

The Criminal Threat to Democratic Consolidation in Latin America

by

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ABSTRACT: Drawing on more than 200 original interviews in Guatemala and analysis of data from the LAPOP 2008 survey, I argue that high levels of violent crime may imperil democratic consolidation in Latin America. At the individual level, crime victimization and concern about crime are correlated with support for authoritarianism and heightened levels of political participation. At the elite level, public concern about crime provides rightist politicians an opportunity to re-empower militaries, to enact repressive policing measures, and to expand the military's role in the provision of domestic security. And at the conceptual level, high levels of crime and pervasive impunity are contributing to a widespread delegitimization of the idea of human rights in Latin America. Should crime rates continue to increase in the region, anti-crime movements and parties could mobilize large numbers of Latin Americans while threatening the quality and durability of democracy in the region.

Democracy has largely triumphed over dictatorship in Latin America. Following a series of "hard-won transitions" that unseated the authoritarian military governments of the 1970s and 1980s (Tulchin and Ruthenburg 2007b: 283), democracy is finally predominant in the region (Caldeira 1996; Lowenthal 1997). Simultaneously, the development of powerful regional human rights advocacy networks (Sikkink 1996; Keck and Sikkink 1998) has pushed Latin America to the forefront of a new "justice cascade" of human rights trials to hold government officials accountable for the atrocities of the past (Lutz and Sikkink 2001). Twenty years of solid advances in the promotion of democratic values and the protection of human rights should portend a bright future for Latin America.

Yet Latin Americans still live in the shadow of violence. Over the past two decades Latin America has experienced a "dramatic rise in criminality" (Bergman 2006: 213). Today Latin America enjoys the dubious distinction of being the most violent

region in the world (Tulchin and Fagan 2003; Rico 2003; Oppenheimer 2007). The magnitude of the region's violent crime problem is staggering; crime has rendered many cities "more dangerous than war zones" (Naim 2007: M4). On average, at least 140,000 Latin Americans are murdered each year (Rotker 2002a: 8; Tulchin and Fagan 2003: 13; Carrión 2003: 51; Londoño and Guerrero 2000:30), meaning that since the year 2000, more than 1 million Latin Americans have been murdered. It is no exaggeration to say that the violent crime wave constitutes a public security emergency in Latin America.

Reliable cross-national crime statistics are scant, but numerous national and sub-national studies offer a sobering portrait of violence in Latin America. A recent survey of children in one Sao Paulo neighborhood found that eight per cent have had a parent murdered and thirteen per cent have witnessed a murder (Cárdia 2002: 158, 156).

According to a national survey in Venezuela, 91% of Venezuelans are afraid of being the victim of a crime in the immediate future (Sanjuán 2003: 120) – and with good reason.

On average, every Venezuelan can expect to be the victim of 17 crimes throughout his or her life, four of which will be violent (Rotker 2002a: 8). Since 1993, homicide has been the leading cause of death for Venezuelan men between the ages of fifteen and forty years (Sanjuán 2002: 95).

The human toll of this criminal violence is severe, even when compared with the region's bloody past. Álvaro Colom, the president of Guatemala, thinks his country is

more violent now than during its civil war (quoted in Lacey 2007). *La Prensa Libre*, the leading Guatemalan newspaper, confirms his conclusion, estimating that more people will be murdered during Guatemala's first 36 years of "peace" than died violently during the country's 36-year civil war (Bonillo 2009). Similarly, El Salvador has "recovered from a decade of political conflict [only] to find [itself] plunged into new sorts of violence and crime" (Cruz 2006: 148).

This surge of criminality is one of the most significant recent developments in Latin America, yet its political consequences are grievously understudied and largely unknown. As Marcelo Bergman argues,

Similar changes in the economic and political landscape [of Latin America] would have surely triggered a torrent of books and research interests. Yet, one of the most puzzling questions in the literature is why such a drastic deterioration in public security and rise in criminal activity have not produced a wave of new volumes in the field (2006: 213).

This paper addresses that deficit by using survey data and qualitative research to analyze the political consequences of crime victimization in Latin America.

I find that high levels of crime threaten the quality and durability of democracy in Latin America in three ways. First and most directly, at the individual level recent crime victimization is robustly associated with anti-democratic views and increased political participation, suggesting that crime victimization may increase the likelihood that an individual actively supports authoritarian policies and movements. Second, at the elite level, high levels of crime provide opportunities for anti-democratic to re-

militarize policing and to rollback the freedoms guaranteed during their countries' democratic transitions. Finally, at a more conceptual level, Latin America's crime wave has resulted in broad delegitimization of the idea of human rights, which in turn raises the likelihood that rights-violating regimes may once again flourish in Latin America.¹

1. The Individual Level: From Crime Victimization to Anti-Democratic Activism?

Democratic consolidation in Latin America has been "tentative and uneven" (Diamond 1997: xxxviii; see also Lowenthal 1997), arguably due in part to the violent crime crisis in contemporary Latin America. This spike in violent crime roughly coincided with democratization in the region,² and crime is widely believed to cause disillusionment with democracy. Consider this statement by Victoria Burnett, Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas, Austin:

Crime in El Salvador is a disaster. ... Common crime is so pervasive in El Salvador and such a problem, that I would call it a crisis of democracy. ... It's very hard for any government to get a grip on the crime. [El Salvador today] is a place where the average citizen feels an enormous amount of dissatisfaction that the government can't provide basic services, like safety, like the idea that you can walk to the store and walk back safely to your home. Until they find a way to resolve that, that's going to be a challenge to democracy, I think (Burnett 2008: 1).

The individual frustration suggested by Burnett could impede the consolidation of democracy in two different ways. First, fear of crime and crime victimization could

¹ I ultimately plan to separate this project into three different papers, so the empirical sections should be read with the understanding that they are the preliminary, and somewhat abbreviated, summaries of research that will ultimately grow into several distinct but related papers.

² I believe that the simultaneous rise of democracy and crime in Latin America is largely an unfortunate coincidental correlation rather than a causal relationship, though some authors contend that democratization actually *causes* violent crime to increase; see, for example, Patterson (2010). I intend to explore this further in a separate paper.

cause citizens to disengage with politics. High levels of violent crime are hypothesized to lead to “lower levels of participation in democratic processes” (Buvinic et al 2002: 74). Given the “broad consensus in the existing literature and among experts that public participation is an indispensable part of building democracy” (Ekiert and Grzymala-Busse 2007: 23), widespread popular withdrawal from or disenchantment with politics could hamper the development of strong democracies in Latin America.

Second, fear of crime and crime victimization could cause citizens to reject democracy and support authoritarianism, either in the form of dictatorship or repressive policing measures (often called *mano dura*). Support for military government or dictatorship is startlingly high in Latin America, which is worrisome because popular support for democracy is an important component of democratic consolidation (Diamond 1997: xix). In 2007, only 54 per cent of Latin Americans thought that democracy was the best system of government, a statistic that dipped as low as 32% in Guatemala and 33% in Paraguay (Latinobarómetro 2007); “the question of why citizens do not support democracy in Latin America today is an urgent one” (Hagopian 2007: 13). Furthermore, *mano dura* is increasingly popular and often re-empowers the military or political leaders with authoritarian tendencies, directly endangering the principle of democratic, civilian rule in Latin America’s nascent democracies.

These two possible causal pathways are analytically distinct; the first deals with the determinants of political behavior, and the second considers the formation of political opinions. They suggest two different research questions:

- **Q1: How does crime victimization affect political participation and political engagement?**
- **Q2: How does crime victimization shape beliefs about dictatorship, democracy, and *mano dura*?**

Finding micro-foundational answers to these questions requires the development of hypotheses about how crime victimization affects individual victims' beliefs and actions.

