Tackling Urban Violence in Latin America:
Reversing Exclusion through Smart Policing and Social Investment

"We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights."
- UN Secretary General Kofi Annan[1]

Introduction

Rio de Janeiro has trumpeted its recent efforts to establish a state presence, offer government services, and bring down crime in favelas, the poor and ungoverned neighborhoods scattered throughout the city. As U.S. President Barack Obama toured a favela on his visit to Brazil in March 2011, Brazilian authorities presented a program that seeks, in officials' words, both to "recover for the government poor territories dominated by traffickers" and to settle "a huge social debt that goes back to these neighborhoods' colonization."[2]

The Brazilian authorities' discourse echoes elsewhere in the region. Some national, state, and municipal governments in Latin America are now discussing fresh strategies to control urban violence. These strategies are not only based on law enforcement, but also include a strong social component.

While crime is a serious enough problem to manage on its own, in much of Latin America it is compounded by social exclusion, marginalization,

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and lack of basic services in many poor neighborhoods. Many of the region's cities' poorer districts, which were settled informally in periods of rapid urbanization, have long been plagued with endemic poverty and lack of opportunity. In recent decades, many have suffered increasing violence, often drug or gang-related, that is sometimes worsened—not alleviated—by police.

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They describe their strategies as fusing public security efforts with basic services through a sequenced, well-planned strategy. These plans do not fit into traditional categories of anti-crime programs—they go beyond, and are more complicated than armed interventions to reduce violence, anti-gang strategies, or counternarcotics or counterinsurgency programs. Though many rely strongly on police forces—and at times, problematically, even the military—they each appear to recognize the principle that a successful strategy requires much more than just the armed part of the state. In these cases, the stated goal is not only to bolster security conditions but also to reverse poor urban citizens' historic exclusion.

Efforts to "reverse exclusion"—for want of a better term—are not all cast from a single mold. They are being implemented in unique contexts, and emphasize different tactics and strategies. The results have been mixed; some communities have become more secure, while others have not. But these efforts merit attention. Even as urban violence worsens to the point where it heads the list of citizens' concerns region wide, the past five

years have seen more innovation and learning than the previous fifty.

What follows is a brief look at four specific efforts to strengthen citizen security in urban Latin America. Each case was selected because of its stated emphasis on "reversing exclusion." While the four examples are different, they share an official commitment to extend government services to marginalized communities, as a key element to rein in crime and violence. The authors look at the strengths, weaknesses, and varying effectiveness of each program. Many of these experiences are incipient, and none can yet be termed a success. In examining them, this report calls attention to the emerging notion that increasing citizen security in the face of high levels of urban violence requires comprehensive efforts that give social development a central role.

"Pacifying" and Reincorporating Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

Ashley Morse *examines crime and violence in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and the recent efforts to assert government authority and increase social services in select communities. A new approach to policing and complementary social programs offers some hope in the "pacified" favelas, while concerns remain about resources, sustainability, and the depth of change in police practices.*

Rio de Janeiro, known as the "Marvelous City," is also unfortunately known for its intractable and often drug-related crime and violence. These are concentrated in its favelas, or slums, dotted throughout the city. Slated to host upcoming mega world events—the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games—all eyes are on Rio to see whether this iconic city will successfully host

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them, and particularly whether it can rein in the crime and violence that have so long plagued it.

The favelas are slums akin to those on the outskirts of many other urban areas worldwide. Unlike elsewhere, though, Rio's favelas are interspersed on hilltops throughout the city. Many butt up against some of Rio's toniest neighborhoods. The city's poor have been relegated to these steep, cobbled-together shantytowns for generations, but the favelas grew ever more permanent during impressive economic growth in the mid 1970s, when an industrial boom, coupled with deteriorating conditions in rural areas, fueled large-scale internal migration towards Brazil's major metropolises.

Today the favelas still reflect their historic neglect. Bereft of access and connection to city services, the favelas have no high schools and lack basic infrastructure like electricity, sewage, and trash collection. Historically considered squatter communities, they exist on the margins and are socially and politically distant from decision making. Many experts believe the lack of state presence and participation opened up space for drug traffickers to establish firm territorial control of the favelas in the late 1970s, when large-scale drug trafficking became prevalent in Brazil.

Rio's geography creates clear-cut boundaries between the "asphalt" (the formal city) and the "hill" (favela) controlled by illegal drug trafficking gangs or militias.[3] Notoriously corrupt police forces, which often collude with drug traffickers, normally do not enter favelas, but rather patrol the perimeter, abandoning the population within to the rule of illegal armed groups. This approach to policing—essentially a strategy of containment—reinforces the favelas' isolation.

When police do enter the favelas it is generally in large-scale incursions, brief operations akin to a surgical strike, ostensibly to dismantle drug gangs but usually achieving few if any lasting results.[4] In these occupations the Military Police, often accompanied by the Special Operations Battalion (Batalhão de Operações Especiais, BOPE), enter and occupy a favela with the same lethal force employed by military forces in war. (Despite their name, the Military Police are a civilian, not military, force.) Murder rates in these occupations are high and in fact, Rio's Military Police is one of the deadliest police forces in the world.[5]

It is standard practice in Brazil for state governments to classify police killings as *autos de resistência* (acts of resistance), and police generally claim that these deaths occurred during a shootout. However, deaths at the hands of the police compared to deaths of police themselves are disproportionate. About 40 citizens are killed for every officer killed in the line of duty. Furthermore, the "acts of resistance" classification systematically treats the deaths as closed cases, allowing police agents a wide margin of impunity. Equally troubling, experts have found that many of these deaths are in fact extrajudicial executions.[6]

Given these police and security dynamics, the principal problem is not necessarily the lack of police presence in favelas, but rather the way the police engage with the favelas.

