisoners Design of alternative models for the punishment and social rehabilitation of offenders

*Source:* Alcaldía Mayor de Santafé de Bogotá (1997).

## Box 7

## WORLD BANK: PROPOSAL FOR A COMBINED APPROACH

*Highly effective forms of intervention*

Epidemiological-type monitoring  
Control of sale and consumption of liquor and of mental ill-health  
Arms control  
Effective treatment of urgent cases

*Favourable macrosocial contexts*

Abundant high-quality education  
Equitable growth to reduce poverty

*Integrated approaches which could give enormous benefits*

Measures against impunity: increase the net expected penalty  
Strengthening of independent public control (of the police force, the intelligence services and the judiciary)  
More flexible preventive and non-public control measures  
Beyond the schools: measures to strengthen the fabric of society and social capital

Source: Londoño (1998).

and Citizen Security which will seek to unify initiatives at the local and central level designed to forestall and control factors which have been identified as being related with crime and violence. The measures envisaged include the creation of data bases and information systems, action to bring the judicial services closer to the community, education for peace and peaceful coexistence, the strengthening of the National Police Force and its relations with the community, programmes for young offenders, and community participation programmes.

It is important to draw a distinction between programmes in different countries of the region which combine preventive and control measures, on the one hand and, on the other hand, programmes which do provide for combined action but give preference to repression and control measures.

An example of the latter type of programme is the “Zero Tolerance” plan applied in New York, which has been praised for significantly reducing

crime in that city. Based on the “broken window theory” developed in 1982 as a result of the investigations of a group of United States criminalists,<sup>21</sup> this Plan is based on the idea that every unpunished offence, no matter how small it is, represents an encouragement to commit more serious crimes, because delinquents get the idea that they will not be punished. In line with this approach, every kind of offence is now pursued (as the name of the plan implies), and police reforms have been made to increase the number of policemen, expand the powers of the police to arrest suspects and make searches, and apply a new approach to the fulfillment of targets designed to prevent crime rather than merely reacting to it. It is these measures which have been given priority –at the expense of social initiatives aimed at involving the community and forestalling crime, such as increasing the number of parks and sports facilities and establishing special schools for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents– and which have given rise to criticism on account of the police abuses they have sometimes permitted.

Some multilateral organizations, assembling examples from inside and outside the region, have identified forms of action which could be considered more effective in dealing with violence. The World Bank, for example, has made an evaluation of the problem and proposed some effective measures for

<sup>21</sup> This group, headed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, made the following experiment: they left a car abandoned in a sleazy neighbourhood to see what happened to it and how soon. The days passed, but nobody went near it. Then they left a car which had a broken window. In no time there was nothing left of the vehicle.

dealing with violence using a classic epidemiological approach (box 7).

## III

### Conclusions

As we have maintained throughout this article, violence and delinquency are multi-dimensional phenomena and are closely associated with subjective attitudes. Thus, efforts to explain them involve factors connected with the social and family position and situation of the persons in question, social, economic and cultural dimensions, and factors of a contextual and institutional nature.

One of the most obvious situations with regard to criminal violence in Latin America is the striking contrast between the growing sense of insecurity of the population and the absence of consolidated statistics which could give a more objective idea of the true magnitude of the phenomenon. Although the perception held by the population is undoubtedly an important element, the lack of ongoing statistics makes it difficult to prepare diagnoses that can serve as an effective guide for the measures that need to be taken by the public authorities, the private sector and the population at large.

Bearing in mind this lack, this article aims to make a contribution to the knowledge of the situation of citizen insecurity affecting the region by making a comparative analysis, on the basis of the limited and not always reliable information available and from different standpoints, both social and economic.

Our analysis has been centered on certain forms of criminal violence in the 1990s, especially in the cities, and is accompanied by a review of the most important theories for the study of violence, the profiles of victims and aggressors, traditional and emergent forms of delinquency, and the frequent relation that exists between violence and unemployment. Information has also been collected on the economic

cost of violence and delinquency and the different policies adopted to deal with them.

We have emphasized the need to approach criminal violence from an epidemiological standpoint which takes account of the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon, and we have also tried to identify the factors which do most to favour violence in the countries of the region.

From this angle, we have examined the measures taken in the region in the field of citizen security, in order to identify the main trends and the most successful examples of action. It may be noted in this respect that in Latin America, as well as in other parts of the world, it has been becoming increasingly clear that more integral approaches should be adopted, combining prevention (both primary and secondary) with control when dealing with criminal violence.

The adoption of multidimensional programmes raises great challenges. As well as dealing with the most urgent needs, these programmes must also pursue solutions sustainable in the long term which effectively reduce levels of violence. Furthermore, in many cases it is also necessary to restore the confidence of society at large in the police, as a prior step to promoting community participation in and commitment to citizen security plans; to set about judicial and penal reform programmes, which call for major political and social consensus, and to promote a long-term cultural change involving a move towards the peaceful settlement of conflicts in all the different segments of society.

The challenge also includes the consolidation of systems of crime statistics in the region in order to

identify the most important factors affecting criminal

violence and the more underhand and emergent forms that it takes.

(Original: Spanish)

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