1.1 Generating Hypotheses: Crime Victimization and Evaluations of Governmental Effectiveness

Crime victimization could put an individual into contact with governmental offices and state services, but in Latin America such an experience would likely be marked by frustration, corruption, and inefficiency, leaving the victim with a negative impression of the state. Latin American police and other law enforcement agents are generally considered incompetent and untrustworthy (Rico 2003); indeed, 84% of Mexico City residents say they do not trust the police (Méndez Bahena et al 2002: 156). Impunity prevails across the region and in some countries, such as Guatemala, the judicial system is so dysfunctional that 98 percent of homicides go unsolved (CICIG

2010). Similarly, in Mexico City more than 90% of all reported crimes are never investigated (Alvarado Mendoza 2006: 294).

As a result of their interactions with state authorities, Latin American crime victims are likely to become disenchanted with government, feel that politics is meaningless, and lose their sense of citizenship (Caldeira 1996). When crime victims see that the state is unwilling or unable to help them, they may lose their trust in government and their interest in politics, “feeling unprotected or even further victimized by the system that is meant to protect them” (Pérez 2003: 628). This generates hypothesis 1:

- **H1: Crime victims will have lower rates of political engagement than their peers.**

Crime victims’ negative experiences with the government may logically cause them to be dissatisfied with the performance of democracy in general, and they may also believe that government responses to crime are ineffective. This intuition yields two additional hypotheses:

- **H2: Crime victims will be less satisfied with the functioning of their democracies than their peers.**
- **H3: Crime victims will have negative assessments of the state’s response to crime.**

1.2 Generating Hypotheses: Crime Victimization and Social Isolation

Crime victimization may cause individuals to withdraw from society, decreasing their participation in civic and political life. At the societal level, extremely high rates of violent crime and impunity are thought to generate a sense of “civic helplessness,” which can “engender paralysis” among citizens (Rotker 2002a: 7, 15). At the individual level, fear of violent crime is believed to lead people to “develop survival strategies that restrict interpersonal contact” (Cárdia 2002, 163), and research in the United States suggests that crime victimization reduces interpersonal trust (Brehm and Rahn 1997). Such behavior could logically decrease participation in political activities, motivating hypothesis four:

- **H4: Crime victims will be less likely to participate in politics.**

1.3 Generating Hypotheses: Crime Victimization and Beliefs about Authoritarianism

Numerous authors suggest that fear of violent crime drives citizens to demand violent retribution against alleged criminals (Sanjuán 2003), often in the form of *mano dura*. Some evidence indicates that individual-level relationships may exist between crime victimization and support for heavy-handed, even violent, anti-crime measures. Among Caracas residents surveyed in 1996, Briceño-León et al (2002) find a significant relationship between crime victimization and support for extrajudicial violence against criminals, which they attribute to victims’ desire for revenge. Gilberto García, a seventy-five year old Mexican man who was kidnapped in December 2007, expresses exactly this sentiment. Reflecting on his kidnapping in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*,

he said, “If there’s no iron hand, this will never end. If I had known they were coming for me that day, I would have run over them. Every man for himself” (quoted in Ellingwood 2008: A1).

Concern about violent crime in Latin America appears to be so severe that citizens are “willing to sacrifice certain liberties in order to feel more secure” ((Tulchin and Ruthenburg 2006b: 5), and fear can generate demand for strong governance, leading to support for authoritarianism and dictatorship (Corradi 1992). In Africa, fear of crime has been associated with increased support for authoritarianism (Kuenzi 2006), so it is reasonable to suggest that crime victimization could have a similar effect in Latin America.

These trends prompt two hypotheses:

- **H5: Crime victims will be more likely to support *mano dura* and vigilante justice.**
- **H6: Crime victims will be more likely to support military government or dictatorship.**

1.4 Data

The lack of reliable data about crime in Latin America makes it difficult, if not impossible, to test these hypotheses at the aggregate level. Cross-national homicide data is available from the World Health Organization, and some researchers choose to use that data (ie: Bailey and Flores-Macías 2007). It is true that criminologists consider the

WHO mortality data the best cross-national measure of homicide (LaFree and Drass 2002), but in the case of Latin America that designation means little. For example, according to the WHO dataset in Guatemala in 1999 there were 1,978 homicides and 3,268 deaths due to “other violence” (WHO 2008). There is no further explanation of the deaths from “other violence,” but it seems possible that they could have been improperly or incompletely recorded homicides.

There are obvious problems with crime data in Latin America; data gathered by the authorities is considered incomplete and inaccurate (Alvarado Mendoza 2006; Bergman 2006). This is a serious handicap for researchers. Indeed,

the failure to make significant strides in the study, evaluation, and policy recommendations of crime and public security in Latin America lies in the miserable state of the data. Sources are scant, organization is poor, and the quality is substandard (Bergman 2006: 220).

Due to these serious and insurmountable problems with government-generated crime data, high-quality surveys are the only defensible way to measure crime victimization in Latin America (Bergman 2006). To evaluate my hypotheses, I analyzed data from the LAPOP surveys from 2008. The LAPOP surveys are personally administered to a random sample of adults from every country in Latin America.³ This data allows for investigation of the individual-level consequences of crime victimization. Other researchers have used similar surveys to assess relationships

³ The countries included in the LAPOP 2008 surveys are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

between crime victimization and political opinions in Latin American and other regions of the world (Kuenzi 2006; Pérez 2003).

The key independent variable in this project is recent crime victimization. The LAPOP survey asked each respondent if he or she had been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. Responses to these questions were coded into a dummy variables measuring recent victimization. Sadly, victimization is not a rare event in Latin America; 18 percent of the 2008 LAPOP respondents said that they had been the victim of a crime in the past year. Crime victims are somewhat different from the general population; on average, they are younger, less likely to be married, more educated, have higher socioeconomic status, and live in more urban areas.

To evaluate whether *actual crime victimization* or concern about crime is driving the results, some regressions use additional independent variables of interest. Survey respondents were asked how much they fear crime in their neighborhood, and this question was used to create the “fear of crime” independent variable that appears in the some of the regression results. Survey respondents were also asked how much gang activity occurs in their neighborhoods. That question was used to create a “gang activity” variable that serves two purposes: (1) it is a control variable in specification checks for regressions seeking to isolate the effect of crime victimization independent of the effect of living in crime-ridden area; and (2) it is an additional independent variable to evaluate the impact of living in an area with high levels of gang activity.

The LAPOP survey also included numerous questions measuring dependent variables related to hypotheses 1 through 6.⁴ The dependent variables and their corresponding hypotheses are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Hypotheses and corresponding dependent variables.*

Hypothesis	Dependent Variables
H1: Crime victims will have lower rates of political engagement than their peers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of conversations about politics • Level of interest in politics • Frequency of attempts to convince others of political views
H2: Crime victims will be less satisfied with democracy than their peers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with democracy
H3: Crime victims will have negative assessments of the state's response to crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that the police catch the guilty. • Belief that the judicial system punishes the guilty
H4: Crime victims will be less likely to participate in politics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at the meetings of a party or political movement • Attendance at community improvement committee meetings • Attendance at town council meetings • Participation in protests or demonstrations • Solicitation of help from government officials
H5: Crime victims will be more likely to support <i>mano dura</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for <i>mano dura</i> • Approval of vigilante justice • Support for police action at the margin of the law to catch criminals
H6: Crime victims will be more likely to support military government or dictatorship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference for a strong unelected ruler • Belief that circumstances could justify a president's decision to close Congress • Belief that circumstances could justify a president's decision to close the Supreme Court • Support for people who join groups seeking to violently overthrow elected governments • Preference for democracy over dictatorship • Belief that democracy is the best form of government

1.5 Data Analysis

To evaluate these hypotheses, I used several types of regressions to analyze the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in the 2008 LAPOP survey data. The basic model estimated is:

⁴ Dependent variables that are binary are indicated in the results tables. The other dependent variables are ordinal variables most often ranging from 1 to 4 or 1 to 5, though there were a few feeling thermometers that included 7 or 10 point scales.

$$Y_i = VictimizationDummy_i + MaleDummy_i + Age_i + SES_i + Education_i + Urbanization_i + CountryFixedEffects_i + u_i$$

Because residuals may be correlated amongst respondents from the same error, the standard errors are clustered by municipality. The regressions also use robust standard errors.