Year	Police Killings	Police Killed	Ratio
2007	1,330	32	42:1
2008	1,137	26	44:1
2009	1,048	31	34:1
2010	855	20	43:1
Source: Rio State Government, Institute for Public Security			

Rio's state government is now undertaking an ambitious new strategy that seeks both to establish an ongoing police presence in the favelas and to legitimize the territories as part of the formal city. Inaugurated in November of 2008 in the Santa Marta favela, the "Pacifying Police Units" (Unidades de Política Pacificadora, UPPs) are a special force within the Military Police charged with policing the favelas in a decidedly community-oriented fashion.

The units are made up of fresh recruits who have not yet hit the streets, and therefore presumably are not tainted by corruption. They earn a higher salary in the hope that they will have less incentive to take kickbacks. Before deployment UPP officers receive specialized training in community relations with an emphasis on human rights and conflict resolution. The UPP has traditional policing roles, but great importance is placed on rebuilding community relations. As part of their routine, all officers perform community service, mostly teaching young children—from music to karate to computer sciences—to try to transform the historically conflictive community-police relationship. The UPP is billed as a "territorial recovery" program, but rather than clear out the drug traffickers and leave, the UPPs stay in the favelas. Their success in large part hinges upon their ability to win residents' hearts and minds.[7]

Public security is only part of the equation for reversing the exclusion of Rio's favelas. The "pacification" process also seeks to provide conditions for economic and social development.

With the new pacifying police installed in targeted favelas, the government has been better positioned to offer city services and territorial recognition, including for the first time registering property titles for residents. Another relatively positive development has been the private sector's enthusiasm. Previously the mercurial rule of drug traffickers made most businesses reluctant to open shop in the favelas, but now with steady levels of security, they are moving in quickly.

Still, a more concerted effort toward social development was needed. About two years after the UPP program began, the state government launched UPP Social, a counterpart program for "pacified" favelas, which has as its stated goal an integrated Rio de Janeiro by the 2016 Olympic year.[8]

UPP Social, regarded as a "management mechanism" by its engineers, began with a comprehensive inventory, which mapped all the government, private sector, and civil society projects already in existence.[9] Information on everything from the installation of street lights, to after-school programs for kids, to job training programs was collected and organized to improve residents' access to services. UPP Social's primary task, therefore, is to ensure that the local, state and federal agencies deliver social services in a coordinated way. In the favelas that UPP Social has reached, government officials—with the inventory in hand—hold an initial public forum with local stakeholders, community leaders, and residents. There, they review and debate a needs assessment for the community, prioritizing goals. UPP Social prepares a geographic map of the communities, which is reviewed at community meetings between public security officials,

A UPP officer teaches a computer technology class to children in the Babilônia favela.
(Source: Priscila Marotti, UPP Repórter, State Government of Rio de Janeiro)

resident members of Community Security Councils and other service providers. Input such as where trash piles up, a dark corner, or the place where gang members sell drugs contribute important data points for current and future work in the favelas.[10]

The fresh approach of the UPP and the complementary UPP Social program deserve commendation. Not surprisingly, though, problems exist.

There are several concerns about policing. The initial incursions meant to drive out the drug gangs so the UPP could move in have involved the Special Operations Battalion (BOPE), the Army, the Marines, and the Military Police. These can be warlike, resulting in deaths and injuries. Civil society groups have expressed concern about the continual sense of militarization in their communities, both during the incursions and thereafter. For example, residents of Complexo do Alemão, which was "pacified" in late November 2010 and is still being occupied with military involvement, report that over the course of several days after the initial incursion, Military Police (many wearing backpacks) kicked in their doors, ransacking their homes and stealing cash and valuables.[11] Many of the "pacified" communities have also expressed concern about the exceedingly tight police control of daily life, including arbitrary search and seizures on the streets, the banning of popular Funk parties, and harassment of residents.[12]

Another major challenge has to do with capacity: whether the UPP can grow to address the magnitude of the problem. There are more than 1,000 favelas in the city. Only 17 have UPP and only 16 have UPP Social. The selection criteria remain unclear, and both experts and citizens have alleged that the government is prioritizing favelas near wealthy neighborhoods, or those close to sites for the upcoming mega events, rather than those with the greatest needs.

Pace is a related issue. Currently there aren't enough UPP units trained and ready to take over even in Complexo do Alemão. The promised social service projects have been slow to arrive and do not always meet communities' needs. Criticisms abound that UPP Social has the feeling of an afterthought, and doesn't actually bring in new services or funding.

Finally, it is worth noting what the program is not. It is not a drug control strategy, nor a tactic to dismantle organized crime. Rather, it focuses on moving drug sales and organized crime out of specific targeted communities. Conspicuous drug sales and young gang members brandishing sophisticated weaponry may well disappear in targeted communities, but most likely they have only gone underground or moved to neighboring favelas. The government also has yet to "pacify" a favela controlled by militias—brutal vigilante groups often led by off-duty police—leading some to question its ability to root out corruption within the existing security forces.