The results of these basic regressions are reported in the appendix. The coefficients reported there are all from OLS regressions. For ease of interpretation, the values of each dependent variable have been re-scaled so they range from 0 to 1. In extensive specification checks involving hundreds of regressions, each equation was also estimated with probit (or ordered probit, as appropriate), and the sign and significance of the coefficient on victimization was generally consistent across those different methods. Additionally, each regression was subjected to numerous robustness checks; the OLS and probit regression were run with and without country fixed effects and with a large number of additional control variables. Those results are not reported here, but they are available from the author upon request. Calculations were performed in Stata 10.

As shown in Table 1, *victimization is positively and significantly associated with all forms of political engagement and participation*. Contrary to conventional wisdom, crime victims do not retreat from political life; rather, they are more politically

active than their peers.⁵ This finding is sufficiently strong to suggest a causal relationship between victimization and mobilization, and it conclusively refutes hypotheses 1 and 4.

People never *choose* to become crime victims, so there is no self-selection problem with crime victimization as is often the case with other independent variables like education, occupation, or marital status. However, it is true that individuals may have different personalities, patterns of behavior, or other traits that increase or decrease the likelihood that they will become the victim of a crime. This presents a possible endogeneity problem, which could threaten our ability to interpret these results causally.

We might be concerned that certain types of people tend to live in high-crime areas, either by choice or more commonly because they do not have any other option. If those people were also, by nature or socialization, more politically active than average, then this could be an unobserved variable rendering our correlation spurious. However, this is unlikely. Well-organized neighborhoods with high levels of social capital tend to have lower crime rates (Bursik and Grasmick 1993), so any correlation between local political mobilization and crime is probably negative -- but the correlation between political participation and crime victimization is *positive*. Any environmental omitted

⁵ I examine this finding in much greater detail a separate unpublished paper (available upon request). In addition to analyzing the results of the LAPOP surveys, that paper also uses Afrobarometer data and finds a similar positive relationship between recent crime victimization in Africa as well as in Latin America. In many countries, the substantive impact of crime victimization is larger than that of *gender*, making these results quite significant for our understanding of political participation in the developing world.

variable or unobserved “neighborhood effect” is likely biasing the reported coefficients toward zero and could not be responsible for the relationships observed here.

Nonetheless, it is possible to imagine rather convoluted local scenarios that could be influencing both an individual’s risk of crime victimization and his or her level of participation in politics. For example, an increase in crime at the neighborhood level could lead a political entrepreneur to organize marches and mobilize local residents to protest against police inefficiency. In this case, an individual could be the victim of a crime and then increase his or her political activism, but non-victims in the neighborhood would also be recruited to participate, so individual victimization would not be the cause of the participation.

To ensure that we are measuring the effect of crime victimization rather than the effect of living in a high-crime area, I included additional control variables measuring the respondents’ perceptions of crime rates, gang activity, and drug dealing in their neighborhoods. The coefficients on victimization remained positive and significant even with these additional controls. I also performed nearest-neighbor matching including all the control variables from my main regression models and requiring exact matches by gender and municipality.⁶ Following the suggestions of Ho, Imai, King, and Stuart (2007), I used this matching as pre-processing, which culled the dataset to ensure that only comparable treatment and control observations were included. Then I re-ran my

⁶ Neighborhood is recorded as well as municipality, but there are too few respondents from each neighborhood (generally 1-5) for exact matching by neighborhood.

basic OLS regressions on the culled data, and the results were basically the same as in the previous analyses. Even when the control and treatment groups were exactly balanced by gender and municipality, recent victimization was associated with higher-than-average political participation and engagement. The results of this matching exercise are available by request.

To rule out the possibility that prior political participation or a personality trait associated with political participation (such as extroversion) was somehow causing crime victimization, I included measures of pre-victimization political participation as additional controls when possible. The 2008 LAPOP surveys asked respondents if they had worked for a candidate or party in their country's last presidential election, and in a felicitous coincidence the last presidential election in every country but Guatemala and Argentina occurred more than 12 months before the survey was administered. The survey's crime victimization question asked if the respondent had been the victim of a crime in the last 12 months, making this question a good control for pre-victimization levels of participation. Separate regressions were run on the 2008 data including this variable and dropping all the observations from Guatemala and Argentina.⁷ As expected, the prior political work variable was positively and significantly related to present-day levels of political participation and engagement, but even when it was

⁷ Full results are available from the author upon request.

included the coefficients on the victimization variable remained nearly the same and were still statistically significant.

Finally, in an attempt to isolate the effect of crime victimization, fear of crime was also considered. Are crime victims participating in politics only because their victimization made them more fearful of crime? Is fear of crime really the root cause of their participation, rather than victimization? Do non-victims who fear crime also participate in politics more than average? To evaluate this possible confounding variable, I ran additional regressions using the data from the 2008 LAPOP survey. Helpfully, that survey included a question asking how much respondents feared crime in their neighborhoods. I re-ran all the 2008 regressions including both victimization and fear of crime as explanatory variables, and then I re-ran them again dropping victimization and including only fear of crime and the standard control variables. In all the regressions with dependent variables measure participation or political engagement fear of crime was insignificant, both when victimization was also included and when victimization was excluded. When both victimization and fear of crime were included, the coefficient on victimization remained virtually unchanged and was still positive and statistically significant in the vast majority of the regression relating to participation. The consistency and robustness of these results indicate that there may be a true causal relationship between victimization and political mobilization in contemporary Latin America.

Worryingly, these newly mobilized activists may have anti-democratic tendencies. As reported in Tables 2 and 3, **crime victimization is associated with low levels of confidence in the judicial system and law enforcement, discontent with democracy, and support for authoritarianism and rights-violating crime-fighting measures, such as vigilante justice and *mano dura***. In contrast to the results with the participation dependent variables, recent crime victimization, fear of crime, and living in a gang-infested area are *all* predictors of anti-democratic attitudes, as shown in Tables 4-7. Both crime victimization and broader concern about crime appear to drive these beliefs, so any effort to increase support for democratic values will have to incorporate measures to reduce actual rates of crimes victimization, to reduce public hysteria about crime, and to reduce local perceptions of criminal activity.

To summarize, my findings refute hypotheses 1 and 4 and are consistent with hypotheses 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3. *Summary of findings.*

Hypothesis	Findings
H1: Crime victims will have lower rates of political engagement than their peers.	False; crime victims have higher levels of political engagement than their peers.
H2: Crime victims will be less satisfied with democracy than their peers.	True.
H3: Crime victims will have negative assessments of the state's response to crime.	True.
H4: Crime victims will be less likely to participate in politics.	False; crime victims are more likely than their peers to participate in politics.
H5: Crime victims will be more likely to support <i>mano dura</i> .	True.
H6: Crime victims will be more likely to support dictatorship.	True.

2. The Elite Level: Crime and the Resurgence of Authoritarianism

Coinciding with the recent wave of crime in Latin America, the last two decades have seen the rise of new forms of repressive policing called *mano dura*, or “the iron fist,” disturbingly high levels of support for authoritarianism, and, in some cases, the militarization of domestic policing. The crime crisis is said to increase support for both dictatorship and *mano dura* (Oppenheimer 2007), jeopardizing human rights, civil liberties, and democracy. As Orlando J. Pérez explains:

Crime undermines support for democratic regimes. As crime rates increase, pressure mounts for “strong” government action which in many instances results in highly repressive and undemocratic measures (2003: 638).

The results described in Section 1 of this paper suggest individuals who fear crime, who live in crime-ridden areas, and who have recently been victims of crime do support harsh policing tactics and authoritarian measures more than their peers. It is difficult to make an ironclad case linking changes in public opinion to the enactment of *mano dura*, but at the very least high crime rates and public hysteria about crime create an environment in which it is possible for politicians to advocate for anti-democratic new policies.

At its core, *mano dura* inherently curtails individual rights and re-empowers the military and police. This bundle of crime-fighting tactics, which often violates countries’ democratic constitutions, includes deploying the military for internal policing, lengthening prison sentences, suspending due process guarantees and other protections

for alleged criminals, and aggressively arresting youths suspected of gang membership.

Essentially, *mano dura* consists of

swift, strong action against crime—sometimes even if this violates the terms of international agreements, and even if it reverses important, hard-won progress toward demilitarization (Snodgrass Godoy 2005: 614).

In Honduras, for example, legislation has allowed individuals merely suspected of being gang members to be imprisoned for up to twelve years (Arana 2005) and has subjected the residents of Tegucigalpa to a 2 am curfew (Mejía 2007). For some politicians, even the “iron fist” is not enough; former Salvadoran President Tony Saca, striving to reinforce his image as a tough crime-fighter, called his package of extra-strict policing measures *super mano dura* (Mejía 2007; Oppenheimer 2007).

The concept of “democratic security” requires the subordination of the armed forces to civilian control, promotion of human rights, respect for individual and procedural rights, collaboration with local communities, and an emphasis on preventative crime-fighting strategies (Chinchilla 2002). *Mano dura* violates all these principles and can be considered roundly undemocratic. It emboldens the military, legitimates elements of the state that not long ago were governing through authoritarianism (Tulchin and Ruthenburg 2006b; Bitencourt 2007), and violates the human rights of alleged criminals. For example, “tough” crime fighting policies in Brazil have resulted in numerous human rights violations; in 1991, 1,171 people in Sao Paulo were killed by the police (Caldeira 1996: 197).

In addition to facilitating *mano dura*, high crime rates are also associated with support for militarized policing and outright dictatorship. Amidst a crisis of crime in Latin America's new democracies, some people look to authoritarianism for the answer. In Brazil, where increasingly high levels of crime are widely believed to have resulted from "weak authority" (Caldeira 1996: 202), people "look to the armed forces as a solution for controlling violence in the cities" (Bitencourt 2007: 177). This sentiment extends across the hemisphere. A survey conducted in El Salvador in 1999 found that 55% of the population could support a military coup if crime rates rose too high (Pérez 2003: 638), and many Guatemalans cheered the ouster of Manuel Zelaya from Honduras. The residents of my case study town in Jutiapa speculated that the move might embolden the Guatemalan military to overthrow Pres. Álvaro Colom, and they believed crime rates would decrease under a military dictatorship. One young man recognized that Guatemala's foreign aid would likely be cut off after a coup, but he still thought that

in the long term it would really benefit Guatemala's security. Because with a coup, they would enact curfews. At a certain time, you can't go out in the street. For example, in Honduras you can't go out in the street after 9 pm. Ask yourself if that wouldn't help security.⁸

The idea that military governments control crime better than democratic ones is commonplace in Guatemala. Many of my interview subjects had fond memories of the government of Jorge Ubico. As one man in Joyabaj, Quiché told me, "No one caused

⁸ Interview with "Raúl," Agua Blanca, Jutiapa, 18 July 2009.

trouble back then. Many people wish that time (the era of Ubico) could return ... There was respect, since he was a dictator. A general.”⁹

Even absent a military coup, Guatemala is a prime example of a country where an incremental, creeping remilitarization of policing and governance is slowly eroding the quality of democracy. Though the Peace Accords stated that the military would no longer be responsible for domestic security, the Constitution was never amended to reflect this. Immediately after the civil war ended, Pres. Álvaro Arzú asked the military to assist the police with certain functions, such as directing traffic.¹⁰ The role of the military has only grown since.

During the FRG government of Alfonso Portillo, the Congress approved legislation allowing the military to work with the Policía Nacional Civil on selected tasks. President Óscar Berger in 2004, claiming there was a “crisis of security,” allowed the military to begin patrolling with the police on regular, preventive rounds.¹¹ (Guatemalans call these “combined patrols,” or *patrullajes combinados*.) Civil society organizations in Guatemala City were concerned about this development, but the head of MINUGUA told them not to protest too vociferously. Javier Monterroso, advocacy director for the Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales, a think tank in Guatemala City, remembers that the MINUGUA official told him the combined patrols

⁹ Interview with “César,” Joyabaj, Quiché, 28 Oct. 2009.

¹⁰ Interview with Gen. Julio Balconi, Guatemala City, 23 February 2010.

¹¹ Interview with Javier Monterroso, Guatemala City, 22 February 2010.

would be “a temporary emergency measure. And once the emergency was over, they were going to put the military back in the barracks. That emergency never ended.”¹² The logic was that the military should support the police temporarily, until they were better established, but “hidden interests” supported the role of the military and it became “fashionable to have the military out patrolling.”¹³

After 10 years of militarized policing in Guatemala, crime rates continue to rise (Bonillo 2010a). Yet the public clamors for increased militarization of policing; “the presence of the military on the streets is demanded by the population” (Ejército 2010b). Bizarrely, the Guatemalan military’s history of human rights abuses is seen as *a good reason* to put them in charge of the country’s domestic security. This is true even in those regions that suffered the worst violence during the civil war precisely because the military is “not respected, but rather feared.”¹⁴ In a strange twist of logic, it is widely believed that the military’s ferocity and abusiveness makes it better-qualified than the police to fight the *mareros* and *delincuentes* today. Guatemalans say over and over again, “Bring out the military! The military should be out on the street, the military should come patrol, because they assume that the military will incite fear, it will incite terror. And because of that, crime will disappear.”¹⁵

¹² Interview with Javier Monterroso, Guatemala City, 22 February 2010.

¹³ Interview with anonymous security expert, Guatemala City, 25 February 2010.

¹⁴ Interview with anonymous security expert, Guatemala City, 25 February 2010.

¹⁵ Interview with Iduvina Hernández, Guatemala City, 3 March 2010.

Both the Guatemalan Policía Nacional Civil (PNC) and the Ministerio de Gobernación, which oversees the police, courts, and prosecutors, are deeply corrupt. Both ordinary agents and high-levels officials are involved in money laundering (Ex 2010; Orantes 2010a; Orantes 2010b, Castillo 2010), narco-trafficking (Orantes, Váldez, and Lara 2009), extrajudicial executions (Ordenan 2010), and a wide variety of violent crimes (Hay 2010). When they are stopped by the PNC, Guatemalans know they could be assaulted, extorted, or killed.¹⁶ So it is not entirely clear that soldiers engaged in policing would abuse the public any more than the PNC already does.

Nonetheless, the militarization of policing in Guatemala is problematic for the consolidation of democracy for two reasons. First, the military has no training in democratic security and policing. As former Minister of Defense Gen. Julio Balconi explained to me, arguing that the military should stay out of policing, “this function does not properly belong to the military. The military is not prepared. They are not trained to provide citizen security.”¹⁷ The entire orientation of a soldier’s training is antithetical to providing rights-respecting policing. A soldier’s goal is to find and annihilate his enemy. A police officer’s goal is to protect the public. So the two are completely incompatible.¹⁸

¹⁶ Interview with Javier Monterroso, Guatemala City, 22 February 2010.

¹⁷ Interview, Guatemala City, 23 February 2010.

¹⁸ Interview with Iduvina Hernández, Guatemala City, 3 March 2010; Interview with anonymous security expert, Guatemala City, 25 February 2010.

Second, the involvement of the military in policing increases the military's power and prestige within Guatemalan politics, further militarizing the country's "civilian" government. According to officials from the Ministerio de Gobernación, the PNC pays the military for the use of the soldiers who participate in the *patrullajes combinados*.¹⁹ So although the PNC lacks sufficient funds for its basic operating expenses—for example, the new class of officers who began work in November 2009 did not receive any pay during their first 4 months on the job (Bonillo 2010b)—part of its budget is effectively being transferred to the military. Similarly, the PNC is buying pistols and giving them to the military so the soldiers in the combined patrols can use pistols, rather than their current rifles.²⁰ The net result of these policies is to "re-empower an institution that should have lost power" in the postwar period.²¹

Both subtly—by refusing to take action to strengthen the police, thereby guaranteeing the role of the military in policing²²—and overtly—by increasing the *patrullajes combinados* to cover additional departments (Váldez 2010, Policía 2010), by establishing military checkpoints on highways (Instalan 2010), and by sending soldiers to provide security on buses (Ejército 2010b)—the government of Álvaro Colom is

¹⁹ José Portillo, Coordinador de la Comisión para la Prevención y Reducción de la Violencia Armada, Ministerio de Gobernación. Q&A Session at the Seminario Internacional, "Buenas Prácticas y Lecciones Aprendidas en Materia de Transferencia de Armas y Violencia Armada," Hotel Vista Real, Guatemala City, 18 March 2010.