Despite these obstacles, the UPP seems to be relatively well received. A recent study interviewed residents in eight favelas with UPP and found 83% characterizing their community's security situation as "better" or "much better" compared to a year before, and 72% saying
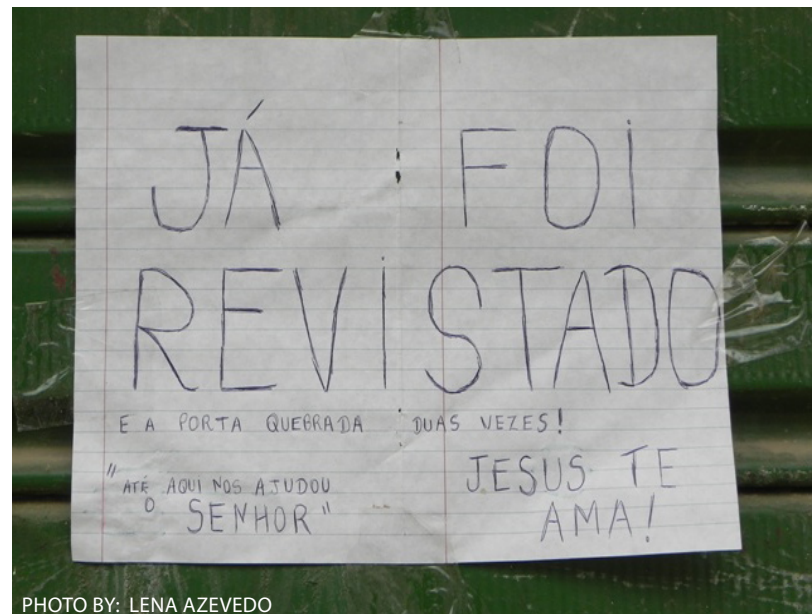
"ALREADY BEEN SEARCHED…and the door broken twice" reads a note left by a resident in Complexo do Alemão, imploring police not to break in again.

they felt more respected by people outside their community.[13] Though the government has only begun what promises to be an arduous undertaking, this marked departure from previous strategies deserves continued oversight and study.

Medellín: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

Adam Isacson *looks at drug and gang violence in Medellín and the ups and downs in the city's violent crime. He explores the mix of government strategies, social programs, and changing power dynamics among criminal organizations that contributed to a drop in homicide rates.*

"Once the murder capital of the world and the home of Pablo Escobar, Medellín today is a place of safer neighborhoods, thriving businesses and a palpable hope that pervades the city," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote in an April 7, 2008 Wall Street Journal column.[14] The homicide rate in Colombia's second-largest city fell from 174 murders per 100,000 residents in 2002 to 36—lower than Washington, DC—in 2005.[15] Journalists and commentators wrote at length of a "Medellín Miracle." In its effort to sell a free-trade agreement signed in 2006,

the Bush administration brought a series of U.S. congressional delegations to Medellín, whose participants learned about the city's dramatic security improvements and met with its progressive, U.S.-educated mayor, Sergio Fajardo.

By 2009, though, the city was contending with resurgent violent crime in the poor neighborhoods, or comunas (wards), that climb up the hillsides ringing the city. While Medellín remains significantly more secure than it was a decade ago, the murder rate soared to 95 in 2009, dropping slightly to 88 in 2010.[16] The Medellín Miracle's erosion has left observers wondering how much of it owed to sound public policies and how much to changes in the configuration of the city's criminal groups.

The answer is clearly both. A unique period in which competition fell between organized crime groups brought homicide rates down to unusually low levels. But once that period ended, improved governance has kept Medellín's violence from returning all the way to previous highs.

Most of this violence has taken place in the comunas, home to roughly half the city's population. The mountainsides surrounding the city began to be settled in the 1960s and 1970s, as rural inhabitants—many of them displaced

Medellín's Homicide Rates
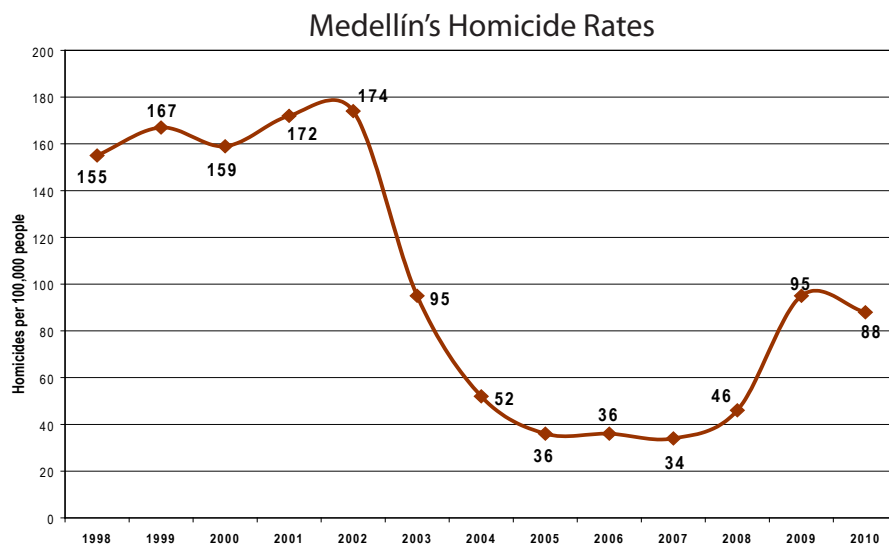
Source: Medellín Mayor's Office

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by violence—began flocking to Medellín. Shantytowns grew into dense, unplanned neighborhoods, while the city government, viewing the new communities as illegitimate, refused to provide services. For decades, nearly all utilities were pirated and police would neither respond to calls nor even—unless in a large group—enter Medellín's marginal neighborhoods. The same went for the Colombian Army, which has played a public-security role in the city for decades.

This neglect left a vacuum for violent groups to fill. The outside sponsors have changed over the years, but on the streets of the comunas, the form has been similar: heavily-armed young people organized in territorial gangs, extorting small businesses, usually selling drugs, controlling residents' movements, and killing rivals.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the city's hundreds of gangs fell under the sway of the Medellín Cartel. During the drug lords' bloody fight against the Colombian state, Medellín was the most violent city in the world. After cartel leader Pablo Escobar's death in 1993, urban militias of the FARC and ELN guerrillas were the first to fill the criminal vacuum. While youth gangs hardly adopted leftist politics, their ties to the guerrillas facilitated the insurgents' access to the city, a key transport hub between Colombia's coast and interior.