²⁰ José Portillo, Coordinador de la Comisión para la Prevención y Reducción de la Violencia Armada, Ministerio de Gobernación. Q&A Session at the Seminario Internacional, "Buenas Prácticas y Lecciones Aprendidas en Materia de Transferencia de Armas y Violencia Armada," Hotel Vista Real, Guatemala City, 18 March 2010.

²¹ Interview with Javier Monterroso, Guatemala City, 22 February 2010.

²² Interview with iduvina Hernández, Guatemala City, 3 March 2010.

increasing the militarization of public security. Colom wants to increase the number of soldiers, rather than police officers, patrolling the streets.²³ Why might the most leftist president in recent memory—whose party’s campaign symbol is a dove—do this? One theory suggests that Colom’s hands are tied by public opinion. No president is willing to remove the military from policing because then people will say, “Look, you are not helping us. You have the military locked away in its barracks when the military could help us.”²⁴ Another more conspiratorial explanation is that Colom is enacting pro-military policies so the military will not overthrow him. Javier Monterroso argues that Colom is doing this

because he does not want to meet the same fate as Manuel Zelaya. He knows that if he has the military on his side, they won’t get involved, they won’t throw him out. ... Because of this, he has increased the military budget, given them more bases, more real power, more national presence. ... It’s like a life jacket for the president.²⁵

Although Guatemala is under civilian rule, the military plays an increasingly large role in national politics and public security—and the future of democracy seems anything but certain. Guatemala is not necessarily a bellwether for the rest of Latin America, but this case study illustrates one possible—and worrisome—outcome when rising crime rates coincide with powerful militaries and weak democratic institutions.

²³ Interview with Javier Monterroso, Guatemala City, 22 February 2010.

²⁴ Interview with Gen. Julio Balconi, former Minister of Defense, Guatemala City, 23 February 2010.

²⁵ Interview, Guatemala City, 22 February 2010.

3. The Conceptual Level: Crime and the Delegitimization of Human Rights

Q: And as far as you're concerned, what do you think of human rights?

A: Human rights only came to ruin everything.

Q: In what way?

A: In the sense that they support criminals (*delinquentes*). Today justice is not done because they support criminals.

Q: And what do they do to support criminals?

A: Now one cannot even go to ask for, like, justice. Because there is no right to it, right. They also have their rights. The perpetrators, the killers, yes, they also have their rights. Uh-huh. No, that doesn't help at all. Ever since then things have been bad here in Guatemala.

Q: Since when?

A: Since human rights came about.

Q: So they don't protect people then?

A: They are protecting the perpetrators, the murderers. Because that was the problem. They wouldn't even let us see my father's killers. Because they protect them instead of acting according to the law, no. They protect murderers, they take care of them. They took care of them, they would let anyone go harm them. They had already killed my father! But they wouldn't let anyone touch them because human rights protect them. So we are in a bad spot, you know. Because killers are held prisoner for a while and they want proof of everything. And even though they caught them in the act, that is not sufficient for them. So then they let them go and they kill more people. They leave even worse. Because there is no justice. No, no.

Q: So then when you say there is no justice, if there were justice, what kind of justice would you want?

A: What I want?

Q: Yes.

A: That he who kills be killed. He who kills should be killed. That would be good. If I do something bad to another person, then they should do it back to me. Because only God has the right. But I would like to see justice done in this way. Because the prisoners are eating and drinking, they even have businesses in prison. They live better, they live better in prison than on the streets. ... They have televisions, they even have pool tables, they are incarcerated but they live better because they have everything.²⁶

²⁶ Interview with "Reyna," Agua Blanca, Jutiapa, 17 July 2009.

The very concept of human rights is in jeopardy in Latin America. Impunity is the norm in many high-crime countries, and services for crime victims are minimal. In this context, many crime victims feel betrayed by the human rights movement. Because human rights groups generally do not advocate for victims of common crimes, and because human rights groups have historically been concerned with abuses of power by the state—including mistreatment of prisoners and illegal detentions—they are broadly seen as favoring criminals over the law-abiding public. This sentiment can escalate into a wholesale rejection of the concept of human rights.

Even after Latin America's wave of democratic transitions in the 1980s and 1990s, human rights problems in the new democracies were still seen as relating primarily to the abuses under the prior authoritarian governments, "inheritances" from the old regimes (Garretón 1996: 40). The notion of the state as the problem, the primary abuser of human rights, was still the lens through which human rights violations were understood. International human rights advocacy has traditionally been dominated by an "exclusive focus on the behavior of states" (Thomas and Beasley 1993: 38), and human rights advocacy groups formed in Latin America to protest against and limit governments' abuses of their civilians. Many of the founders of such groups had themselves suffered repression at the hands of the state (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 92), and the network of human rights groups that developed in the 1970s was tailored to respond to

specific types of human rights abuses, for which the situation of Chile under Pinochet could be seen as the prototype: massive violations of basic rights of the person by an authoritarian military dictatorship (Sikkink 1996: 59).

By the mid-1990s, the types of human rights abuses occurring in Latin America had shifted away from direct commission of mass violations by states (Sikkink 1996). But human rights advocates maintained their state-focused outlook, “tend[ing] to direct their criticisms to the practices of governments” (Sikkink 1996: 70). This focus means that human rights organizations do not see violent crime as a human rights violation, since private actors, rather than the state, are the immediate authors of most violent crimes.

In addition to seeing the state as the source of human rights violations, human rights advocates also conceptualize the core civil and political rights as negative rights. Negative rights are freedoms from abuse, whereas positive rights are entitlements to benefits, protections, or services (Donnelly 2003). Some legal scholars construct human rights as almost exclusively negative, believing that “international human rights law evolved to protect those individual rights from limitations that might be imposed upon them by states” (Thomas and Beasley 1993: 38). Reflecting this conventional orientation, most human rights organizations in Latin America originally formed with the objective of advocating primarily for negative rights (Garretón 1996; Sikkink 1996). If individual rights to physical integrity, personal security, and justice are considered negative rights,

then they are violated only when the state actively infringes upon them, not when it merely fails to protect them.

Given this historical evolution and theoretical orientation, human rights organizations generally draw sharp distinctions between “common crimes” and “human rights cases.” If a group of indigenous human rights activists are shot and killed by gang members who want to steal their truck, then their murders are considered a common crime, dismissed as unworthy of consideration or assistance from international and domestic human rights groups. However, if the very same group of people was killed in the very same way by the police rather than gang members, then their deaths would be labeled “human rights cases,” they would be investigated by numerous organizations and possibly foreign governments, and public pressure would be brought to bear urging trials and convictions of those responsible.

One day in March 2010, I witnessed such a situation. I was sitting in the lobby of an NGO called UDEFEGUA (the Unidad de Defensores de Derechos Humanos), waiting for an interview. The spouse of an UDEFEGUA employee had just been kidnapped off the street, and the staff was frantically trying to determine both his whereabouts *and* whether he had been kidnapped for some reason related to his wife’s work at UDEFEGUA, or simply because he was a moderately well-off person who looked like his family would be able to pay a hefty ransom. In the former case, UDEFEGUA would be able to enlist the help of international human rights

organizations and foreign governments who would advocate for the victim's safe return. In the latter case, the victim's family would have to rely on the police to resolve the case—an uncertain prospect at best.