During the 1990s the guerrilla militias fought for control of the comunas against Medellín's post-Escobar drug mafia, particularly a gang of hit men for hire called La Terraza, led by a former Medellín cartel associate named Diego Fernando Murillo, alias "Don Berna." By the end of the 1990s, La Terraza gave way to the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC for its Spanish

acronym), a powerful network of pro-government paramilitary groups; Murillo quickly became a top leader within the AUC structure.

In October 2002, newly elected President Álvaro Uribe ordered the long-absent security forces to launch an offensive into the comunas. A military-police campaign of house-to-house urban combat, "Operation Orion" cleared the guerrilla militias from the slums on the city's western edge. Paramilitary groups in these neighborhoods were generally not confronted, and subsequent testimonies, including that of Don Berna, revealed that paramilitaries in fact cooperated with some police and military units during Operation Orion.[17] Once the offensive was over, the guerrilla militias ceased to be a factor of violence in Medellín—but the paramilitaries remained, in ever-greater numbers.

The paramilitary faction that assumed control was the one with the strongest ties to Medellín's drug-trafficking mafia, particularly the syndicate known as the "Envigado Office." This was the "Cacique Nutibara Bloc" of the AUC, commanded by Don Berna. Over the course of 2003, Don Berna's men waged, and won, a war against the AUC's "Metro Bloc," whose leaders claimed to oppose the drug trade. In November 2003, once he solidified his control over the neighborhoods, Don Berna's "Bloc" became the first paramilitary unit to turn in weapons and "demobilize." What followed from 2003-2008 was a period of peace unlike anything in the city's recent memory.

This five-year stint was not a period of reduced drug trafficking in Medellín, nor was it a time of lower gang membership. But the violent groups' behavior changed. With his dominion over criminality unchallenged and the AUC's demobilization talks with the

Diego Fernando Murillo alias Don Berna, upon his May 2008 extradition to the United States.   (Source: Presidency of Colombia)

government encouraging him to collaborate, Don Berna ordered his men to use the least possible violence. Some critical analysts used the term "DonBernabilidad"—a play on the Spanish word for governance—to describe what they saw as the main driver of the Medellín Miracle.

The critics were only partially right. Certainly, Don Berna's orders played a large role in reducing violence. At the same time, though, the national and local governments were establishing a presence in the comunas unlike anything attempted before. After Operation Orion, police stations and patrols appeared, and response times improved, resulting in a preventive presence that dissuaded much common (if not organized) crime. Meanwhile the relatively wealthy city government, first under Mayor Sergio Fajardo and then Alonso Salazar, invested handsomely in public-works projects in the comunas, including modern schools, libraries, parks, and community centers.

Medellín's government also heavily supported "reinsertion" programs for demobilized paramilitaries including job training, basic education, psychosocial support, and similar services. The programs, which did not discriminate strictly between paramilitaries and gang members (the line is too blurred in Medellín), had only modest success, but

did bring thousands of young people with criminal experience "into the system" without imprisonment.

The model came to a test on May 13, 2008, just a few months after Sergio Fajardo left office. Don Berna became one of thirteen paramilitary leaders extradited to the United States to face drug-trafficking charges. Diego Fernando Murillo is in a U.S. prison today, serving a 31-year sentence.

In the absence of its maximum leader, Don Berna's organization fragmented, with mid-level commanders competing for control. Two factions of the Envigado Office, under leaders "Sebastián" and "Valenciano," fought a bloody power struggle that caused homicide totals in Medellín to jump from 1,066 in 2008 to 2,186 in 2009.

Mayor Alonso Salazar, who took office at the beginning of 2008, first came to local prominence as a journalist and community organizer working with at-risk youth in the comunas. He has maintained large investments in social projects, while insisting on fighting the gangs, eschewing even the appearance of a "pact" that would allow criminal groups to carry out illegal activity in exchange for a reduction in violence. Salazar has blamed poor results on insufficient police resources from the central government, as well as due-process laws that greatly limit pre-trial detentions. Local police corruption remains a major challenge too, while the judicial system continues to have a high impunity rate and the Army's 4th Brigade has a poor human rights reputation.

Though worse today than during the Medellín Miracle, the city's violence is still far from the nightmare levels of the early 1990s and the early 2000s. Even as the city's gangs remain strong and compete for control, improved state services and greater state presence in the comunas have reduced their room for maneuver. The drastic drop in violence registered during the "Medellín Miracle" years was not the result of government efforts alone, but was exaggerated by a calm in

the city's criminal underworld that proved to be unstable. When that equilibrium disappeared in 2008 and Medellín returned to a "baseline level" of violence, however, that level turned out to be significantly lower than what the city suffered before. Improved local governance in the comunas likely explains why violence, while still horrific, did not reach the even higher levels of the recent past.

As of this writing, figures showed an important drop in homicides during the last quarter of 2010. The Medellín government claims this is a result of its governance efforts.[18] Other analysts cite it as evidence that gang leader "Sebastián" has won the struggle for control, and now has fewer enemies.[19] Once again, both may be right.

"Todos Somos Juárez": The Right Discourse but Insufficient Follow Through

Maureen Meyer *looks at the roots of the crisis in Ciudad Juárez, including the historic exclusion of much of Juárez's population, changes in the drug trade and the Mexican government's war on drugs, and the nature of being a border city. She considers the new emphasis on social investment that has been promised as part of Juárez's anti-crime efforts and raises questions about coordination, implementation, and the need for more effective strategies to control violence.*

Once in the spotlight for the gender-based murders of hundreds of women starting in the early 1990s, Ciudad Juárez is now on the front line of Mexico's drug-related violence. Over 35,000 lives have been lost in drug-related killings in Mexico since 2006. In 2010 alone, there were over 3,100 violent deaths in Ciudad Juárez, accounting for 20% of the drug-related killings in Mexico that year and marking the city once again as the most violent in the world. While there are no official figures, a September 2010 study by the *Observatorio de Seguridad y*

Convivencia Ciudadana de Ciudad Juárez estimates that approximately 230,000 people have left Juárez in the past two years.[20] A quick look at coverage in local newspapers on any given day is a stark reminder that in spite of government efforts, violence continues unabated.