The distinction between “human rights cases” and “common crimes” effectively creates a hierarchy of victims. As Snodgrass Godoy (2005) argues, in human rights discourse in Latin America the moral importance of a person's death is often determined based on the identity of their suspected killers and/or their presumed motives. Killings committed by state agents or in which the victim is targeted because of political activity or identity are generally considered to be “human rights violations” meriting an outcry, while other killings are merely regrettable (Snodgrass Godoy 2005).

In addition to apparently ignoring the victims of “ordinary” crimes, Latin American human rights groups are widely believed to be fighting for the rights of criminals (Snodgrass Godoy 2005). To some extent, that observation is correct. In post-transition Brazil, human rights groups shifted their efforts from advocating for the rights of political prisoners to focusing on “poor common prisoners, which were being tortured and lived in degraded conditions” (Caldeira 1996: 208). Similarly, human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch routinely issue reports condemning police abuses (Bitencourt 2007) and rightly so: torture, extrajudicial killing, and other abuses by law enforcement agents throughout Latin America are rampant. The problem, however, is that given their total disengagement with crime victims, human rights groups are

perceived to be promoting the rights of criminals at the expense of average, innocent people. According to one local judicial employee in Guatemala, the public thinks that “the people fighting for human rights, the state authorities, defend criminals more than the person who is the victim.”²⁷

I heard this sentiment over and over again during my fieldwork in Guatemala in 2009 and 2010. Allegedly, human rights prevent the police from taking action against criminals.²⁸ Human rights “sometimes support even killers, thieves, and that is not just.”²⁹ “Human rights only serve to protect criminals.”³⁰ “Human rights are bad because they go around defending bad guys, thieves, murderers.”³¹ Criminals “use human rights for protection,” to escape prosecution.³² This idea is actively promoting by some members of the police and prosecutorial services, seeking an excuse for their ineffectiveness. They say that they can’t catch and prosecute criminals because then “human rights groups will get mad at them.”³³

Iduvina Hernández, of the NGO Seguridad Democrática in Guatemala City, has been hearing these arguments for the past eight to ten years, and she considers that

²⁷ Interview with “Mauricio,” Agua Blanca, Jutiapa, 23 June 2009.

²⁸ Interview with “Enrique,” Agua Blanca, Jutiapa, 18 June 2009.

²⁹ Interview with “Ángel,” Joyabaj, Quiché, 5 November 2009.

³⁰ Interview with “Guillermo,” Agua Blanca, Jutiapa, 19 June 2009.

³¹ Interview with “César,” Joyabaj, Quiché, 28 October 2009.

³² Interview with “Domingo,” Joyabaj, Quiché, 15 October 2009.

³³ Interview with Iduvina Hernández, Guatemala City, 3 March 2010.

their vehemence and ubiquity has increased especially in the last few years. In her view, it is “a very serious mistake” when “people associate human rights with crime.”³⁴

Frustration with the actions of specific human rights organizations can easily slide into a broader rejection of the basic tenets of human rights. Consider this excerpt from a conversation with a man in Jutiapa, who had just finished arguing that human rights groups protect criminals:

A: I would like to see human rights groups protect those people who really deserve protection, that’s all.

Q: And what if they say that everyone deserves protection?

A: I think that not everyone deserves protection. That’s my personal opinion. What protection does someone deserve when he has killed six, seven people?³⁵

Human rights’ groups alleged pro-criminal bias sometimes generates popular rejection of their work. After Brazilian authorities brutally massacred prison inmates, there were major street protests *against* the human rights groups that had spoken out against the massacre (Caldeira 1996: 198). Similarly, in Argentina advocates for democracy and human rights encounter vocal resistance when they speak about “criminals’ rights” (Caldeira 1996: 209). Many people see human rights groups as “reinforce[ing] rather than reduc[ing] impunity” because they limit the state’s ability to catch, interrogate, and punish alleged criminals (Snodgrass Godoy 2005: 617). “Rather

³⁴ Interview, Guatemala City, 3 March 2010.

³⁵ Interview with “Guillermo,” Agua Blanca, Jutiapa, 19 June 2009.

than a source of support for embattled communities, the human rights movement has been recast as the enemy” (Snodgrass Godoy 2005: 617).

How, then, can the concept of human rights be salvaged in Latin America? First, human rights advocates should publicly and explicitly make the case that the tradeoff between human rights and security is a false dilemma. As Iduvina Hernández argues,

The doctrine of human rights doesn't say anywhere, in any document, anywhere, that criminals have rights and the public or the victims do not, that only criminals have rights and for that reason they can't be detained. To the contrary! If the doctrine of human rights suggests anything, it is the validity of the rule of law and a democratic state in Guatemala.³⁶

Second, human rights organizations should consider expanding their focus to include anti-impunity and crime victims' advocacy as well. Even if organizations want to maintain their focus on violations by states, they could revise their conception of human rights as negative rights. The distinction between negative and positive rights is intellectually flimsy, for “all human rights require both positive action and restraint on the part of the state” (Donnelly 2003: 30). States have both an obligation not to harm their citizens *and an obligation to actively protect them from harm by private actors*. As Donnelly argues (2003), the existence of a human right means that “each state has the authority and responsibility to implement *and protect* the right to *x* within its territory” (34; emphasis added).

³⁶ Interview with Iduvina Hernández, Guatemala City, 3 March 2010.

This “inherent right of people to personal security” is central to all contemporary notions of human rights, as expressed in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Genocide and Geneva conventions (Axworthy 2001: 19). Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the “right to life, liberty, and security of person,” and Article 8 states that

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law (United Nations 1948).

To protect these rights, states must engage in positive, pro-active efforts to

provide the guarantees of physical security (against assault, torture, rape, murder, and so forth) that most people in the world in fact now lack—that most governments fail to provide—to those unable for lack of income to provide security for themselves (by paying for private security guards, bodyguards, and so forth) (Shue 1988: 688).

Only by redirecting its efforts will the human rights movement remain both relevant and valued in the context of Latin America’s crime wave.

4. Conclusions

Crime is not the only factor responsible for the vulnerability of democracy in Latin America. Democracy is far from delivering on its promises; clearly, Latin Americans have many reasons to be dissatisfied with their new democracies. In Latin America today there exists “an institutional absurdity: democracies in which the majority of the population lacks citizenship” (Sanjuán 2002: 89). Poverty is rampant,

basic healthcare is widely unavailable, and discrimination against indigenous peoples is pervasive.

Nonetheless, the implications of Latin America's violence crime crisis do not bode well for the consolidation of democracy in the region. High levels of crime in the region are motivating anti-democratic activism, providing a pretext for the re-militarization of public security and governance, and generating widespread disenchantment with the idea of human rights. This constellation of consequences is perniciously undermining the consolidation of democracy in Latin America. Though Latin America is often painted as a democratic success story, a region that started a wave of peaceful transitions to democracy (O'Donnell et. al. 1986), that reputation may not last much longer.

Table 1. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Crime Victimization and Political Participation. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Town Meeting Attendance ^d	Frequency of Cooperation with Neighbors to Solve Problems	Frequency of Community Improvement Meeting Attendance	Frequency of Political Meeting Attendance	Frequency of Protest Attendance	Frequency of Attempts to Convince Others of Political Views	Level of Interest in Politics	Frequency of Conversation about Politics	Has Attempted to Solicit Help from Government Officials ^d
Victim^d	0.0416***	0.0384***	0.0253***	0.0133***	0.0447***	0.0208***	0.0232***	0.0334***	0.0513***
	(0.00487)	(0.00344)	(0.00339)	(0.00263)	(0.00469)	(0.0038)	(0.00375)	(0.00363)	(0.00564)
Male ^d	0.0263***	0.0261***	0.0166***	0.0169***	0.0154***	0.0355***	0.0504***	0.0694***	0.00739
	(0.0036)	(0.00228)	(0.00236)	(0.00182)	(0.00301)	(0.00276)	(0.0028)	(0.0027)	(0.00422)
Age in Years	0.00524***	0.00638***	0.00716***	0.00212***	0.00126*	0.00499***	0.00335***	0.00570***	0.00746***
	(0.000575)	(0.000382)	(0.000372)	(0.000288)	(0.000503)	(0.000444)	(0.000487)	(0.000446)	(0.000589)
Age in Years ²	-0.0000475***	-0.0000550***	-0.0000671***	-0.0000207***	-0.0000149**	-0.0000479***	-0.0000272***	-0.0000478***	-0.0000684***
	(0.00000618)	(0.00000427)	(0.00000429)	(0.00000313)	(0.00000554)	(0.00000479)	(0.0000053)	(0.0000049)	(0.00000662)
Econ. Status	0.00439	0.00902***	0.00526**	0.00447***	-0.000786	0.00825***	0.0146***	0.00982***	-0.0128***
	(0.00245)	(0.00166)	(0.00177)	(0.00133)	(0.00223)	(0.00197)	(0.00191)	(0.00194)	(0.00301)
Years of Education	0.00320***	0.00477***	0.000952*	0.00221***	0.00480***	0.00541***	0.0105***	0.0132***	0.00366***
	(0.00055)	(0.000373)	(0.000372)	(0.000256)	(0.000553)	(0.000456)	(0.000395)	(0.000385)	(0.000619)
Level of Urbanization	-0.0189***	-0.0115***	-0.0155***	-0.00655***	-0.00155	-0.00391**	-0.00304*	0.00157	-0.0162***
	(0.0018)	(0.00128)	(0.00126)	(0.000766)	(0.00142)	(0.00147)	(0.00142)	(0.00145)	(0.00182)
Constant	-0.0257	0.142***	0.199***	0.227***	0.530***	0.159***	0.283***	0.130***	0.028
	(0.0188)	(0.0121)	(0.0121)	(0.00939)	(0.0282)	(0.0144)	(0.0145)	(0.0141)	(0.021)
<i>N</i>	29127	28719	29125	29045	20425	29022	29167	29171	29233

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by ^d are dummies. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Recent Crime Victimization and Support for Democracy. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Preference for Democracy over other Forms of Government	Satisfaction with the Way Democracy Functions in the Country	Believes Democracy is the Best Form of Government	Would Support an Unelected Strong Leader under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Support Closing the Legislature under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Support Closing the Supreme Court under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Approve of the Violent Overthrow of the Government
Victim^d	-0.0108**	-0.0172***	0.00474	0.0127*	0.0453***	0.0403***	0.00582
	(0.00391)	(0.00287)	(0.00384)	(0.00551)	(0.00915)	(0.00848)	(0.00336)
Male ^d	0.00560*	0.00643**	0.0123***	-0.00412	0.0186***	0.0109*	0.0118***
	(0.0027)	(0.00202)	(0.00288)	(0.00387)	(0.00529)	(0.00511)	(0.00244)
Age in Years	0.00259***	0.00013	0.00332***	-0.00229***	0.000896	-0.000509	-0.00314***
	(0.000442)	(0.000357)	(0.000502)	(0.000669)	(0.000852)	(0.000802)	(0.000435)
Age in Years ²	-0.0000154**	0.00000177	-0.0000201***	0.000012	-0.0000111	-0.000000325	0.0000241***
	(0.0000048)	(0.00000391)	(0.00000563)	(0.00000733)	(0.00000943)	(0.00000907)	(0.00000471)
Econ. Status	0.00262	0.0404***	0.00596**	-0.00318	0.00617	0.00517	-0.00899***
	(0.00188)	(0.00172)	(0.0022)	(0.00357)	(0.00399)	(0.00393)	(0.00191)
Years of Education	0.00335***	-0.00249***	0.00466***	-0.00633***	0.000398	-0.00404***	-0.00234***
	(0.000379)	(0.000312)	(0.000443)	(0.000563)	(0.000803)	(0.00076)	(0.000378)
Level of Urbanization	-0.00372**	-0.00743***	-0.0025	0.00361	0.0138***	0.00923**	0.000971
	(0.00136)	(0.00114)	(0.00173)	(0.00222)	(0.00355)	(0.00318)	(0.00161)
Constant	0.774***	0.548***	0.551***	0.269***	0.161***	0.247***	0.337***
	(0.014)	(0.0131)	(0.0184)	(0.0229)	(0.0303)	(0.0281)	(0.014)
<i>N</i>	27292	28055	27726	27772	25666	25344	28741

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by d are dummies. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Recent Crime Victimization and Beliefs about Criminal Justice. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Thinks Country Needs <i>Mano Dura</i> ^d	Supports Vigilantism When the State Does Not Punish Criminals	Believes Police May Sometimes Act at the Margin of the Law ^d	Believes the Judicial System Punishes Those Guilty of Crimes	Believes the Police Catch Those Guilty of Crimes	Believes the Local Police are Involved in Crime
Victim^d	0.0218**	0.0469***	0.0562***	-0.0467***	-0.0461***	0.0476***
	-0.00764	-0.00499	-0.00789	-0.00400	-0.00370	-0.00466
Male ^d	0.00655	0.0164***	0.0121*	-0.00190	0.00472	0.0000946
	-0.00553	-0.00352	-0.00595	-0.00276	-0.00270	-0.00348
Age in Years	-0.00106	-0.00402***	-0.00185	-0.000625	0.000582	0.00119*
	-0.000897	-0.000567	-0.000957	-0.000492	-0.000456	-0.000598
Age in Years ²	0.0000174	0.0000234***	0.00000293	0.0000107	-0.000000443	-0.0000236***
	-0.00000996	-0.00000621	-0.0000107	-0.00000553	-0.00000511	-0.00000654
Econ. Status	-0.00625	-0.0108***	-0.00634	0.0257***	0.0218***	-0.0303***
	-0.00403	-0.00273	-0.00447	-0.00202	-0.00201	-0.00266
Years of Education	-0.0103***	-0.00450***	0.00233*	-0.00408***	-0.00332***	0.000257
	-0.000817	-0.000546	-0.000914	-0.000410	-0.000405	-0.000533
Level of Urbanization	0.0129***	0.000876	0.00321	-0.0117***	-0.0125***	0.0143***
	-0.00318	-0.00232	-0.00298	-0.00149	-0.00153	-0.00265
Constant	0.332***	0.484***	0.351***	0.559***	0.506***	0.766***
	-0.0301	-0.0201	-0.0333	-0.0158	-0.0150	-0.0226
<i>N</i>	28376	28770	28473	28783	28956	25939

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by d are dummies. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Fear of Crime and Support for Democracy. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Preference for Democracy over other Forms of Government	Satisfaction with the Way Democracy Functions in the Country	Believes Democracy is the Best Form of Government	Would Support an Unelected Strong Leader under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Support Closing the Legislature under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Support Closing the Supreme Court under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Approve of the Violent Overthrow of the Government
Fear of Crime	-0.00643***	-0.0187***	-0.0120***	0.0127***	0.0114***	0.0126***	0.0108***
	(0.00169)	(0.00148)	(0.00199)	(0.00294)	(0.00345)	(0.00322)	(0.00167)
Male ^d	0.00472	0.00427*	0.0113***	-0.00154	0.0209***	0.0130*	0.0126***
	(0.0027)	(0.00199)	(0.00289)	(0.00389)	(0.00525)	(0.00509)	(0.00247)
Age in Years	0.00262***	0.000276	0.00349***	-0.00245***	0.000763	-0.000577	-0.00328***
	(0.000443)	(0.000357)	(0.000497)	(0.000671)	(0.000848)	(0.000803)	(0.000431)
Age in Years ²	-0.0000159***	1.3E-08	-0.0000225***	0.000014	-0.0000101	0.000000497	0.0000258***
	(0.0000048)	(0.00000389)	(0.00000556)	(0.00000735)	(0.00000937)	(0.00000907)	(0.00000468)
Econ. Status	0.00169	0.0385***	0.00453*	-0.00214	0.00644	0.00584	-0.00823***
	(0.00189)	(0.00171)	(0.00219)	(0.00357)	(0.00399)	(0.00397)	(0.00192)
Years of Education	0.00328***	-0.00257***	0.00472***	-0.00611***	0.000698	-0.00377***	-0.00227***
	(0.00038)	(0.000309)	(0.000438)	(0.000571)	(0.000801)	(0.000757)	(0.00038)
Level of Urbanization	-0.00333*	-0.00599***	-0.00114	0.00238	0.0136***	0.00884**	-0.000165
	(0.00139)	(0.00113)	(0.00176)	(0.00229)	(0.00362)	(0.00324)	(0.00159)
Constant	0.789***	0.587***	0.576***	0.242***	0.142***	0.223***	0.317***
	(0.0145)	(0.0134)	(0.0187)	(0.0234)	(0.0302)	(0.0285)	(0.0144)
N	27220	27984	27661	27681	25590	25274	28650