While the Mexican networks established to traffic illicit substances have been functioning for several decades, major interdiction efforts by the United States in the mid 1980s to close off Florida as an entry point for Colombian cocaine shifted a larger part of the drug trade to Mexico. Small-time drug smugglers in Mexico blossomed into more sophisticated trafficking organizations who are now central actors in this criminal activity. Drug violence in Mexico increased as criminal organizations fought for control of access routes into the United States, and for the country's growing local drug markets.

When Felipe Calderón assumed the presidency of Mexico in December 2006, the dominant element in his security strategy was launching military-led counter-drug operations in areas like Juárez that were considered hot spots for organized crime. The Mexican police were deemed too corrupt, or too weak, to take on the cartels. Experts estimate that approximately 50,000 Mexican soldiers participate in these operations in various areas of the country. This strategy was meant to be complemented by institutional reforms in Mexico, particularly to the police and judicial systems. These reforms are underway, but institutional reform is a slow process that requires political will at the federal and state levels, which in certain cases appears to be lacking.

After the massive deployment of soldiers and federal police in counter-drug operations, violence actually increased alarmingly in many areas. In Ciudad Juárez, there were 350 violent deaths in 2007; by 2009, one year after Joint Operation Chihuahua was launched, this number had grown to 2,635.[21]

The social, political, and economic exclusion of much of Juárez's population, increasing unemployment largely due to job losses in the maquila sector, changes in the drug trade and criminal organizations, and the nature of being a border city combined to create a perfect storm.

Understanding the violence means not only examining the current battles between criminal groups, but also taking into account the history of the city itself. In recent decades Ciudad Juárez became a mecca for export-oriented factories termed maquiladoras producing primarily for the U.S. market. From 1980 to 2000 alone, the population of Juárez more than doubled. Investment was made in the city's infrastructure to accommodate factories, but not for the hundreds of thousands of people who came to work in the factories. Federal, state, and local governments allowed the city to grow and absorb this massive population without assuring access to basic services like infrastructure, education, healthcare, or day care facilities for the children of the maquila workers, who are predominately women.

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In January 2010 came the final straw, prompting outrage and a change in the government's approach to the city. On January 30, 16 young people attending a party in one of their homes, because it was no longer safe to go out at night, were murdered by a group of armed assailants. The outrage stretched from Juárez to Mexico City, and the federal government announced a program geared toward a more holistic approach to the security crisis in Juárez: "Todos Somos Juárez: Reconstruyamos la Ciudad" ("We are All Juárez: Let's Rebuild our City").

In the program's documents, the government argues that "insecurity, the lack of social and economic opportunities, the decomposition of the social fabric, and the proliferation of anti-social behaviors are all interrelated phenomena that impede Juarenses' full development. Because of this, Todos Somos Juárez attends to the problem in an integral manner, attacking not only the effects but also the causes of violence." As originally envisioned, the program committed all levels of the government to spend $270 million dollars on 160 concrete actions within the categories of security, economy, work, health, education, and social development; over 70 deal with health or education.[22]

One, called the Safe School program, seeks to transform schools into places free of violence, crime, and drug addictions. The program entails enhanced school security during vacations to prevent theft or vandalism, violence prevention and self-defense courses, and strategies and methods to increase safety while traveling to and from school. As of October 11, 2010, 712 schools were reported as incorporated into the program, with the 294 remaining schools beginning participation in the next school cycle.[23]

One of the more ambitious security pledges was to professionalize and vet the local police force through improved recruitment, selection, training, and certification. The first project toward achieving this goal was the accreditation and certification of state government training programs at the State Internal Control Center (Centro Estatal de Control de Confianza, CECC). The program provided the Chihuahua state government with support for polygraph equipment and for the training and vetting of 660 members of the municipal police. It also evaluated 62 mid-

level personnel in the Chihuahua Secretary of Public Security and the attorney general's office.[24]

One year after the program's February 2010 launch, officials from Mexico's federal and state governments recognized at a public event that while progress had been made to implement the 160 actions planned under the "Todos Somos Juárez" program, these efforts were insufficient. In their progress report, government officials stated that 132 of the 160 actions were being implemented, among them scholarships for college students, the construction of new hospitals, and job creation efforts. However, two stated priorities in the program, combating money laundering in Ciudad Juárez and establishing a program to register vehicles in the city given the large number of illegal vehicles that transit without license plates, have fallen short.[25] Civil society organizations in Juárez have pointed to other shortcomings, such as the 25 minute police response time to emergency calls, when the goal was to reduce the time to 7 minutes, and school administrators with no knowledge of the Safe School program, even though they are listed as having been certified by this federal program.[26] The new head of the Public Security Ministry in Ciudad Juárez, Julián Leyzaola, stated in early May that in spite of efforts to purge the local police, at least 25 percent of the current force has links to organized criminal groups.[27]

In evaluating the "Todos Somos Juárez" program, the ongoing violence speaks volumes. At the end of 2010, the murder rate stood around 230 per 100,000 residents. There were at least 800 drug-related murders in the city in the first four months of 2011. Several incidents have shown the security risks Juárez residents continue to face as they go about their daily lives. In a tragic irony, on January 23, 2011, seven soccer players and fans were gunned down by an armed group of individuals before the match began; the field had recently been constructed with funds from

Federal Police in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico

the "Todos Somos Juárez" program. Likewise, the "Safe Corridors" program, designed to create secure conditions on some of Juárez's main boulevards and listed as "completed" by the federal government, fell apart once responsibility for the security of the streets was transferred from Mexico's federal to state police, then again to the municipal police.[28] In the past year alone, over 2,000 neighborhoods have hired private security companies to close off their streets for public transit due to security concerns.[29]

It is widely recognized that many of the programs funded through "Todos Somos Juárez" are sorely needed in the city. However, Juárez residents are suspicious about the initiative's overall effectiveness, while experts criticize what they view as a laundry list of social programs divided among Mexico's different ministries with little coordination or prioritization.[30]

"Todos Somos Juárez" is far from successful. But what has started is a realization of the need for a different approach to violence, one that addresses security concerns while also supporting socio-economic programs to rebuild the city's badly torn social fabric.