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by d are dummies. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Fear of Crime and Beliefs about Criminal Justice. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Thinks Country Needs <i>Mano Dura</i> ^d	Supports Vigilantism When the State Does Not Punish Criminals	Believes Police May Sometimes Act at the Margin of the Law ^d	Believes the Judicial System Punishes Those Guilty of Crimes	Believes the Police Catch Those Guilty of Crimes	Believes the Local Police are Involved in Crime
Fear of Crime	0.0141***	0.0161***	0.0500***	-0.0275***	-0.0273***	0.0444***
	(0.00331)	(0.00234)	(0.00405)	(0.00202)	(0.00200)	(0.00257)
Male ^d	0.00792	0.0185***	0.0173**	-0.00526	0.00126	0.00415
	(0.00558)	(0.00356)	(0.00594)	(0.00275)	(0.00267)	(0.00349)
Age in Years	-0.00112	-0.00413***	-0.00217*	-0.000492	0.000729	0.000791
	(0.000898)	(0.00057)	(0.000957)	(0.000492)	(0.000453)	(0.000593)
Age in Years ²	0.000018	0.0000246***	0.00000674	0.00000903	-0.00000206	-0.0000186**
	(0.00000995)	(0.00000624)	(0.0000107)	(0.00000552)	(0.00000507)	(0.00000652)
Econ. Status	-0.00429	-0.00955***	-0.00167	0.0232***	0.0193***	-0.0254***
	(0.00406)	(0.00276)	(0.00444)	(0.00202)	(0.00202)	(0.0026)
Years of Education	-0.0102***	-0.00417***	0.00256**	-0.00442***	-0.00361***	0.000584
	(0.000818)	(0.000546)	(0.000913)	(0.000407)	(0.000404)	(0.000527)
Level of Urbanization	0.0118***	0.000336	-0.000772	-0.00996***	-0.0110***	0.0105***
	(0.00323)	(0.0023)	(0.00297)	(0.00153)	(0.00155)	(0.00266)
Constant	0.302***	0.453***	0.249***	0.616***	0.563***	0.675***
	(0.0312)	(0.0207)	(0.034)	(0.0161)	(0.0153)	(0.0223)
<i>N</i>	28291	28676	28449	28710	28874	25881

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by d are dummies. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Neighborhood Gang Activity and Support for Democracy. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Preference for Democracy over other Forms of Government	Satisfaction with the Way Democracy Functions in the Country	Believes Democracy is the Best Form of Government	Would Support an Unelected Strong Leader under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Support Closing the Legislature under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Support Closing the Supreme Court under Some Circumstances ^d	Would Approve of the Violent Overthrow of the Government
Neighborhood Gang Activity	-0.0107***	-0.00547**	-0.0175***	0.0239***	0.0185***	0.0171**	0.0155***
	(0.00208)	(0.00183)	(0.0027)	(0.00403)	(0.00504)	(0.00521)	(0.00224)
Male ^d	0.00791*	0.00306	0.0135***	-0.00129	0.0146*	0.0134*	0.0133***
	(0.0034)	(0.00255)	(0.00396)	(0.0056)	(0.00683)	(0.00653)	(0.0032)
Age in Years	0.00166**	0.0000841	0.00315***	-0.00291**	0.000305	-0.00094	-0.00268***
	(0.000569)	(0.000479)	(0.000669)	(0.000966)	(0.00106)	(0.00109)	(0.00056)
Age in Years ²	-0.00000656	0.00000194	-0.0000216**	0.000018	-0.00000758	0.00000482	0.0000202**
	(0.00000616)	(0.00000524)	(0.00000762)	(0.0000107)	(0.0000117)	(0.0000123)	(0.00000625)
Econ. Status	0.00329	0.0402***	0.00376	-0.00111	0.00893	0.00558	-0.00587*
	(0.0024)	(0.00224)	(0.00299)	(0.00524)	(0.00523)	(0.00518)	(0.00268)
Years of Education	0.00306***	-0.00240***	0.00425***	-0.00666***	-0.000227	-0.00328***	-0.00184***
	(0.000469)	(0.00037)	(0.000602)	(0.000796)	(0.00102)	(0.00098)	(0.00051)
Level of Urbanization	-0.00238	-0.00485***	0.0000282	0.000407	0.00987	0.00709	0.000472
	(0.00177)	(0.00134)	(0.00213)	(0.00312)	(0.00512)	(0.00492)	(0.00196)
Constant	0.812***	0.553***	0.604***	0.235***	0.155***	0.220***	0.278***
	(0.0165)	(0.0168)	(0.0228)	(0.0317)	(0.0348)	(0.0331)	(0.0171)
<i>N</i>	16324	16752	16483	16473	15441	15255	17144

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by d are dummies. The question about gang activity was not included in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic, so the observations from those countries are dropped in these regressions. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7. OLS Regressions Analyzing the Relationship between Neighborhood Gang Activity and Beliefs about Criminal Justice. Data is from LAPOP 2008.

	Thinks Country Needs <i>Mano Dura</i> ^d	Supports Vigilantism When the State Does Not Punish Criminals	Believes Police May Sometimes Act at the Margin of the Law ^d	Believes the Judicial System Punishes Those Guilty of Crimes	Believes the Police Catch Those Guilty of Crimes	Believes the Local Police are Involved in Crime
Neighborhood Gang Activity	0.0210***	0.0170***	0.0273***	-0.00471	-0.00572*	0.0458***
	(0.00422)	(0.00309)	(0.00507)	(0.00256)	(0.00241)	(0.00348)
Male ^d	0.00781	0.0167***	0.0238***	-0.00996**	-0.000829	0.0065
	(0.00705)	(0.00438)	(0.00709)	(0.00339)	(0.0033)	(0.00478)
Age in Years	-0.0013	-0.00331***	-0.00169	-0.00108	-0.000341	0.00121
	(0.00128)	(0.0007)	(0.00124)	(0.000667)	(0.000623)	(0.000776)
Age in Years ²	0.0000202	0.0000180*	0.00000521	0.0000143	0.00000774	-0.0000206*
	(0.000014)	(0.00000792)	(0.0000139)	(0.00000748)	(0.00000702)	(0.00000864)
Econ. Status	-0.00485	-0.00831*	-0.00183	0.0256***	0.0203***	-0.0282***
	(0.00507)	(0.00366)	(0.00566)	(0.00262)	(0.00265)	(0.00361)
Years of Education	-0.0103***	-0.00287***	0.00357**	-0.00411***	-0.00331***	0.000545
	(0.00109)	(0.000743)	(0.00111)	(0.000527)	(0.000546)	(0.000687)
Level of Urbanization	0.00846*	-0.000257	0.00011	-0.0110***	-0.0119***	0.00649
	(0.00414)	(0.0032)	(0.00391)	(0.00202)	(0.00199)	(0.0035)
Constant	0.303***	0.417***	0.266***	0.577***	0.540***	0.673***
	(0.0384)	(0.0255)	(0.0401)	(0.0204)	(0.0198)	(0.0277)
<i>N</i>	16865	17160	16901	17159	17223	15705

Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects; coefficients not reported. Variables followed by d are dummies. The question about gang activity was not included in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic, so the observations from those countries are dropped in these regressions. All dependent variables have been re-scaled so their values range from 0 to 1. Regressions estimated in Stata 10. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

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