During the years in which El Salvador's urban violence was on the upswing, Santa Tecla undertook long-term plans that prioritized human and social development, citizen security, building capacity, and coordination among local government agencies—all with a strong emphasis on citizens' participation.

Santa Tecla: Citizen Security with Citizen Participation

Ashley Morse *examines a city in El Salvador where, despite serious crime problems, organized criminal groups hold less sway than they do in other cities in the region. She examines the municipally-led effort to reduce crime through analysis of crime data, community problem-solving approaches, and coordination of police, government, and social service programs. The homicide rate, though still high, has dropped in comparison to other parts of El Salvador.*
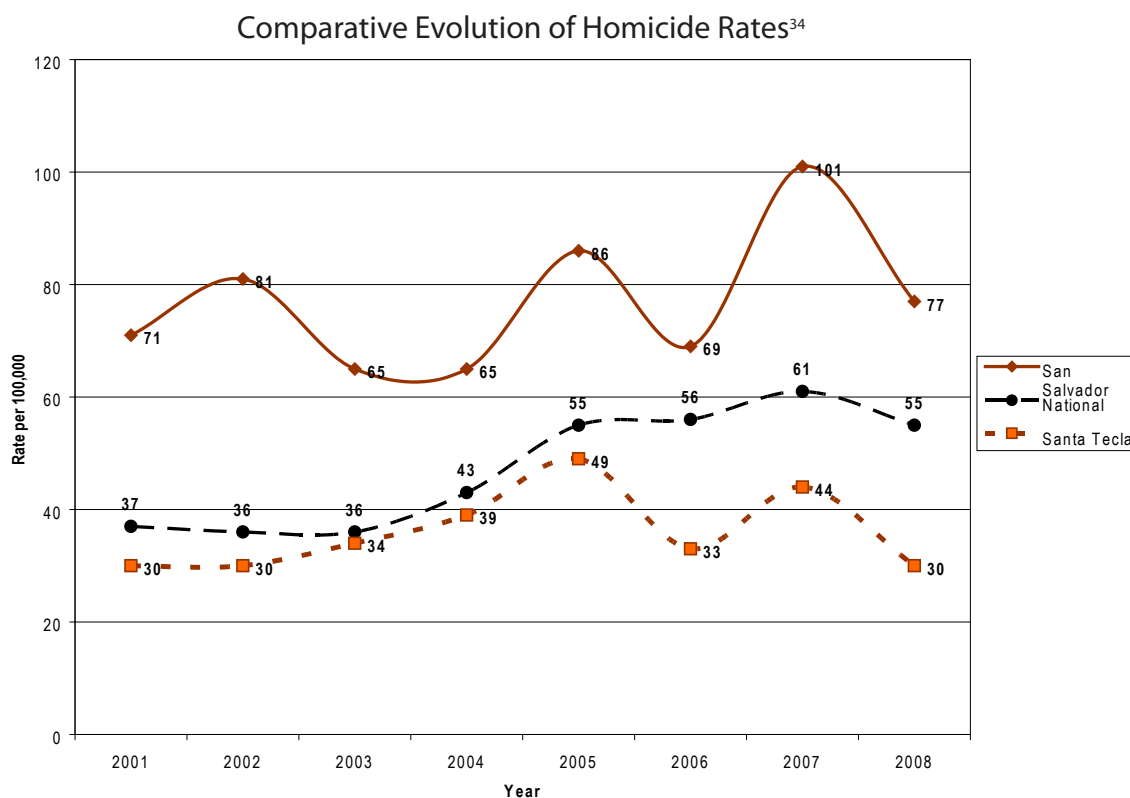
In the immediate aftermath of the 1992 Peace Accords that brought an end to El Salvador's bloody civil war, homicide rates fell and perceptions of citizen safety improved as the police and justice systems underwent reform. Within a few years, though, crime rates began to climb again. Today, nearly two decades later, El Salvador is again reeling with violence. With a shocking national homicide rate of 66 per 100,000 last year, it tops the charts as one of the most violent countries in the world. Along with homicides, Salvadorans experience many other types of violence including assault, robbery, petty theft, extortion, and gender and intra-family violence. When looking at this spectrum of crime, 24.2% of Salvadorans surveyed in 2010 reported being the victim of crime and 49.7% "perceived insecurity," or feared becoming a victim of crime in their neighborhoods.[31]

Crime and violence in El Salvador are predominately urban phenomena. In the 1980s, civil war led to massive internal migration from conflictive rural communities to urban zones. The social fabric further deteriorated when about 20% of the population fled the country.[32] Precarious urban development was made worse by San Salvador's devastating 1986 earthquake, in which 1,500 people died and 100,000 were left homeless. In the post-conflict era, these impoverished urban communities continued to be neglected and had little government support as they grew rapidly.

Parallel to this swift and disorderly urbanization, urban crime and violence began to swell. Though not new, the gang phenomenon became pronounced, starting around 1996 and growing in the early 2000s. At the same time, due to their geographic position and U.S. and later Mexican counterdrug strategies to stem trafficking elsewhere, El Salvador and neighboring Central American countries became targets for drug trafficking, and transshipment routes consolidated in the region. Images of heavily-tattooed gang members from gangs like MS-13 and 18th Street and the gruesome crimes they committed dominated the media and struck fear in citizens.

In this context of rising crime and the visible gang presence, the principal government response was to crack down hard. Authorities focused narrowly on suppressing and incarcerating gang members. Beginning in 2003, the national government began an all-out offensive on gangs and launched the Mano Dura or "iron fist" plan, followed by a second phase, the Super Mano Dura, which included passing legislation that made it a crime to belong to a gang and directed the police to conduct large-scale sweeps to round up young men who wore gang colors, had tattoos, or dressed in "gang styles." These plans did have an impact on gangs—they

Comparative Evolution of Homicide Rates[34]

Chart: "Comparative Evolution of Homicide Rates" — Rate per 100,000 (y-axis, 0 to 120) versus Year (x-axis, 2001–2008). Three series: San Salvador, National, and Santa Tecla.

San Salvador: 71 (2001), 81 (2002), 65 (2003), 65 (2004), 86 (2005), 69 (2006), 101 (2007), 77 (2008).

National: 37 (2001), 36 (2002), 36 (2003), 43 (2004), 55 (2005), 56 (2006), 61 (2007), 55 (2008).

Santa Tecla: 30 (2001), 30 (2002), 34 (2003), 39 (2004), 49 (2005), 33 (2006), 44 (2007), 30 (2008).

drove them underground and often led to increased gang organization, particularly inside the prisons. But they did little to dismantle gang activity or apprehend serious criminals. Instead, they generated thousands of arbitrary arrests and grew the prison populations. Meanwhile, homicide and crime rates rose each year.

Around this same time, one urban municipality experiencing the worst of these symptoms charted a unique course of action.

Santa Tecla is a satellite city of San Salvador, one of the fourteen municipalities that make up the capital's metropolitan area. From 2001 to 2006, Santa Tecla ranked as one of the twenty most violent municipalities in El Salvador, but in 2007 it managed to leave the list, even while three adjoining and similar municipalities ranked in the top ten.[33] Its homicide rate, though still unacceptably high by world standards, has been significantly reduced. In 2008, Santa Tecla had a rate of 30 homicides per 100,000, while San

Salvador had a rate of 77 and the national rate was 55.

Santa Tecla's reduction in violence and improvements in urban quality of life can be attributed in large part to the work of the municipal government under the leadership of Mayor Oscar Ortiz, who has been in office since 2000. During the years in which El Salvador's urban violence was on the upswing, Santa Tecla undertook long-term plans that prioritized human and social development, citizen security, building capacity, and coordination among local government agencies—all with a strong emphasis on citizens' participation.

In 2002, parallel to an accelerated rebuilding process after an earthquake in 2001, the local government developed a "Participative Strategic Plan" to create a citizen-consulted roadmap for municipal leadership. The Strategic Plan analyzed city infrastructure and connectivity, land use, demographics, employment, access to basic

services, and other factors crucial to development. Among its findings, the plan revealed an overwhelmingly young and underemployed population with growing anxiety about crime and violence.[35] With this as the departure point, the municipal government began to develop new policies.

Because one of the public's major priorities was citizen security, municipal leadership placed a premium on violence prevention and the "recuperation" of public spaces. In 2003 the municipal government put into effect a series of social programs oriented towards prevention. The "School Scholarships" program targets students on all levels, from kindergarten through advanced university studies, giving them anywhere from US$15-50 for staying in school with good grades. In return they commit to volunteering, participating in municipal activities, and doing outreach to other youth. "Recuperating" public spaces focused on public works to encourage citizens' confidence in, and usage of, the city. This entailed the cleanup and reinvigoration

of green spaces, improvements in roads and pedestrian walkways, installation of road signs, and increased street lighting.

In 2004, the government entered a more careful and analytical diagnostic phase to develop what would later become its first Municipal Policy for Prevention and Citizen Security. The Policy, implemented in 2005, ultimately focused on reducing homicides.

The municipal government built on the policy with several measures in 2006. First, a local Observatory for the Prevention of Crime was established that gathers data on crime and violence including homicides, robberies, traffic accidents, and intra-family violence. The data is logged with other information such as location, time, age, gender, and weapon used. The Observatory has been an important tool to fine tune local decision making based on standardized evidence and information. For instance, the time of day and location of robberies might make clear the need for street lights on a certain block. Given the goal to reduce homicides and the high rate of homicides committed with firearms—nearly 80%—a 2006 municipal order prohibited carrying arms in public spaces.[36] Community policing focused on prevention also began in earnest, including joint patrols between the National Civilian Police (PNC) and the Body of Municipal Agents (CAM), the latter under the direct control of the Mayor's office.

In 2008, a municipal management mechanism was inaugurated to coordinate violence prevention activities. This mechanism brought together the main local, state, and national actors responsible for services pertaining to citizen security to coordinate their activities in alignment

Parque de la Convivencia (Community Coexistence Park), one example of "recuperating" public space in Santa Tecla. (Source: Santa Tecla Municipal Government)

If efforts at reversing exclusion are to have lasting results, they will require long-term commitment and local communities' involvement in designing and implementing their own solutions.

with Santa Tecla's commitment to violence prevention. It also gave citizens a seat at this important table of coordination and consensus building.[38]

In 2009, the Policy was reformulated based on impact evaluations in a process that involved community participation. The revised Policy's main objective shifted to "strengthening peaceful community coexistence in the city through interagency cooperation and coordination and the promotion of responsible citizen participation in a way that is civic-minded and democratic."

Santa Tecla's local leadership has dealt in an innovative and far-reaching way with crime and violence and their effects on citizens' lives. The long-term planning and municipal commitment to citizen security has helped Santa Tecla budget its own resources more effectively and secure outside resources from international donors. The focus on prevention, community coexistence, and the recuperation of public space—all highly consulted with civil society—has been very popular among citizens.

While Santa Tecla prioritized bringing down homicides and achieved a significant reduction, the complex task of lowering other types of crime and violence is nowhere near complete. In 2008, Santa Tecla ranked higher than the national average in theft, robbery, extortion, and rape, but much lower in homicides and deaths and injuries caused by traffic accidents.[39] Nevertheless, it is no small accomplishment that in a country with one of the world's highest national murder rates, Santa Tecla managed to reduce homicides while most similar municipalities saw them increase sharply.

Conclusion

The cities featured in this report have had different experiences. All, however, have pursued similar—if sometimes still nascent—crime and violence reduction strategies that give central importance to reincorporating and providing social services to marginalized communities. All are attempts to "reverse exclusion."

In Rio, the state government targeted selected favelas for "pacification." The plan attempts to move drug gangs out of specific communities, and then deploys a community-oriented police force amid coordinated and increased city services and social programs. The program receives generally positive reviews from residents of "pacified" favelas. There are concerns that the police presence has a militarized aspect and that the social investment falls short and lags behind the security component. Because the program involves displacing drug gangs from the targeted communities but does not go so far as to try to dismantle gangs, its long-term impact on crime and violence throughout the Rio metropolitan area is not yet certain.

In Medellín, a mayor implemented an anti-violence strategy that brought social services to poor communities dominated by drug-funded criminal gangs. His efforts coincided with a period in which one paramilitary group asserted control over the area, driving out guerrilla militias as well as rival paramilitaries. Crime dropped in part because of the mayor's programs and in part because of the "pax mafiosa" imposed by a dominant paramilitary group. When competition

Reducing violence in marginalized communities requires a serious process that rigorously involves that neighborhood's residents, treating them, sometimes for the first time, like full citizens.

among gangs increased again and peace on the streets eroded, crime shot up, though the government's social and security investments probably prevented a return to the high rates seen in the 1990s.

In Ciudad Juárez, a counter-drug campaign, with the Mexican military as the dominant actor, appears to have intensified infighting between drug trafficking organizations, and violence has skyrocketed. In a recent shift, the Mexican government announced a new emphasis on social investment programs while continuing the intense military and police effort. Today violence continues, and the commitment to social investment has been only partially implemented. It is positive that the government has recognized the need for social investment in long-neglected Juárez. Now, far more needs to be done on the social side. Furthermore, the question remains of how to control drug gang violence in the face of continuing high levels of demand for drugs north of the border and a growing local market.

Finally, in Santa Tecla the municipal government brought together the local government, citizen organizations, the police, and state agencies to coordinate anti-violence efforts, including prevention programs. Though Santa Tecla battled high homicide rates, it confronted less organized forms of crime than did the other cases in this report. The homicide rate has dropped significantly but remains unacceptably high, and the city still struggles to control other types of crime.

Some of the early lessons or positive practices that can be taken from these works in progress to "reverse exclusion" are:

1. Policymakers have to recognize that social, political, and economic exclusion form the context in which crime and violence take root. Comprehensive approaches are necessary for any public security strategy's success. This is especially true in places where swaths of a city have been lost to lawlessness, crime, and decades of government neglect.

2. Successful implementation of comprehensive approaches requires long-term commitment. Adopting the language of "reversing exclusion" can win political points with local constituencies, donor governments, and multi-lateral institutions. Carrying it out, though, is incredibly difficult and requires long-term planning, marshalling resources, achieving buy in from multiple levels of state institutions, involving civil society and the business community, and maintaining a long-term political commitment.

3. Coordination is key and has to take place simultaneously at many levels and across institutions. Whether it comes from top-level leadership or from a new coordination mechanism, a public security strategy has to be aligned with social, education, and health services, and funding has to be aligned for everything. This requires many different levels of government, the private sector, and civil society to work together.

4. The role of municipal leadership is fundamental. Arguably the most positive results are achieved with municipal authorities at the helm. Capable, creative local management can make the difference between success and failure. Ideally there would be broad levels of support at all levels of government, but because so many of these plans involve social services managed at the local level, strong leadership from municipal officials is indispensable. Municipal authorities can also get the best pulse on the community and bring citizens into dialogue.

5. Evidence-based evaluation should be integrated into the process. Success is not one size fits all. Data-driven research, including that performed by outside observers, can help decision makers hone policies to reduce violence.

6. Careful monitoring of the efforts by police and security forces is critical. Military involvement in efforts to "reclaim" abandoned or neglected neighborhoods is deeply troubling. Military doctrine and tactics are generally at odds with the "minimum necessary force" approach of the police. In addition, the likelihood of human rights abuses by the military is much higher. Military involvement in civilian policing tends to blur what should be a clear limit on the role of the military in a democratic society. Police also need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they do not act in an abusive manner. In communities where police presence is new, public education may be necessary to inform citizens of their rights and how to file complaints. Authorities should ensure that allegations of abuse by security forces are promptly and impartially investigated.

Finally, social exclusion and the dramatic levels of violence in some urban areas in the Americas didn't happen overnight, and neither will efforts to reverse them, meaning:

7. The process matters. If efforts at reversing exclusion are to have lasting results, they will require long-term commitment and local communities' involvement in designing and implementing their own solutions. The structure of the process itself should reverse exclusion by bringing affected communities' residents into the decisions that impact their own safety and livelihoods. Reducing violence in marginalized communities requires a serious process that rigorously involves that neighborhood's residents, treating them, sometimes for the first time, like full citizens.

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